

Eva Karl

"Forward, Coburg !"

Mechanisms of Power: Ruling and Living in the "First National Socialist City" in Germany

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Eva Karl

"Coburg ahead!"

Mechanisms of power – ruling and living in "Germany's first National Socialist city"

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Foreword by the Mayor of Coburg,

While the city of Coburg has always been proud to recount much of its past, including its ducal heritage and architectural masterpieces, little to nothing has been said about the darkest period in Coburg's history in recent decades. Some would have liked to forget the pioneering role Coburg played in National Socialism and the atrocities that took place in our city.

However, only those who know their past can learn from it. I am very grateful that my predecessor, Norbert Tessmer, personally committed himself so strongly to the long-overdue, comprehensive reappraisal of Coburg's history during National Socialism and that the Coburg City Council at the time commissioned this book in 2015 despite difficult financial times.

Nine years later, we have a work that we have awaited with great humility, interest, respect, and curiosity. A work that has been compiled according to strict scientific criteria and with a high degree of objectivity. A work that represents a turning point and a great opportunity for Coburg: to understand what drove the people of Coburg. To understand what was the breeding ground for the developments at the beginning of the Nazi era. And to ensure that such a breeding ground can never arise here again.

My sincere thanks go to everyone who supported and contributed to this book. I would like to thank former Mayor Norbert Tessmer, my colleagues at the Office for Schools, Culture, and Education, as well as the high-caliber accompanying expert commission, and especially Prof. Dr. Andreas Wirsching from the Institute for Contemporary History in Munich, who not only accompanied Dr. Eva Karl, but also created a position for our project at the institute.

My special thanks go to Prof. Dr. Gert Melville as spokesperson for the expert commission. Thanks to his efforts, not only were additional high-caliber experts and sponsors found for the commission, but he also devoted himself to the creation of this book over the past nine years, taking on the organization and communication and serving as a mentor to Dr. Karl.

Above all, however, I would like to thank Dr. Karl. This book and this task have accompanied her for many years of her life. During these years, she has invested time, knowledge, expertise, and certainly a lot of sweat into this book. She has taken it upon herself to repeatedly read and process horrific atrocities. She has made a great task of our city her own. On behalf of the entire city of Coburg, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to Dr. Eva Karl for this.

It is now our common wish that this book reaches all the citizens of Coburg. That it can be found in every household. That everyone reads it at least once: because only those who know their history can learn from it.

Dominik Sauerteig Mayor of the City of Coburg

Foreword by the accompanying scientific commission

The city of Coburg appointed a scientific commission to advise the author of this book, Dr. Eva Karl, during her many years of research. At the invitation of the commission's spokesperson, Prof. Dr. Gert Melville, regular meetings were held in Coburg for this purpose.

The commission saw its task as generally bringing the members' specialist knowledge to bear on the project in addition to their shared expertise in the history of National Socialism. This applied equally to the fields of political, social, mental, and institutional history as well as economics and archival science, and was intended to provide support in particular in the diverse interlinking of event-related narratives and the systematic analysis of overarching structures.

The commission's mandate also called for keeping in mind the complex interweaving of the topic, which was primarily concentrated in Coburg, with developments in Germany as a whole. The investigation of Coburg's dealings with National Socialism and the profound influence of National Socialism on Coburg therefore also represents an important contribution to the general history of Germany during that period.

The members of the commission were delighted to have come into direct contact with the citizens of Coburg through a very well-attended series of lectures. These events gave them the feeling that the book would become a landmark event in the city's history of remembrance. Now that it has been published, it can claim to be the first comprehensive account of Coburg's dark past based on critically analyzed sources and reliable research. However, this book also has a particular impact as a milestone for continuing to take responsibility for one's own history and as a warning against the very real possibility of renewed oppression through dictatorship and tyranny. Here, the book fulfills an important function of enlightenment and information.

It was therefore extremely welcome that former mayor Norbert Tessmer did not shy away from launching this project nine years ago and carefully keeping it under his wing. After changing offices, he found a like-minded successor in Mayor Dominik Sauerteig. On behalf of the scientific community, the commission would like to express its sincere thanks to both of them.

We hope the book will find a wide readership in and beyond Coburg. We congratulate its knowledgeable author, Dr. Eva Karl, on her work, which was accomplished with great knowledge, diligence, and care, and thank her warmly for it.

Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. mult. Jürgen Kocka (Berlin) • Dr. Margit Ksoll-Marcon (Munich) • Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Gert Melville (Coburg) • Dr. Michael Stephan (Munich) • Prof. Dr. Ralf Stremmel (Essen) • Prof. Dr. Andreas Wirsching (Munich) • Prof. Dr. Dieter Ziegler (Bochum)

Foreword

This study was initiated by former mayor Norbert Tessmer and a resolution passed by the Coburg City Council in May 2015 to comprehensively examine Coburg's National Socialist past. To this end, a commission of historians was appointed, consisting of Prof. Dr. Jürgen Kocka (Berlin), Dr. Margit Ksoll-Marcon (Munich), Prof. Dr. Gert Melville (Dresden/Coburg), Dr. Michael Stephan (Munich), Prof. Dr. Ralf Stremmel (Essen), Prof. Dr. Andreas Wirsching (Munich), and Prof. Dr. Dieter Ziegler (Bochum) was appointed to define the structural framework of the project and provide support. The author was entrusted with the implementation in 2017. To this end, a position was created at the Institute for Contemporary History in Munich with funding from the city of Coburg in order to integrate the project into a research network and facilitate academic exchange. Nevertheless, Coburg remained the primary place of work due to its central source holdings, where intensive cooperation with the spokesperson of the Commission of Historians, Prof. Dr. Gert Melville, also took place. A public lecture series *entitled "Epoche unter dem Hakenkreuz" (Era under the Swastika),* in which all commission members provided insights into their research and work priorities, accompanied the project work and gave it further impetus. Despite interruptions due to the coronavirus-related closure of archives and two periods of parental leave, the research project was always embedded in a stimulating environment.

I would therefore like to take this opportunity to express my special thanks to the city of Coburg, which made this project possible and supported the development process in every way. Mayor Norbert Tessmer (until 2020), Deputy Mayor Dominik Sauerteig, Third Mayor Can Aydin, and the heads of the Office for Schools, Culture, and Education, Klaus Anderlik (until 2020) and Norbert Anders, have all contributed to the creation of this book in a solution-oriented manner. Thanks also go to the city's local historian, Dr. Christian Boseckert, who was always on hand with advice and assistance, and to Finn Ebsen, a volunteer in the culture department, who was particularly involved in compiling the index. I would like to thank Mr. Gernot Wolz and Dr. Thorsten Paprotny for proofreading and editing the manuscript, and the publisher Schnell & Steiner for including it in its publishing program.

I would also like to express my sincere thanks to the many archivists who have supported and advised me in my research over the past few years. I would particularly like to mention the Coburg archivists and archive staff Michael Tröbs, Laura Hamberger, Nadine Hütter, Dr. Johannes Haslauer, Dr. Alexander Wolz, and Dr. Johannes Staudenmaier, who accompanied me through many hours of source research and always showed extraordinary commitment to the project.

I would like to thank the Institute for Contemporary History and Professor Andreas Wirsching for welcoming me, and the staff there for the warm collegial exchange and excellent cooperation. The same applies to the members of the Historical Commission, who provided extremely valuable suggestions and criticism at our annual meetings and contributed their expert knowledge to the editing process. Without the spokesperson of the commission, Professor Gert Melville,

this work would hardly have been possible. In numerous in-depth conversations and discussions, he accompanied the entire process of creating this work, provided intellectual impetus, channeled frustration, and took care of the entire organization behind the scenes. He has my sincere appreciation and gratitude.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my family and friends for standing by me during what was truly not always an easy time of writing, for encouraging me and for their understanding.

My greatest thanks go to my husband Tim Schulz and my two daughters Karla and Lotte, who brought so much light and joy into my life that it was bearable to deal with such a dark chapter of history over a long period of time. This work is dedicated to them with infinite love.

Eva Karl

I Introduction

> "I made politics with Coburg!" These words of the Führer characterize the historical merits of this city better than any victory dates in the glorious struggle to establish the Third Reich. "When Coburg became so exemplary in the Führer's struggle, it had done nothing more than take up a proud heritage in order to prove itself worthy of a great past in a great present."(2)

As Franz Schwede, one of the central figures of National Socialist Coburg, explained with these words, the city of Coburg played a prominent role in the Third Reich for its contemporaries, a role derived from its history. Coburg, which had had a National Socialist majority on the city council since 1929 and a National Socialist mayor in Franz Schwede since 1931, was declared the "first National Socialist city in Germany"(3) and a model city. Its role as a National Socialist pioneer was a central feature of Coburg's city history during the first half of the 20th century, and the city thus achieved above-average prominence in the German Reich, which condensed into a myth.

Given the vast amount of literature on Nazi rule, one might get the impression that researching and studying the history of a single city during the Third Reich would be of little relevance and that its significance would hardly extend beyond the local context. However, a local history of Nazi rule can reveal very specific local power structures, dynamics, and identity constructions, as well as pointing beyond the local area and completing the picture of "National Socialism," which was never a straightforward and uniform phenomenon. For Nazi society was not only characterized by a top-down structure imposed on the German people, but was also supported by a multitude of different actors and social groups, which constituted its heterogeneous, changeable, and even contradictory character. A deep and source-based analysis of limited social spaces thus not only provides a detailed and nuanced insight into the local implementation and effects of Nazi policy, but also contributes significantly to a comprehensive understanding of the functioning and complexity of Nazi rule. It can highlight both overt and covert mechanisms of power. This is all the more true in a city that had already established a local Nazi system of rule two and a half years before the "seizure of power."

This study therefore aims to answer two main questions: How did Coburg become the "first National Socialist city in Germany" and a National Socialist pioneer by 1929, and what impact did this have?

1 Schwede, Franz: Kampf um Coburg (Battle for Coburg). Munich 1939, p. 25.
2 Schwede: Kampf, p. 30.
3 The city had given itself this title. No evidence could be found that Adolf Hitler had officially conferred this honorary title. See Chapter IV1.1.1.
4 Kocka, Jürgen: Eine durchherrschte Gesellschaft. In: Kaelble, Hartmut; Kocka, Jürgen; Zwahr, Hartmut (eds.): Sozialgeschichte der DDR. Stuttgart 1994, pp. 547–553.

Was this true for the ruling class and the general population, and thus for the regime's survival in the city until 1945? The study of Coburg's city history in the first half of the 20th century should therefore primarily seek to look behind the *myth of Coburg* and understand what the city was like as a sphere of power and as a living environment. In doing so, questions about the social and political characteristics of the former royal seat will be linked to questions about the structure and process of institutionalizing Nazi rule and the formation of a National Socialist society.

1 State of research

Despite the importance attributed to Coburg during the "Third Reich," research on the Nazi era in the Vestestadt has been very fragmentary to date. While there are a number of comprehensive publications on the topic of the annexation to Bavaria and the resulting special status of the former duchy,[5] the issue of National Socialist rule in Coburg has been dealt with mainly in relation to individual aspects.

The two dissertations by Jürgen Erdmann and Joachim Albrecht are decisive, laying the historical foundation for the period up to the "seizure of power" and the rise of the NSDAP, and highlighting the role of the city as a training ground for the National Socialists. While Jürgen Erdmann describes the process of Coburg's integration into Bavaria after the revolution of 1918/19, he also depicts the emergence of the völkisch movement in the Coburg area,(6) Joachim Albrecht describes the process of the seizure of power in Coburg in contrast to the Reich-wide
"seizure of power."(7) Minor preliminary work on the rise of the NSDAP was also presented by Ludwig Asmalsky in an unpublished thesis and by the Americans Nicholas Hayward and Dave Morris.[8] The presentation of the history of the labor movement in Coburg in Günther Schmele's dissertation also contributes to the picture of the

5 See, among others: Andrian-Werburg, Klaus Freiherr v. (ed.): Coburg's Path to Bavaria. Exhibition by the Bavarian State Archives in Coburg on the 50th anniversary of the annexation i n 1920. Coburg, June 27–July 12, 1970. Neustadt a . d. Aisch 1970; ibid.: Coburgische Landesgeschichte zwischen Bayern und Thüringen (Coburg Regional History between Bavaria and Thuringia). Coburg 1981; Beck, Emil: Geschichte und Rechtslage der Coburger Landesstiftung (History and Legal Status of the Coburg Regional Foundation) (= Yearbook of the Coburg Regional Foundation, supplementary volume). Coburg 1967; Erdmann, Jürgen: Coburg, Bavaria, and the Reich 1918–1923 (= Coburg Local History and Regional History, Issue 22). Coburg 1969; Hambrecht, Rainer: "Not through War, Purchase, or Inheritance" (= Exhibition Catalogs of the Bavarian State Archives, Volume 34). Munich 1995; idem: The Unification of the Free State of Coburg with Bavaria. In: Yearbook for Franconian Regional Research 58 (1998), pp. 371–390; idem: Between Bavaria and Thuringia – Coburg from 1900 to 1945. In: Henker, Michael; Brockhoff, Evamaria (eds.): Ein Herzogtum und viele Kronen. Coburg in Bayern und Europa. Augsburg 1997, pp. 186–196; Rupprecht, Walter: Der kirchliche Anschluss des Coburger Landes an die bayerische Landeskirche. In: Jahrbuch der Coburger Landestiftung (1972), p p . 119–140; Wolz, Alexander; Boseckert, Christian (eds.): The Annexation of Coburg to Bavaria in 1920. "... united into a single territory." (= Schriftenreihe der Historischen Gesellschaft Coburg e . V., vol. 30). Coburg 2020.

6 See Erdmann: Coburg.

7 See Albrecht, Joachim: The Avant-Garde of the Third Reich – The Coburg NSDAP during the Weimar Republic 1922–1933. Frankfurt am Main 2005.

8 See Asmalsky, Ludwig: National Socialism and the NSDAP in Coburg 1922–1933. Unpublished thesis, Würzburg 1970 and Hayward, Nicholas; Morris, Dave: The First Nazi Town. Aldershot et al. 1988.

different milieus existing in Coburg. [9]The various studies were finally summarized and supplemented by individual aspects in the exhibition catalog *Voraus zur Unzeit* (Ahead of Its Time), published in 2004, which provides an overview of the 1920s in Coburg and the prevailing climate there.[10] However, the classification of the Coburg situation in the Franconian context and the role of Protestant Franconia as the gateway to the Reich for the NSDAP, which Rainer Hambrecht fundamentally elaborated in his study published in 1976 and reissued in 2017,[11] has not yet been done. Nor has there been any structural analysis of the various factors that explain Coburg's *susceptibility* to National Socialism and its transformation from a liberal stronghold to a haven for völkisch ideas, taking into account socio-cultural traditions and socio-economic factors. In particular, the field of local politics after 1920 has been largely ignored.

However, there are serious gaps in research on Coburg's history in the first half of the 20th century, particularly for the period after 1933. The fate of Coburg's Jews, as documented by Hubert Fromm, has been sufficiently researched for this period.[12] Rainer Axmann compiled initial findings on the victims of National Socialist "hereditary and racial hygiene."[(13)] A master's thesis on Nazi building policy by Christian Boseckert sheds light on aspects of administrative work and the staging of the local power elite.[14] There is also a history of the savings bank for the 19th and 20th centuries[15] and a brief outline of the Coburg judiciary during the Nazi era. [16] In addition, aspects of Coburg's National Socialist history are mentioned in supra-regional studies. An analysis of provincial theaters during the Nazi era by Konrad Dussel, for example, includes the repertoires of the Coburg State Theater,[17] Liesa Weber also devotes herself to the Coburg deanery in a comparative study of the scope of action of Protestant pastors [18] and Andreas Hofmann takes Coburg into account in his analysis of the rule of Upper Franconia between 1933 and 1939. [19]

9 See Schmehle, Günther: Coburg and the German Labor Movement. The labor movement in the Coburg area from its beginnings to the present, in connection with the overall development of the labor movement, especially in the history of the Federal Republic of Germany. Bamberg 1980.

10 See Initiative Stadtmuseum Coburg e. V. (ed.): Ahead of its time. Coburg and the rise of National Socialism in Germany. Coburg 2004.

11 See Hambrecht, Rainer: The Brown Bastion. The Rise of the NSDAP in Middle and Upper Franconia (1922–1933). Paderborn 2017.

12 See Fromm, Hubert: The Jews of Coburg. Tolerated – Ostracized – Exterminated. Coburg 2012.

13 See Axmann, Rainer: "...he arrived here safely." The story of 60 people from the Coburg region who were murdered as victims of the so-called "euthanasia program." In: Yearbook of the Coburg Regional Foundation 39 (1994), pp. 155–180.

14 See Boseckert, Christian: "So that Coburg becomes more beautiful"? Nazi building policy in the Vestestadt (1933–1945) (= Schriftreihe der Historischen Gesellschaft Coburg e. V., Volume 26). Coburg 2014.

15 See Finzel, Frank; Reinhart, Michael: Spuren. 175 Jahre Sparkasse Coburg. Hauptwege, Nebenwege, Irrwege. Stuttgart 1996.

16 See Dressel, Carl-Christian: Notes on the judiciary in Coburg from the establishment of the Coburg Regional Court to denazification. In: Yearbook of the Coburg Regional Foundation 42 (1997), pp. 47–81.

17 See Dussel, Konrad: A New, Heroic Theater? National Socialist Theater Policy and Its Effects in the Provinces (= Literature and Reality, Volume 26). Bonn 1988, pp. 186–193.

18 See Weber, Liesa: Scope for action and options for action of pastors and parishioners during the Nazi era: A comparative study for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria based on the Upper Franconian deaneries of Bayreuth and Coburg (= Research on Church and Dogmatic History, Volume 119). Göttingen 2019.

19 See Hofmann, Andreas Stefan: Upper Franconia during the Nazi era from 1933 to 1939. A study of the rise, seizure of power, and organization of rule by the National Socialists in northern Bavaria (= Publications of the Bamberg City Archives, Volume 34), Bamberg 2020.

In addition, the focus of the analysis to date has been on individuals. The various biographies of Carl Eduard, the Duke of Coburg who abdicated in 1918, provide insight into the problematic position of the Duke during the Nazi era itself and its subsequent assessment through their different approaches and, in some cases, diverging conclusions.[20] Hubertus Büschel's 2016 study on Carl Eduard,[21] which also drew on sources from the ducal private archive, focuses primarily on the Duke's role as a diplomat by Hitler's grace, thus revealing the Duke's complex entanglements in the Nazi system. Carl Eduard's role in connection with the seizure of power in Coburg, his role in the local power structure, and the question of the Duke's role model function even after his abdication, on the other hand, are not the subject of Büschel's analysis. More detailed attention has also been paid to the Coburg-born resistance fighter Colonel Georg Alexander Hansen[22] in connection with the assassination attempt on Hitler on July 20, 1944 and the entrepreneur Max Brose.[23]

20 The first biography of Rudolf Priesner, published in 1977, still has strongly glorifying and apologetic features and can be used more as a historiographical source of its time and with a focus on the history of memory. (See Priesner, Rudolf: Herzog Carl Eduard. Eine tragische Auseinandersetzung zwischen Deutschland und England. Gerabronn 1977). Harald Sandner's 2011 publication on Duke Carl Eduard, like his chronicle of the city of Coburg for the 20th century, is characterized by very meticulous research, but it stands out for its disregard of scientific conventions and its lack of footnotes and direct source references, so that it cannot be used without criticism. (See Sandner, Harald: Coburg in the 20th Century. The Chronicle of the City of Coburg and the House of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha from January 1, 1900 to December 31, 1999 – from the "good old days" to the dawn of the 21st century. Against forgetting. Coburg 2002; Sandner, Harald: Hitler's Duke. Carl Eduard of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha. The Biography. Aachen 2010). Karina Urbach's study on the role of aristocratic intermediaries in the international network also devotes a chapter to the Duke of Coburg and focuses primarily on his significance in the history of diplomacy. (See Urbach, Karina: Go-Betweens for Hitler. Oxford 2015). In 2018, Prince Andreas of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha also published a biography of the last Duke of Coburg, compiled from the memoirs of Carl Eduard's son, Prince Friedrich Josias of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha. (See Prince Andreas of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha (ed.): The Duke. The Last Duke. From the writings of Prince Friedrich Josias of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha. Coburg 2018).

21 Cf. Büschel, Hubertus: Hitler's Noble Diplomat. The Duke of Coburg and the Third Reich. Frankfurt am Main 2016.

22 See Appeltshauser, Rupert: Im Konflikt zwischen Pflichterfüllung und Widerstand (The Conflict Between Duty and Resistance). Notes on Colonel Georg Alexander Hansen and his role in the opposition to Hitler. In: Jahrbuch der Co-burger Landesstiftung 50 (2005), pp. 221–228; Erdmann, Jürgen: "My Place is Berlin." Georg Hansen (1904–1944): General Staff Officer from Coburg – Resistance Fighter – Victim of National Socialism in 1944. In: Nöth, Stefan (ed.): Coburg 1056–2006. A journey through 950 years of history of the city and region. Coburg 2006, pp. 279–317; Frey, Edmund; Maisch, Brigitte (eds.): Georg Alexander Hansen (1904–1944) – a resistance fighter from Coburg. An exhibition by the State Library and City Library of Coburg. Coburg 2009; Bartl, Franziska: The forgotten conspirator: Georg Alexander Hansen and the resistance against National Socialism. Berlin 2023.

23 See Schöllgen, Gregor: Brose. Ein deutsches Familienunternehmen 1908–2008 (Brose: A German Family Business 1908–2008). Berlin 2008. Gregor Schöllgen's history of the Brose company also dispenses with footnotes and source references and has been criticized primarily for its apologetic tendencies. See Rauh, Cornelia: "Applied history" as an apologetics agency? How Erlangen researchers "capitalize" on corporate history. In: Zeitschrift für Unternehmensgeschichte/Journal of Business History, 56 (2011) 1, pp. 102–115.

2 Methodological Preliminary considerations

In order to illustrate how the analysis of a society on its path to National Socialism and during its rule will be approached in the following, a few key terms will first be introduced and explained. They form methodological tools that enable the overarching questions to be pursued in a targeted manner and adapted to the subject of investigation. At the heart of the approach to this topic are three central ideas that place the work in the tradition of regional history, which, through the integration of cultural-historical approaches, has already provided new insights into the functioning and mechanisms of the penetration and exercise of power in the "Third Reich."[24]

Firstly, the aim is not to classify Coburg's contemporaries of the Nazi regime into a grid of fixed and static attributions. Categories such as *perpetrators*, *followers*, *spectators*, and *victims* do not adequately describe the extremely complex situation of German society under National Socialism. Instead, these labels are replaced by a view of actors as active subjects. For even those who were persecuted under the Nazi regime were not merely dominated objects, but actors who communicated and interacted with each other, thereby influencing the sphere of power and the world in which they lived. It is therefore a question of the "ways in which people appropriated their world – and in doing so, constantly changed it." [25]This inevitably directs attention to the level of action, also in order to consider the important gray areas of action.[26] The following analysis will therefore be guided less by the question of *why* and more by the question of how, thereby focusing on aspects such as creative power, creative will, and scope for action. The prevailing, already established, and changing routines, rituals, and patterns of action and communication are key to understanding the National Socialist penetration of a society. Such an approach allows us to take into account the ever-changing and contradictory nature of National Socialist rule.[27]

Secondly, the idea of the "people's community" is at the heart of this analysis. It represented the central National Socialist social objective, which was never comprehensively defined, but which involved national revival and the conquest of the world.

24 See also: Wirsching, Andreas: National Socialism in the Region. Research Trends and Methodological Problems. In: Möller, Horst; Wirsching, Andreas; Ziegler, Walter (eds.): National Socialism in the Region. Contributions to Regional and Local Research and International Comparison. Munich 1996, pp. 25–46; Kißener, Michael: Opportunities and Problems of Regional Historical Research on the Nazi Era from a Practical Research Perspective. In: Ruck, Michael; Pohl, Karl-Heinrich (eds.): Regions under National Socialism (= IZRG Schriftreihe, vol. 10). Bielefeld 2003, pp. 58–65; Szejnmann, Claus-Christian: Dilution or system stabilization? National Socialism in regions of the German Reich. In: Neue Politische Literatur 48 (2003), pp. 208–250; Schneider, Michael: National Socialism in the region. In: Archiv für Sozialgeschichte 40 (2000), pp. 423–439.

25 Cf. Lüdtke, Alf: Herrschaft als soziale Praxis. In: ibid. (ed.): Herrschaft als soziale Praxis. Historische und sozialanthropologische Studien (= Publications of the Max Planck Institute for History, vol. 91). Göttingen 1991, p. 12.

26 See Reichardt, Sven: Praxeological History. A Stimulus for Discussion. In: Social History. Journal for Historical Analysis of the 20th and 21st Centuries 22 (2007), pp. 43–65.

27 See also: Speitkamp, Winfried: Eschwege: Eine Stadt und der Nationalsozialismus (Eschwege: A Town and National Socialism) (= Publications of the Historical Commission for Hesse, Volume 81). Marburg 2015, pp. 6–10.

promised social, political, and religious division. The term was one of the most common buzzwords of the time and had been used by various political camps since World War I. Ultimately, it was usurped by the NSDAP propaganda machine, which gave it a völkisch interpretation and racial categories, as a central promise to the German people. However, the focus here is less on the question of the extent to which Nazi society in Coburg actually exhibited elements of a propagandistically promoted "people's community" ([28])than on the interpretative, identity-forming, and meaning-creating potential of this concept and its potential for mobilization.

The "people's community" model

"Volksgemeinschaft" [29]is used here as a model for historical analysis, which does not take it for granted, but rather traces the practices involved in its creation. [30]

"Volksgemeinschaft" is to be understood as *a social practice*, because the idealized model was also reflected in concrete actions when individual actors emulated it in their everyday lives, participated in it, and reinterpreted it individually in order to secure their own position in the "Volksgemeinschaft" structure. These were *idiosyncratic* appropriation strategies that enabled individuals in the Nazi state to create coherence in their life plans, to perceive the "people's community" as a model of identity, and to make National Socialism livable. The ongoing negotiation processes that this entailed, which the study aims to highlight, ultimately shaped the specific local character of Nazi society and of ruling and living in the "Third Reich."([32])

The ideal of the "people's community" also prescribed a two-part attribution system that divided society into "fellow citizens" and "outsiders."

28 For discussion of the "people's community" and its realization, see, among others, Winkler, Heinrich A.: Vom Mythos der Volksgemeinschaft. In: Archiv für Sozialgeschichte 17 (1977), pp. 484–490; Mommsen, Hans: Changing Historical Perspectives on the Nazi Dictatorship. In: European Review 17 (2009), pp. 73–80; Frei, Norbert: "Volksgemeinschaft." Erfahrungsgeschichte und Lebenswirklichkeit der Hitler-Zeit. In: ibid.: 1945 und wir. Das Dritte Reich im Bewusstsein der Deutschen. Munich 2005, pp. 107–128 and Aly, Götz: Hitlers Volksstaat. Raub, Rassenkrieg und nationaler Sozialismus. Frankfurt am Main 2005.

29 On the concept of the Volksgemeinschaft as a historical model of analysis and research concept, see in particular: Steber, Martina; Gotto, Bernhard (eds.): Visions of Community in Nazi Germany. Social Engineering and Private Lives. Oxford 2014. An overview of research is provided by: Steuwer, Janosch: Was meint und nützt das Sprechen von der „Volksgemeinschaft"? Neue Literatur zur Gesellschaftsgeschichte des Nationalsozialismus. Archiv für Sozialgeschichte 53 (2013), pp. 487–534. Findings on the topic of the "people's community" on a local and regional basis are provided primarily by the studies of the research college "National Socialist 'People's Community'? Construction, social impact, and local memory" provide insights into the topic of the "Volksgemeinschaft" on a local and regional basis: Schmiechen-Ackermann, Detlef (ed.): "Volksgemeinschaft": Myth, powerful social promise, or social reality in the "Third Reich"? Paderborn 2012 and Reeken, Dietmar von; Thießen, Malte (eds.): "Volksgemeinschaft" as social practice. New research on Nazi society at the local level. Paderborn 2013.

30 See Bajohr, Frank; Wildt, Michael: Introduction. In: ibid. (eds.): Volksgemeinschaft. Neue Forschungen zur Gesellschaft des Nationalsozialismus (= Die Zeit im Nationalsozialismus, vol. 18354), Frankfurt am Main 2009, pp. 7–23, here p. 10.

31 See Lüdtke: Herrschaft.

32 See Steber, Martina; Gotto, Bernhard: Volksgemeinschaft im NS-Regime: Wandlungen, Wirkungen und Aneignung eines Zukunftsversprechens. In: VfZ 3 (2014), pp. 433–445, here pp. 439–442.

33 See Peukert, Detlev: Volksgenossen und Gemeinschaftsfremde. Anpassung, Ausmerze und Aufbegehren unter dem Nationalsozialismus. Cologne 1982.

As a result, the practices of *inclusion and exclusion* became central mechanisms of action within National Socialist society, determining the position of individuals in the social fabric and their individual life chances.[34] By analyzing inclusion and exclusion, it is therefore possible to describe the process of *National Socialist communitization*, i.e., the transformation of existing society into one permeated by National Socialism, as this was achieved by drawing boundaries: on the one hand, through social participation and new scope for "Volksgenossen" (members of the national community), and on the other hand, through the exclusion of "Gemeinschaftsfremde" (outsiders).[35] Realized "volksgemeinschaft" inclusion and exclusion could therefore mean personal advantages, protection, and special opportunities for advancement for some, and discrimination, exclusion, and persecution for others.

Inclusion and exclusion as dynamic processes

However, inclusion and exclusion were not static states, but dynamic processes that interacted and conditioned each other, for example when group cohesion arose through a shared enemy image. The gradual nature of inclusion and exclusion, which allowed for varying degrees of belonging to the community, can serve to highlight the complexity of the options for action in National Socialist society. At the same time, breaks in inclusive and exclusive modes of action must also be made visible in order to explore the scope and limits of "volksgemeinschaft" interpretations and attributions. Overall, the analysis of inclusion and exclusion highlights a range of modes of action that ranged from bureaucratic processes and everyday practices to resistant behavior, violent actions, and terror.

The city as a topographical, social, and cultural space

Thirdly, the city should be understood not only as a topographical space, but also as a social and cultural space, thereby incorporating the dimension of urban space into the analysis. It was precisely in the limited space of a city that identities could consolidate and networks, traditions, and a particular habitus could establish themselves and express themselves in their own symbols and rituals. The National Socialist penetration of this very space must be broken down accordingly. To this end, the city should be understood as a dynamic space of action in which attempts were made to form a National Socialist "people's community," in which, in turn, various spaces for action, interaction, and communication opened up, and in which, on a symbolic level,

34 The pair of concepts *of inclusion* and *exclusion*, which can be traced back to Niklas Luhmann, refers to the way in which social functional contexts are made accessible to individual members of society, or rather to the ways in which individuals are taken into account in social systems. See Luhmann, Niklas: Inclusion and Exclusion. In: ibid., Sociological Enlightenment 6 . Sociology and Humanity. Wiesbaden 2008, pp. 226–251.

35 On the significance of exclusion for the process of community building, see: Wildt, Michael: "Volksgemeinschaft" as self-empowerment. Violence against Jews in the German provinces from 1919 to 1939. Hamburg 2007 and Bajohr; Wildt: Introduction, pp. 9–13. On the role of the NSDAP in processes of inclusion and exclusion, see Nolzen, Armin: Inclusion and exclusion in the Third Reich. The example of the NSDAP. In: Bajohr, Frank; Wildt, Michael (eds.): Volksgemeinschaft. Neue Forschungen zur Gesellschaft des Nationalsozialismus (= Die Zeit im Nationalsozialismus, vol. 18354). Frankfurt a. M. 2009, pp. 60–77.

level of spatial representation. [36] The aim is to show how it was negotiated who was entitled to the space of the city, who could demonstrate power in it, and how it should be symbolically filled and interpreted. In this way, it is possible to clarify how the city was produced, permeated, and occupied as space in the "Third Reich," and thus how processes of inclusion and exclusion were spatially implemented.[37]

3 Objects of investigation and Sources

Based on this state of research and the methodological premises, the present study seeks to answer the key questions "How could this happen?" and "How was the Nazi regime able to establish and maintain itself in Coburg?" will examine the course set until 1929/31 and the shaping of the sphere of power and living environment during Nazi rule, as well as the nature of Coburg's wartime society. This will be the first comprehensive and structural analysis of Coburg in the first half of the 20th century.

However, the aim is not to recount the history of the city over a period of almost 25 years in its entirety, with all its details and twists and turns. Although the overall social structure is always taken into account, a selection of subjects must be used to illustrate the overall structure and key points must be identified. When selecting the relevant subjects for investigation, it was of central importance that sufficient and well-founded source material was available for the facts to be dealt with and that it was of particular relevance both to the specific conditions in Coburg and to research into National Socialist rule.

Furthermore, the aim cannot be to tell the history of the city of Coburg in a purely chronological treatise. Rather, the presentation must be guided by an analysis focused on specific questions. The structure combines narrative-exemplary and structural-analytical episodes, and thus chronological and systematic approaches, to cover the period between 1920 and 1945 in three phases. The period from the union with Bavaria to the NSDAP's consolidation of power between 1929 and 1931 will focus on Coburg's path to National Socialism.

36 See Szöllösi-Janze, Margit (ed.): Munich under National Socialism. Image politics of the "capital of the movement" (= Munich under National Socialism. Local government and urban society, vol. 4). Göttingen 2017, p. 14.

37 On the concept of National Socialist cities as spaces for action, see Thießen, Malte; Süß, Winfried (eds.): Städte im Nationalsozialismus. Urbane Räume und soziale Ordnungen (= Beiträge zur Geschichte des Nationalsozialismus, vol. 33). Göttingen 2017. Urban space is not regarded as a given, but is subject to a social practice that produces it. In this sense, we should assume a
"duality of space" created by social practice and at the same time pre-structured by spatial structures embedded in institutions. See Martina Löw: Space Oddity. Raumtheorie nach dem Spatial Turn. In: sozialraum.de 1 (2015). URL: http://www.sozialraum.de/space-oddity-raumtheorie-nach-dem-spatial-turn.php (last accessed 22 March 2018). On *the spatial turn*, see Döring, Jörg; Thielmann, Tristan (eds.): Spatial turn. The spatial paradigm in the cultural and social sciences. Bielefeld 2008.

and features of local sociocultural development. However, the core of the analysis is the period of National Socialist rule in Coburg, with particular interest in the years before the NSDAP seized power throughout the Reich, when it was still pursuing party politics in Coburg. The period after 1939 and the transformations during the Second World War are considered separately.

The entire study was based on source material that presents specific problems for the Nazi period, as it contains large and crucial gaps due to the destruction of a large portion of the actual Nazi documents, while at the same time comprising an enormous amount of diverse files due to the complex structure of state authorities. The main sources were the contemporary historical collections in the Coburg City Archives, the State Archives in Coburg, Bamberg, Nuremberg, and Munich, the Main State Archives in Munich, the Federal Archives in Berlin, and the Military Archives in Freiburg. In addition to these central sources, holdings in the State Church Archive in Nuremberg, the Bavarian Economic Archive, the Institute for Contemporary History, and the Historical Archive of Commerzbank AG were also examined in order to fill gaps in the sources. The author was also gratefully given access to the house archive of the Saxe-Coburg and Gotha Foundation. In addition, the largely digitized holdings of Yad Vashem and the Arolsen Archives were consulted. Smaller private archives and collections, such as those of the *Zur Fränkischen Krone* lodge, were also available for research.

Setting the course: Coburg until the National Socialists came to power in 1929/31

The question of how Coburg became "Germany's first National Socialist city" must be answered in three steps. First, the focus will be on the city's development and profile in order to introduce the specific history and mentality of Coburg. To this end, the political, economic, social, and cultural characteristics of Coburg in the 1920s will be presented by means of a detailed description of the urban space and its construction. Relationship and power networks will be broken down using the symbolic level of spatial representation. This will lay the foundation for analyzing the symbolic and factual domination of space after the seizure of power and the inscription of "people's community" ideals in the urban space. The study thus begins after the end of the First World War, but throughout the chapter, references are repeatedly made to the period of the German Empire, insofar as they are necessary for understanding the upheaval of 1918/19 and 1920.[38]

The aim is to illustrate the lines and forces that made Coburg a pioneer of National Socialism. To highlight this, the decisive spheres of politics in urban society as well as prominent representatives and trend-setting key scenes will be examined. Specifically, we will take a look at the bourgeois camp and city politics, associations, political Protestantism, the labor movement, and the ducal house. Individual significant actors will be presented in each of the selected areas. The description of various

38 The decisive break between the German Empire and the Weimar Republic is not reflected in the thematic structure, but its relevance will be highlighted in the individual sections.

Pioneering events in short narrative inserts serve to highlight the lines of conflict within society. The focus of this chapter is deliberately on the bourgeoisie, where the decisive mobilization for the NSDAP took place, without, however, losing sight of the other social forces in the city.

Thirdly, the process of the National Socialists' penetration of power around the "Friedmann affair" in 1929, which resulted in the dissolution of the city council and the National Socialists gaining an absolute majority, as well as their subsequent consolidation of power until 1931.

Area of rule

In the main part of the study, which covers the period between 1929/31 and 1939, an analysis is carried out in two steps, in which the city is examined as a sphere of power and as a living environment. Despite this dichotomy, however, the aim is not to adhere to the outdated idea of a dichotomy between power and society, but rather to understand *power as a social practice*[40], i.e., as a reciprocal process.

First, the structure of a space of institutionalized power will be described, in which various organizations wielded power, underwent multiple negotiation processes, and were constantly referred to one another. Space of power does not refer to a static entity, but rather a dynamic one that was subject to constant change and possessed considerable momentum for action and mobilization. First, the power relations and conditions for action that existed in Nazi Coburg will be outlined by examining the structure of the sphere of power with the forces influencing city politics from the party, the administration, the higher state level, the church, the ducal house, the military, and the economy.[41] In addition, the question of informal and

39 In contrast to the in-depth research on the Coburg ducal house, research on the bourgeois sphere and culture in Coburg is still far behind. One example worth mentioning here is the series of publications by the Stadtmuseum initiative on the history of Coburg. See Habel, Hubertus (ed.): Coburg 1907: Leben in der Residenzstadt vor hundert Jahren (= Coburger Stadtgeschichte, vol. 7). Coburg 2007; idem (ed.): Auf die Platte gebannt: Coburg um 1900 auf Fotografien Georg Schmidts (= Coburger Stadtgeschichte, vol. 8). Coburg 2008; ibid.: Lost certainties? Everyday life in Coburg during the First World War, insights and consequences (= Coburg City History, Volume 9). Coburg 2017; Appeltshauser, Rupert; Eckerlein, Gerhard (eds.): Residence in transition. Auf dem Weg ins Industriezeitalter (= Coburg City History, Volume 10). Bamberg 2020, as well as numerous individual articles in the Coburg History Journal. On social formation in the 19th century and the history of the bourgeoisie, see, among others, Hettling, Manfred; Pohle, Richard (eds.): Bürgertum. Bilanzen, Perspektiven, Begriffe (= Studien zur Zivilgesellschaft, Volume 18). Göttingen 2019; Kocka, Jürgen: Kampf um die Moderne. Das lange 19. Jahrhundert in Deutschland (= Schriftenreihe der Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, Volume 10868). Bonn 2022; idem: Bürger – Bürgertum – Bürgerlichkeit. In: APuZ 9–10 (2008), pp. 3–9; Jäger, Jens: The Networked Empire. The Beginnings of Modernization and Globalization in Germany. Stuttgart 2020.

40 Lüdtke, Alf: Introduction. What is everyday history and who drives it? In: ibid. (ed.): Everyday History. On the Reconstruction of Historical Experiences and Ways of Life. Frankfurt am Main 1989, pp. 9–47, here p. 12. In developing his concept of rule as social practice, Alf Lüdtke draws on Max Weber's concept of rule as an asymmetrical social relationship, but unlike Weber, he does not want it to be defined purely by focusing on those who rule. See Lüdtke: Herrschaft, p p . 9–63.

41 Specifically, the institutional network in which, for example, the Gau leadership, the district presidents, the head of the district office, or the party representative influenced Coburg's city politics to varying degrees will be broken down here. A study on Upper Franconia published in 2020 in

institutionalized networks that contributed to the consolidation of the NSDAP's rule. Within the polycratic Nazi system of rule—characterized by competing institutions operating side by side—these networks created new spaces in which politics was conducted and unique forms of cooperation and communication were established.[42] The interaction between the party and the administration, as well as concrete power negotiation processes, are illustrated by a portrait of the four mayors who served in Coburg during the Nazi era and who, from 1934 onwards, almost continuously held the office of district leader in addition to their mayoral duties. Each of them is examined in terms of their self-image in office, their leadership style, and their political and administrative guidelines.

On this basis, the analysis then focuses in detail on the party and the city administration and thus on the exercise of political and administrative power, which were the central determinants of local power. Both openly demonstrated power and hidden power working in the background are brought into focus. The organizational framework, the actors, and the guidelines for action are examined on three levels. With regard to the party, the structure and organization of the Coburg NSDAP will be discussed first, with a focus on the significance of the strikingly high degree of organization of the SA and SS, as well as Germany's first Nazi daily newspaper as instruments of power. In order to characterize the party members, individual actors and their path into the NSDAP will be presented in order to highlight the different currents and cliques within the party, each of which fulfilled different functions. By showing how the aspiration to make Coburg a model National Socialist city was directly translated into ideologized patterns of action, which can be summarized by Schwede's slogans "The name Coburg obliges!" or "Coburg ahead!", a specific profile of the Coburg NSDAP will be developed.

The Coburg administration as an actor

The administration should also be presented as an independent actor in the Coburg domain, exercising power in the everyday life of the population because it had the expertise and scope for action to influence the distribution of life chances

The Nazi era provides valuable insights into this complex issue: Hofmann: Upper Franconia. Since detailed studies are already available on both the ducal house and the deanery of Coburg, and the source base for the complex issues of economy and military is very limited, the classification of these political forces will be very brief.

42 See Hachtmann, Rüdiger: "Systemic collapse" or "new statehood"? Theses on the structure of the Nazi regime. In: Bösch, Frank; Sabrow, Martin (eds.): ZeitRäume. Potsdam Almanac of the Center for Contemporary History Research. Göttingen 2011, pp. 89–100 and Hachtmann, Rüdiger: Elastic, dynamic, and catastrophically efficient—on the structure of the new statehood of National Socialism. In: Reichardt, Sven; Seibel, Wolfgang (eds.): The Precarious State. Ruling and Administering in National Socialism. Frankfurt; New York 2011, pp. 29–73.

43 Numerous regional administrative analyses of the Nazi era serve as models: Gotto, Bernhard: National Socialist Local Politics. Administrative Normality and System Stabilization by the Augsburg City Administration 1933–1945 (= Studies in Contemporary History, Volume 71). Munich 2006; Fleiter, Rüdiger: Stadtverwaltung im Dritten Reich. Verfolgungspolitik auf kommunaler Ebene am Beispiel Hannovers (= Hannoversche Studien, Volume 10). Hanover 2006 and the series München im Nationalsozialismus. Kommunalverwaltung und Stadtgesellschaft, of which six volumes have been published to date.

had. [44] In order to analyze their role in the urban sphere of power, the process of their organizational and personnel restructuring and "Gleichschaltung" (enforced conformity) will first be explained. This transformation involved a reorganization based on the primacy of ideology, an adaptation of ideological and racial utopian premises, and the implementation of the "Führer principle" in the administrative structure. In order to clarify the processes of inclusion and exclusion within the city administration, the weighting and ranking of the individual departments as well as the practices of staffing and promotion must be highlighted. The question is to what extent the attitudes and proactive, creative behavior of individual civil servants were valued in personnel policy. From this, it can be deduced how the ambition to be a model city led to the premise of anticipatory obedience becoming a guiding principle in administrative action. In this sense, it is necessary to show how the mayor was *thwarted*, so that proactive administrative action became a constitutive element of the Nazi system of rule and a catalyst for radicalization, which also provides insight into the effectiveness and mobilizing power of the ideal of the "people's community."[45] The negotiation between maintaining administrative normality and thus the functionality of the city administration on the one hand, and unyielding party zeal in administrative practice on the other, should reveal the scope for administrative action. The analysis of forms of collaboration, competition, and cooperation, of personnel links, institutional integration, and information exchange will break down power dynamics and polycratic elements.

Since the work of the Coburg city administration during the Third Reich runs like a red thread through this study, the documents of the Coburg city administration from the Coburg City Archives also form the core of the source material used. Due to the central role of the local government as an intermediary between the party and the population, the extensive administrative documents can serve to compensate for the party's holdings, which were largely destroyed in Coburg. Both the records of the Coburg district leadership and the Bayreuth regional leadership in the Coburg and Bamberg state archives are now only fragmentary and proved extremely unproductive for the analysis. On the other hand, it also allows access to the Coburg population, which was involved in ongoing negotiations with the local

44 Fundamental to the role of administration in National Socialism is: Matzerath, Horst: National Socialism and Local Self-Government. Stuttgart 1970. Building on his findings, research has long focused on the destructive nature of National Socialism for local self-government and is based on the basic assumption of a dualism between party and state. The evidence to the contrary, however, that the city administration should be regarded as an independent actor with sufficient room for maneuver within the National Socialist power structure, was provided above all by: Gotto: Kommunalpolitik. Gotto contrasts Ernst Fraenkel's image of the distinction between a *normative state and a state of measures* with the principle of *administrative normality*. For a fundamental discussion of the role of municipalities as independent actors, see: Gruner, Wolf: Die Kommunen im Nationalsozialismus: Innenpolitische Akteure und ihre wirkungsmächtige Vernetzung. In: Reichardt, Sven; Seibel, Wolfgang (eds.): Der prekäre Staat. Herrschen und Verwalten im Nationalsozialismus. Frankfurt a. M., New York 2011, pp. 167–211; Mecking, Sabine; Wirsching, Andreas: Stadtverwaltung als Systemstabilisierung? Tätig-keitsfelder und Handlungsspielräume kommunaler Herrschaft im Nationalsozialismus. In: ibid. (eds.): City Administration under National Socialism. System-Stabilizing Dimensions of Municipal Rule (= Research on Regional History, Volume 53). Paderborn 2005, pp. 1–19.

45 Kershaw, Ian: Hitler. Volume 1. Stuttgart 1998, pp. 666 f. On the adaptation of the term in "working against the mayor," see Gotto: Kommunalpolitik, pp. 139–147.

administration. Precisely because critical public opinion was suppressed in the Nazi state and personal documents in the form of letters or diaries are hardly available, a methodical and source-based approach via administrative channels opens up a considerable opportunity to research the conditions in Coburg.[46]

The focus was on a comprehensive but unstructured collection of files from various departments of the city administration, with the records of the main office and the police department proving particularly useful for the analysis. In addition, the minutes of the city council and the police and administrative senate were used as essential sources, although the former showed a gap from 1935 to 1936 and after 1944 and were created exclusively as summary minutes. Administrative reports were not available for Coburg. The Coburg holdings were supplemented in particular by those of the supervisory authorities, the government of Upper and Middle Franconia in the Bamberg State Archives, and the next higher level of local government supervision, which are kept in the Main State Archives in Munich. A detailed evaluation of the various Coburg daily newspapers also provided insightful findings for the entire range of subjects under investigation.

An approach that focuses on actors and their actions brought a number of individuals and, above all, municipal party and administrative staff into the spotlight. However, there was a lack of personnel files for a corresponding analysis, as these have only been preserved in fragments because Mayor August Greim had the relevant municipal administration files burned before the Americans marched in, in addition to the party files.[48]Nevertheless, it was possible to evaluate staffing plans, personnel files from the respective supervisory authorities, the denazification tribunal files from the state archives in Coburg and Munich, and personnel records and party correspondence from the Berlin Document Center in the Federal Archives in Berlin. In the course of the research, a previously unrecorded submission from the main office also came to light, which contained isolated personnel files as well as the reference files of the lawyers and mayors Dr. Werner Faber and Dr. Otto Schmidt.

Living environment

In the next step, the ideologized *lifeworld*[49], which contrasted "fellow citizens" with "outsiders," will be broken down into three significant areas of investigation, highlighting the concrete effects of the spheres of power on the everyday life of the population and the involvement of other social actors.

46 It should be noted, however, that the administrative records of the city of Coburg have an almost incomprehensible structure, and it cannot be ruled out that individual offices still have files relevant to the investigation or that central holdings have not yet been recorded. In the course of the research, files and holdings that had not yet been viewed or inventoried were repeatedly brought to light.

47 The heterogeneous Coburg newspaper landscape consisted of the democratic to neutral *Coburger Tageblatt*, the social democratic *Coburger Volksblatt*, the conservative to German nationalist *Coburger Zeitung*, and the *Weckruf*, later the *Coburger Nationalzeitung* and *Bayerische Ostmark* as National Socialist daily newspapers.

48 See Mayor Dr. Langer to the State Ministry of the Interior, July 1, 1949. StadtACo A 8082.

49 On the concept of the lifeworld, see Schütz, Alfred; Luckmann, Thomas: Structures of the Lifeworld. Darmstadt, Neuwied 1975 and Peukert, Detlev: Everyday Life of Workers – Fashion or Method? In: Haumann, Heiko (ed.): Everyday Life of Workers in Town and Country. New Approaches to Historiography. Berlin 1982, pp. 8–39.

To this end, three practices of the National Socialist communitization process, i.e., inclusion and exclusion, were selected: staging through image and cultural policy, differentiation through welfare and health policy, and persecution through the use of violence and the process of "Aryanization." Based on an exemplary examination of administrative and political action, these three pillars can serve to provide insights into various milieus of Coburg society beyond the party and administration and to reveal the scope for action and creativity of the population. In addition, ambivalences between adaptation and deprivation as well as between assertion and resignation can be demonstrated here. In selecting the three main areas of investigation, particular emphasis was placed on taking into account the entire spectrum of the Coburg population and the respective class-specific offerings of the NSDAP. The aim here was also to reveal the reality of life for *the oppressed*, most of whom left no personal records but were nevertheless reflected in administrative documents as recipients of administrative action. These documents show how they, in turn, helped shape and influence the National Socialist system of rule as actors in their own right.

Image and cultural policy

Image and cultural policy played a decisive role in the consolidation of Nazi rule. [50]For this reason, the project highlights the semantics, symbols, and visions of the future that were used to conceive and shape Coburg as a social space, and how prevailing bourgeois ideals and habits were integrated into this process.

Image politics as a decisive instrument of power must be accorded particular significance in Coburg, insofar as the self-imposed status as a model National Socialist city had to be constantly reinforced in the public eye, and the multi-layered *myth of Coburg* became a decisive means of enforcing and securing power. The focus here is on how the party and the administration created the profile of Nazi Coburg through a policy of symbols and space, but also on the integrative effect of image politics. In addition, the National Socialist festival and celebration culture established in Coburg, which was based on existing traditions but also produced a new festival calendar and its own anniversary tradition, and the associated self-promotion are examined.

In the area of cultural policy, the Landestheater (state theater) is singled out as a Coburg-specific feature, which played a central role as a prestige object in Coburg's living environment and, as part of the independence preserved in the cultural sphere, had a high symbolic effect on the city's self-image. The question is how the theater was ideologized and included in the local Nazi system through a cultural staging of the "people's community" or the adaptation of the repertoire and personnel policy. On a performative level, the communal experience of the theater and its inclusive effect also come into focus. This allows us to highlight the relationship between cultural policy and the audience and answer the question of which specific habits and mentalities favored Nazification and were exploited by the party.

50 See the example of Munich: Szöllösi-Janze: Imagepolitik.

In addition to individual files in the Coburg City Archives, a wide range of contemporary documents in which the work of the National Socialists in Coburg was propagandistically presented as exemplary speeches by leading NSDAP politicians, and material for municipal tourism advertising proved to be particularly relevant for the study of theater productions. For the investigation of the Coburg State Theater, comprehensive holdings were available in the State Archives and the Coburg City Archives, which contained a wide range of administrative and personnel files, for example, of the Coburg theater directors and artistic staff, through which the National Socialist penetration of the State Theater could be presented in detail. In addition, there was a wide reception of the performances in the daily newspapers and the collection of theater programs in the Coburg State Library.

Welfare and health policy

A selective and racially differentiated welfare and health policy based on the ideal of the "people's community" was also a cornerstone of Nazi policy that deeply affected the everyday lives of the population and can provide insight into the regime's influence at the local level.[52] In a welfare policy aimed at forming a "völkisch Leistungsgemeinschaft" (ethnic community based on performance), the different assessments in terms of an ideologically defined welfare hierarchy can be illustrated both by the upgrading of preferred groups of needy people and by socio-political discipline through work welfare. As key political groups that received special support, small pensioners, who occupied an important position in Coburg, and war invalids and war survivors of the First World War were selected to illustrate support according to the category of "worthiness." In addition, spatial welfare can be used to analyze the spatial implementation of National Socialist objectives and the spatial definition of "people's community" hierarchies. The awarding of honorary sponsorships by the city to "hereditarily valuable" families also offers a suitable object of study. This is contrasted with the Coburg labor service and the associated labor service camp as an instrument of discipline, to be understood as an actionist response to the particularly pressing unemployment in Coburg. In the camp as an isolated space, here

51 See Schwede: Kampf; Gaede, Herbert: Schwede-Coburg. Ein Lebensbild des Gauleiters und Oberpräsidenten von Pommern. Berlin 1939; Faber, Werner: Coburg unterm Hakenkreuz. Nationalsozialistische Aufbauarbeit in Coburg. Munich 1932; Walter, Louis: Coburg in the First Year of the Third Reich. Coburg 1933; Probst, Erich: Stronghold of National Socialism. In: City of Coburg (ed.): Cities of the Bavarian Ostmark – Coburg. Bayreuth 1938, pp. 104–110.

52 See Peukert: Volksgenossen, p. 247. On the role of welfare in the persecution of Jews, see Wolf Gruner: Öffentliche Wohlfahrt und Judenverfolgung. Wechselwirkungen lokaler und zentraler Politik im NS-Staat (1933–1942) (=Studien zur Zeitgeschichte, vol. 62). Munich 2002. Exemplary local studies on welfare and health policy include: Glensk, Evelyn; Rothmaler, Christiane (eds.): Kehrseiten der Wohlfahrt. Hamburg Welfare on its Path from the Weimar Republic to National Socialism. Hamburg 1992; Paulus, Julia: Municipal Welfare Policy in Leipzig 1930 to 1945. Authoritarian Crisis Management between Self-Assertion and Appropriation. Cologne et al. 1998; Christians, Anne-mone: Official Authority and Public Health. Public Health Care in National Socialist Munich (= Munich under National Socialism. Local Government and Urban Society, Volume 1). Göttingen 2013; Wimmer, Florian: The Völkisch Order of Poverty. Municipal Social Policy in National Socialist Munich. (= Munich under National Socialism. Local Government and Urban Society, Volume 2). Göttingen 2014.

In cooperation between the party and the administration, the categories of work performance, "hereditary and racial care," and classification into the "people's community" were already part of welfare practice before 1933.

With regard to health policy and the "preservation of the purity of the German people," it can be shown how the administration acted in a derogatory manner in implementing the "Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor." In addition to institutionalized discrimination, the burdens and bureaucratic harassment imposed on applicants as part of the process of disenfranchisement will also be presented here. By highlighting the multifaceted possibilities for intervention by the state health department as the enforcement body for "hereditary and racial care," the extent of the stigmatization of "hereditary patients" will be made visible. The health department and the hereditary health court contributed to the "eradication" by implementing the "Law for the Prevention of Hereditary Diseases in Offspring." The procedure for sterilization, the mechanisms underlying administrative action, and the options available to the families affected can be worked out here.

The main source of information in the area of *differentiation* was the extensive holdings of the welfare and social services office in the Coburg City Archives, which were supplemented by documents on social policy measures from the collection of the Coburg Police Department. In addition, the holdings of the health office established in 1934, which are very limited in their administrative records for the period before 1945 and primarily contain family records, as well as the 919 individual case files of the Coburg Hereditary Health Court in the Coburg State Archives, were also consulted. These documents were supplemented by the holdings of the Kutzenberg Sanatorium and Nursing Home with patient files in the Bamberg State Archives.

Violent measures and "Aryanization"

Thirdly, the persecution of "outsiders" through the use of violence, the displacement of Jewish entrepreneurs, and the "Aryanization"[53] of Jewish property will be traced. The focus here will be on the process of exclusion itself, but also on its inclusive effect. Both aspects will be presented on the basis of various forms of action as radicalizing processes that are closely linked to the question of the creation of a space of power and violence.(54) The use of violence as

53 As a contemporary but never officially defined neologism, the term "Aryanization" was used in the narrower sense to refer to the transfer of property from "Jewish" to "Aryan" ownership. At the same time, it was also used to refer to the entire process of displacing the Jewish population from economic life, for which the term "de-Jewification" was also used. In the following, the term "de-Jewification" refers to the entire process of displacing Jews from economic life, and
"Aryanization" will primarily refer to the actual transfer of property to "Aryan" owners. A distinction must also be made between this and state-directed fiscal persecution. See Bajohr, Frank: "Arisierung" in Hamburg. Die Verdrängung der jüdischen Unternehmer 1933–1945 (= Hamburger Beiträge zur Sozial- und Zeitgeschichte, Volume 35). Hamburg 1998, p. 9 .

54 For an analysis of the relationship between space and violence, see Jureit, Ulrike: Skripte der Gewalt. Urban space and collective violence in the Middle Franconian province. In: Thießen, Malte; Süß, Winfried (eds.): Cities in National Socialism. Urban Spaces and Social Orders (= Contributions to the History of National Socialism, Volume 33). Göttingen 2017, pp. 47–65. On the question of spaces of violence, see Snyder, Timothy: Bloodlands. Europe between Hitler and Stalin. Munich 2010; Baberowski, Jörg; Metzler, Gabriele (eds.): Spaces of Violence. Social Orders in a State of Emergency. Frankfurt a. M. 2012; Ibid.: Spaces of Violence. Frankfurt a. M. 2016.

The political means began with normalization through a series of individual actions that promoted the visibility and acceptance of physical and psychological violence in particular. The establishment of a municipal emergency police force in March 1933 and a "beating room" in 1933, where extreme forms of violence and torture were used early on due to the already advanced establishment of spaces that enabled such acts, represented a particular disinhibition. After a phase of rationalization of violence through its regulation and institutionalization, a final removal of boundaries followed in the form of pogrom violence, which visibly brought radicalism into the center of society. The role of the Coburg city police, which had been infiltrated by National Socialists at an early stage and made a decisive contribution to radicalization in Coburg, is explicitly addressed here.

The process of excluding Jewish entrepreneurs from economic life will be examined primarily in terms of the intensity of persecution in the city. The process of exclusion will be described, beginning with spontaneous exclusion campaigns and a boycott movement that developed both *from below* in society and was controlled by directives *from above*. In addition to the special significance of the *National Socialist craft, trade, and commercial organizations* as institutions of institutionalized anti-Semitism among the middle class, explicit forms of administrative exclusion will also be highlighted. The actual liquidations and "Aryanizations" of Jewish businesses will then be described as a multi-phase process, which in turn ranged from local momentum to systematic and controlled displacement. In addition, the multi-layered fiscal persecution of Jewish Coburg residents will be shown as part of a broad-based process of plunder and expropriation. The involvement of the city administration and the population in the expropriation process can be described particularly impressively in the case of the disposal of "Jewish furniture" through the so-called "Aktion 3."

In addition to the central documents of the Coburg police department, the files of the Coburg public prosecutor's office, which dealt with Nazi crimes of violence in major trials in the post-war period, and the Bamberg Special Court served as the basis for the presentation of the persecution. The area of economic persecution is documented by the files of the Reparations Authority of Upper and Middle Franconia from the Nuremberg State Archives, the State Compensation Office in the Main State Archives, and the tax files of racially persecuted persons in the Coburg State Archives. The post-war reparations and compensation files had to be used primarily because the loss of the records of the Coburg Chamber of Industry and Commerce for the "Third Reich" could not be compensated for by other contemporary files. According to their own information, the companies and businesses still based in Coburg no longer have any relevant files either. The company

55 Exemplary regional and local studies on "Aryanization" and the displacement of Jewish entrepreneurs include: Baumann, Angelika (ed.): München arisiert. Entrechtung und Enteignung der Juden in der NS-Zeit (Munich Aryanized: Disenfranchisement and Expropriation of Jews during the Nazi Era), Munich 2004; Janetzko, Maren: Die "Arisierung" mittelständischer jüdischer Unternehmen in Bayern 1933–1939. Ein interregionaler Vergleich (= Mittelfränkische Studien, vol. 22). Ansbach 2012. On the role of the administration in "Aryanization," see: Einzendörfer, Doris: Die Stadtverwaltung Frankfurt am Main und die "Arisierung" von Grundbesitz. In: Mecking; Wirsching: City Administration, pp. 299–324; Janetzko, Maren: The Displacement of Jewish Entrepreneurs and the "Aryanization" of Jewish Property by the City Administrations of Augsburg and Memmingen. In: Mecking; Wirsching: City Administration, pp. 277–298.

The author was kindly given access to the archives of Brose Fahrzeugteile SE & Co. KG, but here too there are no records from the period before 1945 that are relevant to the investigation.

Coburg and the War Society

In a separate analysis, Coburg will be examined as part of wartime society, looking at the processes of transformation that the Second World War brought about in the urban sphere of action. Three processes triggered by the outbreak of war will be used to analyze wartime society in Coburg. First, the reality of war demanded a great deal of adaptation. The urban sphere of influence was subject to new types of negotiation processes due to the restructuring and realignment of the various authorities. The party and city administration had to take on new tasks and areas of activity, adapt to new conditions, and transform new objectives into political and administrative action, for example through "administrative simplifications" and the establishment of war offices. The National Socialist staging also had to take on new forms due to the challenges on the "home front."

Secondly, the mobilization of the German population for the war was a decisive factor in the Nazi regime's ability to carry out its campaign of exploitation and conquest. For this reason, this section will highlight the local economic organization during the war, from labor management and resource mobilization to various mobilization strategies in the course of *human resource management(*[56]for warfare. However, since the demand for labor could not ultimately be met without the exploitation of foreign workers, forced laborers, and prisoners of war, special focus will be placed on this aspect.

Thirdly, the policy of exclusion culminated in the war with the radical cleansing of urban areas of "outsiders" and the extermination of entire sections of the population, declared as "purification of the national body." On the one hand, this involves the murder of patients and the deportation of inmates of mental hospitals and nursing homes to designated killing facilities. On the other hand, the exclusion of Coburg's Jewish population is traced from displacement to deportation to concentration and extermination camps.

In order to portray Coburg as part of wartime society, the war files in the Coburg State Archives were consulted in addition to the relevant municipal source material. The records of the Coburg Armaments Command and the Nuremberg Armaments Inspection in the Military Archives in Freiburg, as well as those of the Reich Ministry of Economics and the Reich Chamber of Economics in the Federal Archives in Berlin, were also central to the aspect of war-related mobilization. Here, too, the lack of records from the Coburg Chamber of Industry and Commerce represented a major gap, not least because the question of the deployment of

56 Kroener, Bernhard R.: "Human Resource Management," Population Distribution, and Personnel Armament in the Second Half of the War (1942–1944). In: ibid.; Müller, Rolf-Dieter; Umbreit, Hans (eds.): Das Deutsche Reich und der Zweite Weltkrieg, vol. 5, second half: Kriegsverwaltung, Wirtschaft und personelle Ressourcen 1942–1944/45. Stuttgart 1999, pp. 777–1001. An exemplary local study in this area is Schuhmann, Silke: Cooperation and Efficiency in the Service of the War of Conquest. The Organization of Labor Deployment, Soldier Recruitment, and Forced Labor in the Chemnitz Region from 1939 to 1945 (= Publications of the Hannah Arendt Institute for Totalitarianism Research, Volume 61). Göttingen 2016.

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There were no files from the party or the employment office, nor any documents from the UNRRA/IRO tracing service for the city available for forced laborers. The lists compiled after 1945 by the Coburg General Local Health Insurance Fund on foreign workers employed in Coburg refer exclusively to the district. Only various file fragments and the lists compiled by the government of Upper and Middle Franconia on foreign civilian workers provide clues to the extent of forced labor in Coburg.

Within the urban area, a process will ultimately be described that spanned the entire period of Nazi rule, from the promises of a
"people's community" to the creation of a "performance community" and finally to the formation of a "community of struggle and destiny" during the war years.

II Setting the course: Coburg until the National Socialist seizure of power

1 The development and profile of a city

The Eastern European historian Karl Schlögel coined the famous saying: "We read time in space." If one wants to write the history of a city in the first half of the 20th century, one must begin with the realization that urban space is not merely a container in which history takes place. The city of Coburg is a creation: it is the product and construct of the actions of a wide variety of actors who worked in and on it. At the same time, urban space always provided the individuals who moved within it with structures that influenced their perceptions and actions. In this reciprocal and dynamic process, the specific characteristics of the Vestestadt unfolded, and an urban logic of its own emerged, permeating all areas of life as

"a complex, interwoven ensemble of knowledge and forms of expression based on rule-guided, routine forms of action stabilized by symbolic and material resources."[1]By observing the urban space in all its forms, dynamics, structures, and networks of relationships, social practices, orders, power relations, and identity constructions can be deciphered. A view of Coburg guided by this approach, as it had developed until the 1920s and had gone from being a prosperous royal seat to a crisis-ridden medium-sized Bavarian town, should therefore be the starting point and basis for tracing the development of the Vestestadt until the end of the National Socialist dictatorship.

1.1 Location and spatial planning of the city

The interplay between small-scale and large-scale structures, between parochialism and cosmopolitanism, was a characteristic component and constant in Coburg's development. On the one hand, small-state structures shaped the Duchy of Saxe-Coburg, which had existed since 1572, and the surrounding region. Since the Middle Ages, a radial road system connected the surrounding area with its center, Coburg, and over the centuries grew into a traditional regional entity. The city of Coburg acted as a hub connecting the individual parts of the Coburg region, from which economic life was organized, the land was administered, laws were passed, and cultural impulses were given. This continued in the 19th and 20th centuries.

1 Löw, Martina: Sociology of Cities. Frankfurt am Main, 2008, p. 55.

No large urban center developed in the immediate vicinity that would have broken up the concentration of the Coburg region around the medium-sized town. The duchy's independence, which was maintained until 1920, had had a profound impact on Coburg and woven its members together into a unity through a shared history.[2]On the other hand, the ducal house integrated the residential city of Coburg into a worldwide network of dynastic relationships. Due to its location in the center of the German Empire, influences from both the north and the south converged here, allowing Coburg to advance as a mediator between them. Located between the Thuringian Forest and the Upper Main, Coburg was also significantly influenced by its border location between the Franconian and Thuringian regions. As a "Franconian-Thuringian border area"([3]) it maintained close relations with both regions and was alternately assigned to them throughout its history. The Werra Railway, which ran from Lichtenfels via Coburg to Eisenach from 1858, was an important link between the Thuringian and Franconian regions, between the old Bavarian and Thuringian-Prussian railway lines, even though the main economic traffic on the Munich-Berlin line bypassed Coburg. The duchy was primarily politically and legally connected to Thuringia, into whose world of small states Coburg seamlessly integrated at the beginning of the 20th century, after numerous state treaties had been concluded between the two entities and administrative and judicial matters had been jointly regulated.[4]The education of Coburg academics at the University of Jena since the 16th century and the shared Protestant heritage provided additional links between Thuringia and Coburg. The special connection with the Duchy of Gotha, which had been united with Coburg since 1826 and the Treaty of Hildburghausen to form a double duchy under Ernst I, strengthened this bond even further. Coburg's connections to Prussia, which reached the borders of the duchy with the enclaves of Schmalkalden and Suhl, had also led to a northern orientation. For example, from 1861 onwards, the Coburg-Gotha military was subordinate to the Prussian king, and the orientation towards Prussian models was particularly evident in administration and education.[5] In contrast the economic and regional ties to its Franconian neighbors, and thus to Bavaria, were closer. [6] In the burgeoning 19th century, Coburg therefore presented itself as a kind of mixed territory between the two neighboring states, not least in economic terms. Industrial

2 For information on the urban geography of Coburg, see Nährlich, Werner: Stadtgeographie von Coburg. Raumbeziehung und Gefügewandlung der fränkisch-thüringischen Grenzstadt (=Mitteilungen der Fränkischen Geographischen Gesellschaft, Volume 7/8). Erlangen 1961.

3 See Nährlich: Stadtgeographie, p. 55.

4 See Heß, Ulrich: Geschichte der Behördenorganisation der thüringischen Staaten und des Landes Thüringen von der Mitte des 16. Jahrhunderts bis zum Jahr 1952 (= Veröffentlichungen der Historischen Kommission für Thüringen, Volume 1). Jena et al. 1993, p. 104 and Hambrecht: "Nicht durch Krieg," pp. 45–51.

5 See ibid.; Hambrecht, Rainer: Zwischen Bayern und Thüringen – Coburg von 1900 bis 1945. In: Henker, Michael; Brockhoff, Evamaria (eds.): Ein Herzogtum und viele Kronen. Coburg in Bayern und Europa (= Publications on Bavarian History and Culture, No. 35). Augsburg 1997, pp. 186–196 and Sander, Detlef: Coburg im Deutschen Bund und Deutschen Reich. Coburg von Ernst I. bis zu Carl Eduard. In: Henker, Michael; Brockhoff, Evamaria (eds.): Ein Herzogtum und viele Kronen. Coburg in Bayern und Europa (= Publications on Bavarian History and Culture, No. 35). Augsburg 1997, pp. 81–84.

6 There is no statistical evidence of economic ties to Bavaria, but many statements on the economic situation point to this being the case. See Andrian-Werburg, Klaus Freiherr v.: Coburg Regional History between Bavaria and Thuringia. Coburg 1981, p. 6 f.; Hambrecht: Not through War, p. 46.

Compared to many cities and small states in Thuringia, the duchy had developed less progressively, but it was far more industrialized than the surrounding Franconian countryside, which was still predominantly agricultural.

However, the hybrid status of the Duchy of Coburg developed into a state of division during the upheavals of the 20th century, at the latest, and its political dissolution became increasingly urgent. The First World War and the revolution of 1918/19 acted as catalysts in this process. After the abdication of Duke Carl Eduard, presumably on
On November 13, 1918, which was officially announced the following day,[8] the newly formed Free State of Coburg was faced with the necessity of declaring its allegiance to Bavaria or Thuringia and initiating its annexation to a larger state.[9]After lengthy and essentially open negotiations and political controversies, it was ultimately supply issues that tipped the scales for the people of Coburg in the turbulent years after World War I, leading them to vote against joining Thuringia in the referendum on November 30, 1919.[10] The Coburgers, plagued by hunger, felt neglected by the War Food Office in Weimar, a joint institution of the Thuringian states, whereas the storehouses in agrarian Bavaria seemed to be full. The
"stomach issue" was therefore a decisive factor in the annexation to Bavaria. In addition, Thuringia, which was ravaged by hunger riots and left-wing uprisings and was still in the process of establishing itself as a state, presented itself as a worse alternative even to Bavaria, which found itself in political turmoil after the end of the Munich Council Republic.[11] The union with Bavaria, which was completed on July 1, 1920, primarily resulted in an administrative border at the edges of the former duchy. However, a certain interconnection with the southern Thuringian region remained and, like the integration into the Bavarian state, had to be readjusted in the following years.[12] As part of the administrative district of Upper Franconia, the newly formed district office of Coburg now adopted Bavarian legal and administrative structures. The immediate towns of Coburg, Neustadt bei Coburg, and Rodach were placed under the district government in Bayreuth. [13] Although Bavaria, in the sense of

7 See ibid. pp. 51–59.

8 The information on Carl Eduard's abdication varies in the literature, as November 11, 12, 13, and 14 are cited as the date of his abdication. See Weber: Handlungsspielräume, p. 58 FN. 3.

9 An annexation to Prussia was also one of the politically possible constellations in 1919, but was quickly abandoned due to Prussia's negative stance. See Hambrecht: Nicht durch Krieg, pp. 133–135.

10 As early as November 16, 1918, the Coburg Workers' and Soldiers' Council announced that the majority of Coburg's citizens wanted to join Bavaria, primarily for economic reasons. See *Coburger Zeitung*, November 17, 1918.

11 See Erdmann, Jürgen: Coburg, Bayern und das Reich 1918–1923 (= Coburger Heimatkunde und Landesgeschichte, issue 22). Coburg 1969, pp. 46 f. and Quarck: letzte Zeiten, p. 82.

12 See transcripts of the public meetings of the Coburg Chamber of Commerce from 1920, 1921, and 1922. Bavarian Economic Archive K6/1130–1138.

13 When Coburg was united with Bavaria, the town of Königsberg in Franconia was incorporated into the Lower Franconian district of Hofheim, while the rural communities of Altershausen, Dörflis, Erlsdorf, Hellingen, Köslau, Kottenbrunn, and Nassach were incorporated into the district of Upper Franconia. See the state treaty between the Free States of Bavaria and Coburg on the union of Coburg with Bavaria dated February 14, 1920. StACo Urk. LA F 570, reprinted in: Wolz, Alexander; Boseckert, Christian (eds.): Der Anschluss Coburgs an Bayern in Jahre 1920. "... united into a single territory." (= Schriftenreihe der Historischen Gesellschaft Coburg e. V., vol. 30). Coburg 2020, pp. 98–103.

its fundamental understanding of federalism, was prepared to promote Coburg's cultural characteristics and traditions, the former duchy's independent existence was now to become a thing of the past.(14)

Centrifugal forces that had always been inherent in the relationship between the two parts of the country were also unleashed with regard to Gotha, their partner. [15] As early as the 19th century, several attempts to form a unified state out of the dual state had failed, and within a number of Coburg offices and institutions, the desire to sever ties with Gotha had spread. Gotha, which was more extensive in terms of territory and more advanced economically, had also become a rival to Coburg, not least for the favor of the dukes, who traveled between the two royal seats twice a year with their court.[16] The diverging interests and political objectives had become even more apparent after the revolution, so that a separation of the forced marriage was ultimately the only logical consequence. While liberal and conservative forces always dominated the Coburg state parliament, the Social Democrats had already been able to build up a strong position in the Gotha state parliament by 1918. The radical demands coming out of Gotha during the revolution and the idiosyncratic Gotha Workers' and Soldiers' Council, dominated by the USPD, fostered antipathy in moderate Coburg. The result of a "Away from Gotha" movement was finally the severing of common ties through the state treaty of April 12, 1919. However, the enemy image of a communist-dominated Gotha remained a political instrument and specter for the next few years, which at the same time repeatedly served the people of Coburg as a means of self-determination. Similarly, in the heated atmosphere of the 1920s, Coburg's location on the border between "red Thuringia" and "law-abiding Bavaria" was one of the decisive factors in its development, with the Vestestadt positioning itself as a right-wing bulwark in harmony with its Franconian surroundings. In particular, the establishment of a "Northern Border Guard" to ward off socialist and communist influences from Thuringia in the Coburg area contributed to a radicalization in the former duchy.

The construction of an identity space in the Duchy of Coburg was therefore primarily shaped by the tradition of independence and the common orientation and fixation on the duchy. In the self-construction of the Coburgers, since

14 See Andrian-Werburg: Landesgeschichte, p. 4.

15 The forced marriage had to take place for purely dynastic reasons following the inheritance disputes after the extinction of the Ernestine line of the House of Saxe-Coburg-Altenburg, and any hoped-for unionWithout a common border and separated by the Thuringian Forest, Prussian and Saxe-Meiningen territory, the different regional characteristics and unequal economic and political development also prevented an actual union between the two duchies of Coburg and Gotha, which was to be created by the 1852 constitution, particularly due to the budgetary rights that both states held in their respective special state parliaments. Without a common border and separated by the Thuringian Forest, Prussian and Saxe-Meiningen territory, the different regional characteristics and unequal economic and political development also prevented the two states from actually merging and forming a common identity or a unified sense of statehood. See Quarck, Hermann: Aus den letzten Zeiten des alten Herzogtums Coburg (From the Last Days of the Old Duchy of Coburg). Coburg 1933, pp. 13–15 and Sandern: Coburg, p. 82.

16 Especially when Ernst II of Hohenlohe-Langenburg relocated several authorities from Coburg to Gotha and Dukes Alfred and Carl Eduard resided in Gotha much more frequently until 1918, the danger always perceived by the Coburgers of being left behind by their sister city seemed to become a reality. The idea of being outvoted by a more vocal Gotha gave impetus to particularist aspirations. Cf. Quarck, Hermann: letzten Zeiten, p. 20.

17 See Hambrecht: Nicht durch Krieg, pp. 82–86.

18 See Chapter II2.2.2.

The principle has always been, as the title of a work by the Franconian writer Max von Aufsess emphasized: "Coburg plays its own role."[19]Not least because of its border location, the identity of the people of Coburg was strongly focused on their own territory, which resulted in the development of pronounced practices of inclusion and exclusion, especially after the annexation and absorption into a larger state.

1.2 The ducal house as a defining authority

Even after the end of the monarchy, the identity of the people of Coburg remained inextricably linked to the ducal house. Just as the urban space was permeated by monuments, symbols, and institutions of the ducal house, it remained a fixed and constant core of Coburg life even after Carl Eduard's abdication. For centuries, the ducal house had formed the substance of Coburg's identity and, above all, provided the royal seat of Coburg with a fixed point of reference and orientation.

As a promising dynasty, the rulers of the Ernestine Principality of Saxe-Coburg had understood how to combine monarchical traditions with the newly forming bourgeois movements and to forge a chain of rule stretching across Europe through family ties.[20]Coburg was part of the Wettin dynasty from 1353 onwards and, after the Erfurt division of 1572, rose alongside Weimar to become an important residence of this up-and-coming Ernestine line. Under Dukes Ernest I and
II. The expansion into a royal seat finally reached its peak when the dynasty once again managed to extend its influence and importance in the 19th century. Both the external appearance and internal development of the city had been shaped by the actions of the dukes. A large part of the city's activities and concerns were therefore focused on its function as a royal seat. The Coburg princes had proven themselves to be cultural patrons, benefactors, and role models. They had maintained educational and social welfare institutions, established foundations, and brought valuable art treasures to the city. The court had always been a source of important economic, cultural, and political impetus, which had a decisive influence on the city and the Coburg region. Coburg's development had thus always been influenced by and related to its ruling dynasty.

The Coburg Veste, which had served as a state fortress since the 16th century, was directly connected to Coburg's old town via the Hofgarten, which was laid out on the initiative of Ernst II as a recreational area for the town's population.[22] The Ehrenburg, the city residence of the Dukes of Coburg,also blends directly into the urban green belt on the edge of the old town with the Schlossplatz, which was laid out in 1825. Together with the arcades, the

19 Aufsess, Hans Max von: Coburg spielt seine eigene Rolle. Coburg 1967.

20 On the origins of the House of Saxe-Coburg, see: Nicklas, Thomas. Das Haus Sachsen-Coburg. Europas späte Dynastie. Stuttgart 2003.

21 On the nobility in the 19th and 20th centuries, cf. Reif, Heinz: Adel im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert. Munich 2012; Wienfort, Monika: Der Adel in der Moderne. Göttingen 2006.

22 See Boseckert, Christian: Ernst II and the Industrial Revolution in the Duchy of Coburg. In: Melville, Gert; Wolz, Alexander (eds.): "The world in an unpredictable development of previously unimagined forces." Studies on Duke Ernst II of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha (1818–1893) (= Schriftenreihe der Historischen Gesellschaft Coburg e. V. 29). Coburg 2018, pp. 45–63, here p. 61.

Together with the administrative and cultural buildings, the riding hall, the royal stables, and the court theater formed a residential district that blended organically with the bourgeois world. The palace square in particular served as a meeting place where the various groups active in the city could come together. Princely parades were held here, the III Battalion of the 6th Thuringian Infantry Regiment No. 95, which was stationed in Coburg until its mobilization, used the square for marches, civic associations used it for festivals and celebrations, and workers gathered here for demonstrations. It was here that Coburg's civic, military, and ducal identities merged into one, and the square became the centerpiece of Coburg's magnificent self-representation.

Like the Schlossplatz, which had been adorned with a statue of Ernest I since 1849, the rest of the urban space and thus the bourgeois world was also permeated with reminiscences of the great personalities of the Coburg ducal family. The imposing equestrian statue of Duke Ernst II had towered over the court garden since around 1899.[23] The names of Coburg's streets and squares, as well as schools such as Ernestinum, Alexandrinum, Ernst-Albert-Seminar, and Casimirianum,[24] also served as reminders of their ducal patrons and permeated everyday civic life with references to the ducal house. The bronze statue of Prince Consort Albert in the middle of Coburg's market square also occupied a special place in the center of urban and civic life. It was initiated by the citizens of Coburg and finally presented to her husband's hometown by Queen Victoria of Great Britain in 1865. In the same vein, the market square in the center of the bourgeois market town, which was particularly characterized by its position as an administrative center, was a symbiosis of ducal influences and bourgeois-urban self-government. The imposing and representative town hall, with its richly decorated façade, reflects the architectural style of Coburg's town houses of the 18th and 19th centuries, thus embodying its function as a town hall. On the other hand, the paintings in the regimental room, donated by Duke Franz Josias, depicting a number of his noble ancestors, and the bay windows in the town hall, furnished for the respective dukes, testify to the town's loyalty to its sovereigns.

While the ducal splendor in the urban area was preserved into the 20th century, keeping the memory of the glorious past ever-present in the everyday lives of the city's residents, the political reality had moved significantly away from this outward appearance with the end of the duchy. On the one hand, the course of the upheaval had shown that a large part of the population of Coburg continued to support Carl Eduard and the monarchy, even though the revolution of 1918/19 had sealed the end of more than 500 years of Wettin rule. The ties that the urban society and the urban bourgeoisie had established with their aristocratic rulers in economic, social, and cultural terms also survived the political upheaval. While in Coburg, where Carl Eduard resided unhindered at Callenberg Castle, six kilometers from the city center

23 For the equestrian statue, see n.n.: The equestrian statue of Duke Ernst II of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha (1818–1893) in the Coburg Court Garden. In: Coburger Geschichtsblätter 26 (2018), pp. 84–86.

24 See Morsbach, Peter; Titz, Otto: Stadt Coburg (= Monuments in Bavaria, Volume IV.48). Munich 2006, pp. CCXXXI–CCXXXII.

In November 1918, there was no radical sentiment, and the initiatives to depose the duke came from Gotha. What is more, in Coburg, the ducal ministry and the local commander, in consultation with Carl Eduard, had even planned to prevent a coup in the Vestestadt altogether by having the troops stationed in Coburg occupy the railway station. Finally, a workers' and soldiers' council was formed here as well, which called for a march through the city and a rally in a leaflet, but at the same time emphasized that calm and prudence should be maintained. It also accepted that the ducal ministers were willing to cooperate, but did not recognize any revolutionary bodies and remained loyal to their oath to the duke. The latter, in turn, resigned, but avoided an official abdication and kept open the option of returning to the throne. ([25])Without profound intervention in state and municipal administration, the Workers' and Soldiers' Council ultimately functioned merely as a link between the population and the administration. By agreeing to act only "in agreement" with the Ministry of State, the Workers' and Soldiers' Council ushered in its own irrelevance. ([26]) The preservation of the civil service and the prevailing structures meant that little had changed in the actual balance of power. ([27])

Nevertheless, on the other hand, the relatively moderate course of the revolution and Carl Eduard's reluctant abdication also brought about a sudden upheaval that confronted the Coburg bourgeoisie. Traditional certainties had been shattered and the city of Coburg had lost its identity as a royal seat because it had been robbed of a central object of identification.[28] After the upheaval, the people of Coburg were confronted with the question of whether they would be able to"produce values of equal magnitude and significance"([29]) in view of the charisma that the ducal house had possessed. The consequences of the First World War thus proved to be far-reaching for Coburg. The upheaval had sealed a development that saw the city descend from a dynastic center to a provincial town in central Germany. After the necessary annexation to Bavaria had ended the independence of the

25 Carl Eduard's specific wording was: "... Meanwhile, Germany has become a republic based on socialist principles, within which there is no room for the continued existence of individual monarchies. The Duke has thus ceased to rule in the duchies of Coburg and Gotha. ..." *Coburger Zeitung* newspaper, November 16, 1918.

26 The "Provisional Law on Legislation and Administration in the Free State of Coburg" of March 1919 established a kind of presidential system by setting up a state government (State Ministry), which was headed by a three-member collegium and faced the state assembly (Landtag).

27 On the 1918/19 revolution in Coburg, see Sauerteig, Alfred: Die Verwaltung der Stadt Coburg. Einfluss des Krieges auf die städtische Verwaltung und Bevölkerung. In: Ungelenk, Ludwig (ed.): Coburg im Weltkrieg 1914–18. Ein Denk- und Dankstein. Coburg 1922, pp. 313–319 and Erdmann: Coburg, pp. 5–15. On the German Revolution of 1918/19, see, among others, Gallus, Alexander (ed.): Die vergessene Revolution von 1918/19. Göttingen 2010; Jones, Mark: Am Anfang war Gewalt. Die deutsche Revolution 1918/19 und der Beginn der Weimarer Republik (= Schriftreihe der Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, Band 10133). Berlin 2017; Niess, Wolfgang: Die Revolution von 1918/19. Der wahre Beginn unserer Demokratie. Berlin 2017.

28 See Boseckert, Christian: "... people remained stuck in the good old days." The Coburg identity crisis between 1918 and 1922. In: Coburger Geschichtsblätter 24 (2016), pp. 91–112.

29 Hirschfeld, Gustav: The Administration of the City of Coburg. The Condition of the City in General. In: Ungelenk, Ludwig (ed.): Coburg in the World War 1914–18. A Memorial and Monument of Gratitude. Coburg 1922, pp. 310–313, here p. 313.



Fig. 2: Revolutionary rally with the Workers' and Soldiers' Council in front of Ehrenburg Castle on November 11, 1918

former duchy, a feeling took hold in the city that it was now just a neglected part of Bavaria.[30] There was a huge gap between the political reality and the self-esteem of the people of Coburg, which had been tied to a certain special status for decades. More than elsewhere, there were uncertain identities that had to be reestablished, as well as a society that was striving to replace lost certainties.

The establishment of the Coburg State Foundation made an important contribution to self-determination, the preservation of parts of Coburg's identity, and the maintenance of self-awareness and historical consciousness. In November 1918, the Coburg Workers' and Soldiers' Council, in contrast to its counterpart in Gotha, decided to compensate the ducal family. The settlement agreement issued on July 1, 1919, largely accommodated Carl Eduard's wishes by granting him the right to reside at the Veste, the castle, park, and Callenberg estate, as well as the Eichhof estate and the Rosenau Swiss farm, with a total area of 533 hectares. He received a settlement sum of RM 1.5 million for the remaining released properties. The domain estate and the court theater, including its collection, the art collections of the Veste and the Ehrenburg, the Hofgartenmuseum, the Rosenau castle and estate, the ducal private library, the court and state library, and the court and state archives were to be transferred to the

30 Significantly, the annexation treaty with Bavaria still bore the barely modified ducal seal in 1920. See Andrian-Werburg: Landesgeschichte, p. 2.

The "Law on the Use of Former Domain Property and the Establishment of the State Foundation" of August 9, 1919, passed by the state assembly of the newly formed Free State of Coburg, transferred the administration of the newly established Coburg State Foundation to the state. However, the domain property, the Court Garden Museum, and the Court Theater were declared state property, and the city undertook to continue operating the theater. After Coburg's annexation to the Free State of Bavaria, the latter issued a state guarantee to the State Foundation and undertook to provide an annual subsidy for its maintenance.[31] The Free State of Bavaria promised to cover 40% of the shortfall in income for the court theater, which was converted into a Bavarian state theater in 1920. The preservation of the Coburg theater in particular served to strengthen the city's identity, as it was located in the center of the city and had established itself as the focal point of civic and courtly life.[32] In addition, the "State Treaty between the Free States of Bavaria and Coburg on the Union of Coburg with Bavaria" of February 14, 1920, and additional protocols guaranteed Coburg a number of individual rights and thus a special role for the material and intellectual treasures it brought with it to Bavaria. These included, for example, the guarantee of the continued existence of the three higher schools in the city, the preservation of its own chamber of commerce and chamber of crafts, and a special status for the Coburg savings bank, which was henceforth not subject to the restrictions of Bavarian savings bank law. In addition, Coburg was given its own regional court and trade supervisory office.

1.3 Location of the urban bourgeois milieu

In addition to the ducal world, a dominant bourgeois sphere had developed in Coburg's urban environment, in which educated and wealthy circles shaped their established self-image into a political concept of order. The petty bourgeoisie, or the old and growing new middle class, which included a large number of employees, also adapted to the bourgeois culture. Despite all the social differences and symbolic distances, they were united by a bond that distinguished them in their self-image, above all from the working class.

31 For more on the Coburg State Foundation, see Erdmann: Coburg, pp. 21–24 and Nöth, Stefan: Coburger Landesstiftung. In: Historisches Lexikon Bayerns. URL: http://www.historisches-lexikon-bayerns.de/Lexikon/ Coburger Landesstiftung (last accessed July 16, 2021).

32 Founded in 1827 by Ernst I, it continued an old theatrical tradition of the Dukes of Coburg. During the court theater era, which became a fixed point in the politics of memory in the decades after his death as the "good old days," Coburg became an artistic center thanks to the ambitions and financial commitment of Ernst II. On the court theater, see Heinz, Andrea. Das Herzoglich Sächsische Hof-theater zu Coburg und Gotha. In: Henker, Michael; Brockhoff, Evamaria (eds.): Ein Herzogtum und viele Kronen. Coburg in Bayern und Europa (= Veröffentlichungen zur Bayerischen Geschichte und Kultur, No. 35). Augsburg 1997, pp. 134–138. On the Coburg State Theater, see Bachmann, Harald; Erdmann, Jürgen (eds.): 150 Jahre Coburger Landestheater. Coburg 1977 and Erdmann, Jürgen (ed.): Ein Theater feiert. 175 Jahre Landestheater Coburg. Coburg 2002.

33 See State Treaty between the Free States of Bavaria and Coburg on the Union of Coburg with Bavaria of February 14, 1920. StACo Urk. LA F 570 and Final Protocol to the State Treaty of February 14, 1920 on the Union of Coburg with Bavaria. StACo Urk. F 570, reprinted in: Wolz, Alexander; Bos-eckert, Christian (ed.): The Annexation of Coburg to Bavaria in 1920. "... united into a single territory." (= Schriftenreihe der Historischen Gesellschaft Coburg e .V., vol. 30). Coburg 2020, pp. 98–105.

34 Cf. Kocka: Kampf, pp. 67–104 and Herbert: Geschichte, pp. 34–42, 234–244.

In the mid-19th century, in line with the social prosperity enjoyed by the bourgeoisie and the royal seat of Coburg, a number of closed bourgeois neighborhoods were built. Here the citizens of Coburg aspired to emulate their sovereigns by living in prestigious residences and flaunting their lifestyle in exclusive villa districts. Through imposing villas, lavish decorations, and gardens, the owners objectified their wealth and standard of living, thereby constructing their bourgeois self-image for the outside world. The bourgeois apartments themselves also represented a social microcosm that was a materialized expression of the bourgeois lifestyle.[36] In this way, the Coburg villa districts became an expression of civic pride and the upward mobility of the city and its inhabitants in an act of reasserting social and cultural dominance. They represented a phase that prevailed until 1914, with great harmony between social groups, especially the bourgeoisie, as well as between them and the ruling house. On the Festungsberg in particular, the proximity and affiliation with the ducal house was expressed not only in the form of prestigious residences, but also through the actual geographical proximity to the ducal residences. Due to the development of the sloping terrain around the city center, the villas either nestled against the edges of the court garden or had a direct view of the Coburg fortress. Villa districts such as those on Alexandrinenstraße, Marienberg, or Festungsberg radiated order, representativeness, and lasting value with buildings in the classical, Heimatstil, or historicist styles. The Art Nouveau villas scattered throughout the city, which were oriented towards a newer architectural zeitgeist and often combined eclectic historicism with avant-garde Art Nouveau forms, testified to the attempt to strike a balance between the various prevailing trends within the bourgeoisie, which were caught between the conflict of persistence and change.

As a result of this expansion, the city took on a garden city-like character during this period and exuded an atmosphere of calm and tranquility. [37]In particular, the internal and external striving for order had an impact on the entire population of Coburg, including the non-bourgeois classes, but also had a very concrete influence on the composition of the Coburg bourgeoisie. With its cultural advantages, a vibrant social life, and attractive surrounding countryside full of forests, lakes, and hills, the city exerted a special appeal.[38] As a pensionopolis, Coburg now attracted many civilian and military pensioners and rentiers, particularly with its impressive villas and large parks, who in turn had a decisive impact on social, cultural, political, and economic life.

35 See the list of monuments in the independent city of Coburg compiled by the Bavarian State Office for the Preservation of Historical Monuments, URL: https://geodaten.bayern.de/denkmal_static_data/externe_denkmalliste/pdf/denkmalliste_merge_ 463000.pdf. (last accessed on September 15, 2021). For selected Coburg villas, see Reuther, Renate: Villas in Coburg. Coburg 2011.

36 On bourgeois interior design, see Saldern, Adelheid von: Rauminszenierungen. Bürgerliche Selbstrepräsentation im Zeitenumbruch (1880–1930). In: Plumpe, Werner; Lesczenski, Jörg (eds.): Bürgertum und Bürgerlichkeit zwischen Kaiserreich und Nationalsozialismus. Mainz 2009, pp. 39–55.

37 See Teufel, Richard: Die Baugeschichte Coburgs (The Architectural History of Coburg). In: Stein, Erwin (ed.): Monographien deutscher Städte (Monographs of German Cities). Presentation of German cities and their work in economics, finance, hygiene, social policy, and technology, Volume XXX Coburg. Coburg 1929, pp. 24–31.

38 See report in the *Fränkischer Kurier* reprinted in *the Coburger Zeitung* on September 11, 1924, and Reuther: Villas, p. 7.

Coburg was considered a quiet, tranquil, yet up-and-coming city with a high standard of living. This profile continued well into the 20th century and shaped a specific urban habitus.[39] Coburg's villa and middle-class residential districts thus symbolized the outward unity and separation of a very heterogeneous urban bourgeois milieu.

1.4 Economic preconditions and class differences

The industry located here also fitted into the image of the tranquil royal seat. In 1929, commercial councillor Alfred Hausknecht proudly summed up: "The air is pure and the streets are clean (...). Only rarely is the pedestrian forced to wipe a speck of coal from his eye or suit, as the products of Coburg's industry, with few exceptions, are those whose manufacture causes neither dust nor dirt."([40])One would search in vain for a row of industrial chimneys in Coburg, which set the city apart from the industrial centers of the time. In this small-business-oriented city of middle-class residents and retirees, with a high proportion of civil servants and teachers, the phenomena of modernity initially made a less rapid and overwhelming entrance.

Industrialization in the Duchy of Coburg experienced an upswing at the beginning of the 19th century, following initial efforts by the bourgeoisie to establish industrial enterprises, primarily through the suppression of the influence of the guilds and the opening of the Werra Railway in 1858. The entire Coburg area was connected to Thuringia and, via Lichtenfels, to the Bavarian transport network by the establishment of the railway, and thus developed from an agricultural to a craft and industrial area. The introduction of freedom of trade in 1863 by Ernst II as part of a liberal economic policy, which triggered numerous rationalization processes, led to further companies establishing branches in the duchy.[41]This process was accelerated by the boom that followed the founding of the German Empire, with the result that in 1898, 53 of the 111 factories in the entire duchy were located in the city of Coburg. The lack of significant mineral resources and access to a navigable river prevented the development of heavy industry. Instead, the exploitation of abundant clay deposits, the productive timber industry, and agricultural products led to the spread of notable businesses producing porcelain, consumer goods, toys, and food products throughout the 19th century. ([42])

39 On the application of the concept of habitus to cities, see Lee, Martyn: Relocating Location. Cultural Geography, the Specificity of Place and the City Habitus. In: McGuigan, Jim (ed.): Cultural Methodologies. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi 1997, pp. 126–141.

40 Hausknecht, Alfred: Die Industrie der Stadt Coburg. In: Stein, Erwin (ed.): Monographien deutscher Städte. Darstellung deutscher Städte und ihrer Arbeit in Wirtschaft, Finanzwesen, Hygiene, Sozialpolitik und Technik, Band XXX Coburg. Coburg 1929, pp. 87–92, here p. 87.

41 Cf. Boseckert, Christian: The introduction of freedom of trade 150 years ago in the Duchy of Saxe-Coburg. In: Coburger Geschichtsblätter 21 (2013), pp. 97–100.

42 See ibid.; Boseckert: Ernst II, pp. 45–63 and Bachmann, Harald: Economic History of the Coburg Region from 1814 to 1914. In: Falkenberg, Jörg; Dlouhy, Richard (eds.): The Economy in the Coburg Border Region. Kulmbach 1982, pp. 88–98 and Reinhart, Michael: The Economic Foundations of the Duchy.

The population of the royal seat had grown significantly, albeit less rapidly than in highly industrialized areas, from around 6,000 in 1800 to 24,000 in 1914.

Economic development in the duchy had been supported since 1896 by a chamber of commerce, which was established by a law passed by Duke Alfred on November 30, 1895. Parallel to Coburg's political upswing, the chamber, together with local industrialists and merchants, also succeeded in supporting an economic upswing and, among other things, developing a lively export industry, so that Coburg goods were exported to countries all over the world. In 1898, the Americans also moved their Sonneberg consulate to Coburg, initially to Theaterplatz 10 and then to Ernstplatz 2 in 1908, thus recognizing the central location and the promising and emerging export economy here.

During the First World War, trade, commerce, and industry initially came to a standstill. The well-developed cottage industry, which was dependent on exports, faced decisive challenges. However, by acquiring a large number of armaments contracts, the Chamber of Commerce and, in particular, Reichstag deputy Max Oskar Arnold succeeded in offering the Coburg economy a means of compensation through the manufacture of ammunition baskets, grenades, and woodwork or sewing work. The result was a strong war economy with full employment and profits. The Coburg district was thus characterized by very high war bonds among the population, which were well above the Reich average, especially towards the end of the war. The economic collapse after the end of the war and the consequences of economic crisis, inflation, deflation, and unemployment came as a massive shock.

In Coburg itself, 46 companies specialized in the manufacture and trade of basketware and cane furniture until the 1920s, with companies such as Conrad Gagel, Dusco-Werke, and the aforementioned Forchheimer & Co. making a name for themselves through worldwide distribution and their entrepreneurs acting as internationally active *networkers*. Around 1,200 families of home workers in the Coburg area and 138 delivery masters worked for the basket industry. The metal industry was still in its infancy. However, it had experienced an upswing since the World War and comprised 20 companies, such as Langenstein & Schemann, Waldrich & Hardt, and Metallwerk Max Brose & Co. Co., with a total of around 1,000 workers. In the food sector, six breweries stood out, and in the meat industry, the Großmann A. G. company with 100 workers was particularly prominent.([45])An industrial belt had developed around the royal seat, with brickworks, porcelain and brick factories located in Esbach, Creidlitz, Cortendorf, Köppelsdorf, Neuhaus, Rauenstein, and Oeslau, while Ebersdorf was home to hard stone and chamotte factories, Gauerstadt, Sonnefeld, Weitramsdorf, Ahorn, Oberlauter, and Unterlauter to wood processing industries, and Neuses and Cortendorf to machine factories. A

In: Henker, Michael; Brockhoff, Evamaria (eds.): Ein Herzogtum und viele Kronen. Coburg in Bayern und Europa (= Publications on Bavarian History and Culture, No. 35). Augsburg 1997, pp. 85–91.

43 Cf. Morsbach, Titz: Coburg, p. 69.

44 See Habel: Certainties, pp. 47–49.

45 See Hausknecht: Industry, pp. 87–92. Grossmann names 54 companies that specialized in basketware and cane furniture. Grossmann, Anton: Milieu Conditions of Persecution and Resistance Using the Example of Selected Local SPD Associations. In: Broszat, Martin; Mehringer, Hartmut (eds.): Bavaria in the Nazi Era V : The KPD, SPD, and BVP Parties in Persecution and Resistance, Munich, Vienna 1983, pp. 433–540, here p. 460.

To the north and northeast, several companies joined the established doll and toy industry in Neustadt near Coburg and Sonneberg, while to the south, a number of basket-making villages had developed. Coburg thus lay at the head of a horseshoe-shaped industrial belt of numerous supplier and auxiliary industries, which together formed an economic-geographical unit.[46]

The development of the labor movement was as moderate as the industrial development in the royal seat, forming in parallel to the bourgeois-liberal public sphere and challenging it with a struggle for social justice and co-determination. Due to Coburg's economic structure, the working class did not form an industrial proletariat, even though there was also a significant gap between rich and poor here. Accordingly, most workers found their political home less in extreme socialist movements than in social democracy. Only the doll and toy makers, who looked to Neustadt and had become impoverished during the First World War, were receptive to the more radical slogans of the Thuringian communists. The broad class of basket weavers, on the other hand, was organized in trade unions and affiliated with the SPD. There was also a noticeable broad class of home workers in the Coburg area who considered themselves to be middle class, oriented themselves towards bourgeois ideals and tended to be hostile to the labour movement.

According to the 1925 census, the working population of the city consisted of 21% employers, 0.8% cottage industry workers, 30% white-collar workers, 38% blue-collar workers, 7% domestic workers, and 3% family members working in the family business. While 42.8% of the working population was employed in industry and crafts, 22.4% worked in trade and transport, 7.3% in administration, and 1.5% in agriculture and forestry. Within trade and industry, 29.9% were employed in the wood and carving industry, which in Coburg's case primarily referred to furniture and basketry production, 13.6% worked in the clothing industry, 11.3% in construction and ancillary trades, 10.2% in food and beverages, 6.9% in stone and earth, including porcelain, 5.4% in iron and steel production, and 5.1% in machinery, equipment, and vehicle manufacturing.[48] The employment situation was therefore characterized by a large number of employers and employees, as well as high employment figures in administration, trade, transport, and the basketry industry, compared to a lack of large-scale industry.

Despite its moderate development, the emergence of the labor movement and a distinct working-class culture, distinct from that of the bourgeoisie, had become engraved in Coburg's social structure as the most important manifestation of class differences in the 19th century, even if this was less evident in the cityscape. Although smaller workers' and craftsmen's settlements sprang up in Hahnweg and Judenberg, Coburg's residential character remained the decisive feature of the city, even from the perspective of its contemporaries. "Even if the construction of the Werra railway line connected the

46 See Nährlich: Stadtgeographie, pp. 110–117; Arnold: Industrie, pp. 33–35 and Grossmann: Milieubedingungen, p. 460.

47 See Hill, Leonidas E. (ed.): Walter Gyßling: Mein Leben in Deutschland vor und nach 1933 und Der Anti-Nazi. Handbuch im Kampf gegen die NSDAP. Bremen 2003, pp. 90 f.

48 See *Coburger Zeitung newspaper* dated March 31, 1934. The figures refer to the 1925 census.

Coburg region to Germany's rapidly advancing economic development in the age of technology and the growth of large-scale industry, even in Itzstadt, the pounding beat of the machine in the outside world actually only sounds from afar, and Coburg remains the quiet, elegant princely seat," [acc]ording to a description of the city from 1924.

1.5 Religious influence and Jewish life

The Protestant character of the Vestestadt is impressively illustrated by the dominance of St. Moriz Church and the surrounding church district in the city center. St. Moriz is the center of a total of five Protestant churches. In 1919, the Free State of Coburg had a population of around 71,000 Protestants, 2,100 Catholics, and 300 Jews, meaning that the Protestant tradition was an essential part of Coburg's identity and shaped the lives of its inhabitants.[50]Since the Enlightenment, the Coburg regional church had been characterized in particular by its liberal theology. The traditional position of the sovereign as *summus episcopus* in the Duchy of Coburg and the development of a purely state church had established a close connection between throne and altar, so that the liberal ideas of Ernst II had a direct impact on liturgy and worship practices, for example through the early introduction of cremation in 1907. The fact that Martin Luther had stayed at Coburg Castle for a long time in 1530 and preached several times in St. Maurice's Church also formed a strong ideological connection to Luther and the tradition of Protestant German Christianity. By joining the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria in 1921, following Coburg's annexation to Bavaria, the Coburg regional church finally became a Bavarian deanery. During the negotiations, large parts of its liberal theology, which had been influenced by the University of Jena, had to be abandoned in order to conform to Bavarian church traditions, although the Bavarian regional church always tried to take Coburg's peculiarities into account.[51] However, the tradition of a close connection between the state and the church remained even after the separation of the two spheres following the annexation to the Bavarian regional church. [52]

The somewhat remote Roman Catholic parish church of St. Augustine at the foot of the fortress hill provided a meeting place for the Catholic minority. Previously, the Catholic community of Coburg had been allowed to use the small St. Nicholas Chapel by Ernst I.

49 Lorenz, Ernst: Coburg's History. In: Herold, Emil (ed.): Fortress Consecration Combined with Local Festival in Coburg 1924. Coburg 1924, pp. 18–23, here p. 23.

50 See Erdmann: Coburg, p. 25. In 1926, 96.5% of the inhabitants of the former duchy were Protestant. See Statistical Yearbook for the German Reich, Volume 1926, p. 11.

51 On the Coburg Regional Church, see Axmann, Rainer: Coburger Landeskirche. In: Historisches Lexikon Bayerns. URL: https://www.historisches-lexikon-bayerns.de/Lexikon/Coburger_Landeskirche (last accessed June 25, 2021); ibid.: On the History of the Protestant Regional Church of Coburg and its Accession to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria on the Right Bank of the Rhine (1918–1921). In: Wolz, Alexander; Boseckert, Christian (eds.): The Annexation of Coburg to Bavaria in 1920. "... united into a single territory." (= Schriftenreihe der Historischen Gesellschaft Coburg e. V., vol. 30). Coburg 2020, pp. 61–77 and Weber: Handlungen, pp. 95–115.

52 See ibid., pp. 99 f.

After initially belonging to the Diocese of Würzburg, the parish was incorporated into the Archdiocese of Bamberg in 1826. The remote location of the Catholic community also directly reflected its social role within Coburg. According to Protestant pastors in Coburg, Catholics in the Duchy of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha were treated more like members of a sect who were allowed to practice their religion freely in their church buildings but were not permitted to exert any influence on political and social affairs.(53)

Another religious minority that had settled in Coburg was a small Jewish community. At the beginning of the 19th century, only Judengasse (Jewish Lane) and Judentor (Jewish Gate) in the city center hinted at the significant Jewish community that had existed in the Middle Ages.[54] After the end of the Middle Ages and centuries of rejection of Jews, it was not until 1805/06 that the Jewish brothers Salomon and Joseph Simon from Hildburghausen successfully settled in Coburg, allowing a distinct culture to flourish there once again in the wake of progressive Jewish emancipation.[55]After Jews had long traveled through the Coburg region solely as merchants, the letter of protection of 1806 marked the beginning of a period in which Jewish influences became visible again in Coburg and were also reflected in the cityscape. While at the beginning of the 19th century only three Jewish families were allowed to settle in the Vestestadt under strict restrictions, legal equality was guaranteed in the constitution of the duchies of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha under Ernst II. However, comprehensive and thus also economic equality and the granting of freedom of settlement were only enshrined in law with the introduction of freedom of trade in 1863 and finally the equality of all denominations in the constitution of the German Empire. With the founding of the Jewish Community of Coburg in 1873, the establishment of Jewish culture and the emancipation of the Jews was finally complete. The number of Jews living in Coburg rose from 68 in 1869 to 210 in 1880 and finally to 316 in 1925.[57] The driving forces behind this liberal policy in Coburg were Duke Ernst II and the duchy's state parliament. The duke himself maintained close contacts with Jewish liberals and financiers and showed no sympathy for emerging anti-Semitic tendencies.[58] Although Ernst II's liberal policies also had an impact on city politics, the city authorities remained

53 See ibid., p. 98.

54 See Axmann, Rainer: On the History of the Jewish Community in Coburg in the Middle Ages. In: Fromm, Hubert: The Jews of Coburg. Tolerated – Ostracized – Exterminated. Coburg 2012, pp. 257–282 and Axmann, Rainer: The Life and Eventful History of the Jews of Coburg in the Middle Ages. In: Fromm, Hubert: The Jews of Coburg. Tolerated – Ostracized – Exterminated. Coburg 2012, pp. 282–296.

55 Cf. Wolz, Alexander: The Legal Status and Political Situation of Jews in Coburg in the 19th Century. In: Amend, Gerhard; Boseckert, Christian; Melville, Gert (eds.): In Focus: Jews and Coburg. Return, Exclusion, and Integration in the 19th Century. Coburg 2021, pp. 1–20 and Axmann, Rainer: In the Shadow of the "Letter of Protection" of 1806. On the Origin of the "Letter of Protection" and its Impact on the History of the Jews of Coburg in the 19th Century. In: Amend, Gerhard; Boseckert, Christian; Melville, Gert (eds.): In Focus: Jews and Coburg. Return, Exclusion, and Integration in the 19th Century. Coburg 2021, pp. 21–89.

56 See *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums* (General Newspaper of Judaism) of May 25, 1875.

57 See Ophir, Baruch; Wiesemann, Falk: The Jewish Communities in Bavaria 1918–1945. Munich 1979, pp. 125, 128.

58 See *Der Israelit*, October 16, 1893, and Wolz: Legal Situation, p. 12 f.

political dignitaries and decision-makers as representatives of the citizenry were much more cautious and restrictive here. [59]

The centers of Jewish life and culture that were now emerging in Coburg were spread out across the city. The Jewish synagogue in the former Catholic St. Nicholas Chapel was established in 1873, after there had previously only been a private prayer room at Herrngasse 4 and the vacant chapel had been provided free of charge by the city of Coburg.[60] Having their own place of worship just outside the city center was an enormous gain for the newly founded Jewish community, both in terms of internal consolidation and external perception. In addition, the Jewish cemetery on the edge of the municipal cemetery on Glockenberg provided another consecrated site.[61] With the establishment of a private Jewish boarding school in 1918, primarily to accommodate male Jewish children from rural areas who attended secondary school in Coburg, a genuinely Jewish educational institution was also established. Hermann Hirsch, a preacher who had been active in the Jewish community since 1914, taught religious education here.[62]

However, this concentration of Jewish religious life in certain central locations in the city also provided prominent targets for violent anti-Semitism in the 1920s. After individual Jewish residents of Coburg had already been victims of anti-Semitic attacks before World War I, and after smear campaigns against Jews spread through posters in 1919, the first acts of vandalism occurred in 1923 at the Jewish cemetery and at the synagogue, whose windows were smashed with stones. These were still isolated incidents. Nevertheless, they were an expression of a spreading mindset that was already reflected in the actions of some Coburg officials and civil servants who refused to issue a diploma of nobility to Jakob von Mayer, a Jew from Coburg. It was also evident in the decisions of the *Casimiriana* student fraternity and the *German Landsmannschaft* not to accept Jews anymore.[64]

In Coburg's city center, a number of Jewish shops and apartments sprang up along the old trade routes and important public hubs in Steinweg, Spitalgasse, Markt, and Ketschengasse, especially since the 1870s. By the beginning of the 20th century, the Jewish business world had finally spread throughout the entire city center, and the residences of Jewish Coburgers had spread throughout the entire city. In addition, more and more buildings were now passing into Jewish ownership or being newly built by Jewish Coburg residents. In the course of the acculturation of Coburg's Jews, Jewish life and business soon became completely integrated into bourgeois Coburg, even if there was often still a certain degree of

59 See Boseckert, Christian: Migration and Acculturation of Coburg Jews in the 19th Century. In: Amend, Gerhard; Boseckert, Christian; Melville, Gert (eds.): In Focus: Jews and Coburg. Return, Exclusion, and Integration in the 19th Century. Coburg 2021, pp. 109–129, here pp. 112 f.

60 See Fromm: Jews, pp. 318–330; Axmann: Letters of Protection, pp. 85–89 and Wolz: Legal Situation, p. 15.

61 See *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums (General Newspaper of Judaism)* of May 25, 1875; Fromm: Jews, pp. 353–359; Axmann: Schutzbriefs, pp. 77–84, and Wolz: Legal Situation, pp. 15 f. Previously, there had already been a private cemetery belonging to the Simon family on the outskirts of Coburg, which Joseph Simon was allowed to establish in 1849 with the permission of the Coburg magistrate.

62 See *C.V.-Zeitung* – Zeitschrift des *Central-Vereins (Central Association Journal)* of April 5, 1934, and Fromm: Juden, p. 362.

63 See ibid., pp. 325, 354.

64 See *Der Israelit*, September 15, 1909, and Wolz: Legal Situation, pp. 18–20.

There was a separation into two spheres, so that there were very few marriages between Jewish and Christian Coburg residents. As in many places, there were members of the Jewish community who strictly followed Jewish rules and laws in an orthodox faith, as well as those who had completely assimilated into the Christian-influenced bourgeoisie. During the establishment of the Jewish religious community, about 17 Jewish families in Coburg were involved in the community, while 14 families and some younger people remained completely aloof.[66] In the course of the assimilation of the Jewish and Christian spheres, Jewish Coburgers also gained access to the central political, economic, and cultural institutions of the city.[67] The merchant Jacob von Mayer, who died in 1901, was the first Jewish magistrate and a founding member of the Coburg Chamber of Commerce. He was ennobled by Ernst II for his services and is probably the best-known example of this. [68]

The large Jewish department stores, which were among the most important pillars of inner-city trade, were a clear expression of the economic success of many Jewish Coburg residents. The most successful of these department stores was the Conitzer & Söhne fashion store, which opened in 1903 on Spitalgasse and was notable for its modern furnishings and advertising techniques.[69] In addition, two examples of important Jewish companies that were able to form emerging international networks could be found on the outskirts of the city: the Coburg wood and cane furniture factory Bernstein & Saalfeld and the wood and upholstered furniture factory Forchheimer & Co. As entrepreneurs, traders, merchants, doctors, and lawyers, Jews shaped economic life in Coburg throughout the city. ([70])

1.6 Achievements of modernity and national recoding

At the beginning of the 1920s, Coburg presented itself as a city in transition. On the one hand, the challenges of modernity fostered a palpable spirit of optimism, encouraging the use of modern achievements for sustainable urban development and creating space for the now more differentiated social situation. Even before the First World War, urban development in Coburg was eminently progressive, following a significant modernization drive under Mayor Rudolf Muther during his term of office from 1865 to 1897. By introducing a modern tax system, he increased municipal revenues by 350%, thereby enabling a series of investments. Not only did a crematorium, a high-pressure water supply, and a sewer system bring the city up to the latest standards of hygiene, but the construction of a slaughterhouse, a

65 See Fromm: Jews, p. 138, and Boseckert: Migration, pp. 121–123.
66 See *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums* (General Newspaper of Judaism) from May 25, 1875.
67 See Boseckert: Migration, pp. 122–126 and Amend, Gerhard: Integration and Social Advancement of Jews in Coburg through Education: In: Amend, Gerhard; Boseckert, Christian; Melville, Gert (eds.): In Focus: Jews and Coburg. Return, Exclusion, and Integration in the 19th Century. Coburg 2021, pp. 131–137.
68 See Boseckert: Migration, p. 122 and Wolz: Legal Situation, p. 16.
69 See Boseckert, Christian: Coburg and its department stores and warehouses, Part 1: From the history of Spitalgasse and the market square (1438–1945): In: Coburger Geschichtsblätter 21 (2013), pp. 51–68.
70 See Fromm: Jews, pp. 103–120.

Gas and electricity works and gas street lighting brought modern amenities to the royal seat. After the war, attempts were made to continue this development despite difficult financial conditions. The city council invested around RM 350,000 in the Hindenburg Baths to improve public health. During the renovation of the slaughterhouse beginning in 1928, the latest technical equipment, such as a rail system and a low and high transport railway, was also installed. At the same time, a new type of housing development was established on the outskirts of the city, reflecting the changed social conditions. Pragmatic buildings, which testified to functionality without any facade decoration, became a vehicle for enabling less affluent sections of the population to own their own homes or obtain affordable housing through state-subsidized financing offers.

On the outskirts of the city center, the construction of the main post office in the New Objectivity style also brought a modern element to the Vestestadt, which seemed like a foreign body in the cityscape. To the annoyance of some contemporaries, the tranquil royal seat was confronted with a monument to a new era.(73) With its emphasis on sobriety and reduction, the main post office stood out clearly from the representative buildings erected in splendor and ornamentation as an expression of bourgeois pride.74 Similarly, architect Arthur Bergmann brought elements of modern industrial construction to Coburg with the construction of the factory building for Iso-lierrohrwerk Neuses AG with its characteristic sawtooth roof, or the Dietze machine factory. (75)

On the other hand, the challenges of modernity prompted a redirection of energies toward a common focal point: the nation. A steady national recoding of urban space had already begun before World War I and now reached a preliminary climax. With a series of powerful symbols finding their way into the cityscape, the inner striving against seemingly destructive change was given expression. On the occasion of the Sedantag on September 2, 1900, the foundation stone of the Bismarck Tower was laid at the highest point of Coburg's Himmelsacker. Completed in the summer of 1901 according to the popular *Götterdämmerung* design by architect Wilhelm Kreis, the national monument was commissioned by the Bismarck Tower Association, which was founded specifically for this purpose, on ducal land. In a line of sight with the Veste Coburg, Callenberg Castle, and the Eckardt Tower built by Ernst II, a rectangle was thus formed on the hills around the city center, where "on patriotic commemorative days, a mighty flame should shine as a warning" (76)and visible far into the Rhön, the Thuringian Forest, the Fichtel Mountains, and the Franconian Forest. The ducal house and the town bourgeoisie with

71 See Habel, Hubertus: Hygiene and Social Progress. In: Appeltshauser, Ruppert; Eckerlein, Gerhard (eds.): Residence in Transition. On the Way to the Industrial Age (= Coburg City History Volume 10). Bamberg 2020, pp. 81–89.

72 See Nöth, Stefan: Die Stadtentwicklung Coburgs seit 1920 (The Urban Development of Coburg since 1920). In: Morsbach, Peter; Titz, Otto: Stadt Coburg (City of Coburg) (= Denkmäler in Bayern (Monuments in Bavaria). Volume IV.48). Munich 2006, pp. CV-CXIII, here pp. CVI f.

73 See minutes of the city council meeting of April 10, 1931. StadtACo 8074.

74 See Fiedler, Rembrant: On Architecture in Coburg – An Overview. In: Morsbach, Peter; Titz, Otto: City of Coburg (= Monuments in Bavaria. Volume IV.48). Munich 2006, pp. CXV-CXXVII, here pp. CXVII f. The restaurant and café with a large outdoor terrace in the rose garden, newly created in 1929, was also dedicated to the New Objectivity style.

75 See Nöth: Urban Development, p. CVI.

76 *Coburger Zeitung* newspaper, September 4, 1900.

its dignitaries collaborated in the construction of the monument. As a local status symbol, the monument served to visualize the national character of Coburg, the conscious national self-affirmation of its inhabitants, and as a permanent national memorial.

During and after the First World War, war memorials in particular served to further recode urban space in national terms. With the war memorial stone on the Coburg Bank building, which was installed in 1917 with the inscription "A sign of German strength, created in a great and serious time," the circular group of heroes erected by the German Landsmannschaft in the Hofgarten in 1926, and the war memorial created by Edmund Meusel in 1927 in the Glockenberg Cemetery, the city commemorated those who had fallen in the war. The monuments are characterized by the depiction of muscular and naked male figures in order to emphasize the strength of German men and the German people despite, or perhaps precisely because of, the defeat in the war. The fact that Jewish Coburgers had also participated in the war with self-sacrifice and patriotism was visibly expressed by the Jewish community in 1919 with the inauguration of its own memorial for Jewish soldiers who had fallen in World War I. Of the approximately 75 Jewish families in Coburg, 68 had sent soldiers to fight in the war, about half of whom were awarded the Iron Cross.

The awarding of honorary citizenship to Paul von Hindenburg on the occasion of his 70th birthday in 1917 and the naming of Hindenburgstraße were expressions of national hero worship.[77] In 1927, the Coburg summer swimming pool was also renamed Hindenburg-Bad, thus creating another monument to the revered "war hero of Tannenberg."[78] In addition, street names were used in the mid-1920s to promote the nationalization of urban space and, in particular, to make the hope for a revision of the Treaty of Versailles visible in the cityscape. National glorification and revisionist memory went hand in hand here and reinforced the political culture of the time. In addition to Tannenbergstraße and a Kriegerdanksiedlung (war veterans' housing estate), streets such as Elsässerstraße and Lothringerstraße, Straßburgerstraße and Danziger Straße, and Eupenstraße and Malmedystraße were established in Coburg to commemorate the territories lost after the First World War and to keep them present in the everyday life of the population.

The enormous change and upheaval at the beginning of the 20th century was also reflected in the cityscape, where elements of progress contrasted with a persistence expressed in monuments, representative buildings, and institutions, sometimes merging symbiotically with each other, but mostly remaining side by side in a seemingly irresolvable tension. The demonstration of power by the ducal Coburg, which continued to be expressed in the cityscape, and the image of the idyllic and orderly royal seat were shifted by political reality. In the course of the increasing confrontation between the political extremes, Coburg, which was still in a phase of consolidation, found itself at the center of the conflict due to its proximity to Thuringia. In various rooms of the

77 See *Coburger Zeitung newspaper* dated October 2, 1917. Coburg took this step along with 82 other Thuringian cities.
78 See minutes of the city council meeting of September 30, 1927. See also: Boseckert, Christian; Wolz, Alexander "... der Siegfried unseres Vaterlandes" Der Hindenburg-Mythos und seine Auswirkungen in Coburg (1917–91). In: Coburger Geschichtsblätter 25 (2017), pp. 99–113.
79 See Habel: Gewissheiten, p. 72.

The resulting conflicts within society as a whole were now appropriated, negotiated, and resolved politically, and a path was taken that would make Coburg a pioneer of National Socialism.

2 Spaces of politics

"The soil we had to cultivate here was more fertile than that in the rest of the Reich."[80]

With these words, Franz Schwede, the central figure who made Coburg the "first National Socialist city in Germany," looked back on the 1920s in Coburg in a biographical retrospective with the dramatic title *Kampf um Coburg (Battle for Coburg)*. And indeed, the ground had been prepared in Coburg for a völkisch-nationalist worldview to take root. The period under examination here, from 1920 to 1929, began in Coburg with the referendum that resulted in Coburg's unification with Bavaria and ended with its premature entry into the "Third Reich." The early success of the NSDAP in the Vestestadt will be explained below through an interplay of structural and situational conditions.[81] Their interaction created the momentum that prompted the Coburg bourgeoisie, in search of a political home and future prospects, to rally behind Adolf Hitler's party. For this reason, we will first identify the political spheres in which political and social processes were negotiated in the 1920s. Without disregarding questions of contingency, the aim is to use prominent representatives and key scenes to highlight the transformation of the city after its annexation to Bavaria, the lines of conflict, and the diversity of conflict resolution strategies in society.

80 Schwede: Kampf, p. 32.

81 For explanations of voting behavior and the success of the NSDAP, see Falter, Jürgen W.: Hitlers Wähler. Die Anhänger der NSDAP 1924–1933. Frankfurt, New York 2020, pp. 96–105, 415 f. Falter describes the NSDAP as a *people's party with a middle-class base*. See ibid., p. 413. Based on the stability of the party system in the German Empire, Rainer Lepsius developed the concept of *socio-moral milieus (*Catholic, conservative, bourgeois Protestant, and socialist) that underlay voting behavior. See Lepsius, Rainer M .: Party System and Social Structure. On the Problem of Democratization in German Society. In: ibid.: Democracy in Germany. Sociological-historical constellation analyses (= Critical Studies in Historical Science, Volume 100). Göttingen 1993, pp. 25–50. The models can be expanded to include Karl Rohe's concept of *political camps (*socialist, Catholic, bourgeois Protestant), which united different milieus. See Rohe, Karl: Elections and Voter Traditions in Germany. Cultural Foundations of German Parties and Party Systems in the 19th and 20th Centuries. Frankfurt 1992, p p . 14–22.

82 The political spheres analyzed below do not represent a comprehensive overview of the areas in which political issues and problems were negotiated in a socially relevant manner. Only those areas in which the decisive course was set for the success of the National Socialists in Coburg have been identified here. The church, for example, as a pioneering and politicizing institution, is not described as a separate sphere, but only in its confrontation with the völkisch movement. For an overview of developments in Germany after 1918, see, among others: Rossol, Nadine; Ziemann, Benjamin (eds.): Aufbruch und Abgründe. Das Handbuch der Weimarer Republik (= Schriftreihe der Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, Band 10937). Bonn 2022; Wildt, Michael: Zerborstene Zeit: deutsche Geschichte 1918 bis 1945 (= Schriftenreihe der Bundeszentrale für politische Bildug, Band 10883). Bonn 2022.

2.1 The bourgeois camp and urban politics

2.1.1 The bourgeois milieu

The *bourgeoisie*[83] in the urban environment consisted of a multitude of subgroups with different economic, political, and cultural backgrounds.[84] In addition to the educated bourgeoisie, Coburg's demographic composition meant that it also had a pronounced economic bourgeoisie with large, but above all small, bourgeois traits. Despite its internal differentiation, the bourgeoisie defined itself primarily through a common lifestyle, shared patterns of interpretation and values, and a shared sphere of experience and action.[85] The existence of these shared values united the various strata within the bourgeoisie in a culture of interpretation. In a city the size of Coburg, these characteristics were further condensed, resulting in the emergence of an urban bourgeois milieu that saw itself as the true Coburg.

A civic obligation served as a ritual of admission into the circle of citizenship as an exclusive social unit. Within bourgeois circles, the emphasis on education, property, achievement, and success also served to promote self-determination and differentiation from the working class. In the fields of education and art in particular, the urban bourgeois milieu claimed a kind of monopoly alongside the ducal house. Many bourgeois citizens were active as art collectors and volunteered their time to promote the arts. The educated bourgeoisie in particular could claim local patriotic merits for their engagement with the history of Coburg. This also included many Jewish Coburgers such as the physician Dr. Moritz Cramer, who made a name for himself as an important art connoisseur and collector and had his own Coburgica library.[87] The Coburg State Theater served as a social center and meeting place where bourgeois values were on display. Legitimized by a shared set of values, the bourgeoisie ultimately derived the right to politically patronize the working class. Numerous speeches, press articles, and commemorative publications bear witness to these central and shared values. This gave rise to a common lifestyle based on cultural practices that the members

83 In the following, the bourgeoisie is to be understood as a sociocultural construct and not as a legal category.

84 The large group of the bourgeoisie can be divided into 1. the economic and property-owning bourgeoisie, 2. the educated bourgeoisie, 3. the petty bourgeoisie or old middle class, 4. the new middle class, and 5. marginal groups. See Kocka, Jürgen: The Bourgeoisie and Bourgeois Society in the 19th Century. European Developments and German Characteristics. In: ibid. (ed.): The Bourgeoisie in the 19th Century. Germany in European Comparison. Munich 1988, pp. 11–78, here pp. 12 f. For a definition of the bourgeoisie, see also Lepsius, Rainer M .: The Bourgeoisie as a Subject of Social History. In: Schieder, Wolfgang; Sellin, Volker (eds.): Social History in Germany. Developments and Perspectives in an International Context, Volume 4. Göttingen 1987, pp. 61–80.

85 See Schulz, Andreas: Lebenswelt und Kultur des Bürgertums im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert (The Life and Culture of the Bourgeoisie in the 19th and 20th Centuries) (= Encyclopedia of German History, Volume 75). Munich 2005, pp. 90 f.

86 See Sauerteig, Alfred: Bürgerbuch. Collection of local statutes, police regulations, and other official regulations and announcements for the ducal residence city of Coburg. Coburg 1908, p. 4; idem: Administration, p. 318.

87 See Habel, Hubertus: Dr. Moritz Cramer. In: Fromm, Hubert: The Jews of Coburg. Tolerated – Ostracized – Exterminated. Coburg 2012, pp. 246–248 and Amend: Integration, p. 136.

this socially exclusive group in their everyday lives. Invitations to mutual tuxedo evenings and banquets with exquisite food and alcohol in prestigious rooms specially furnished for this purpose were just as much a part of it as the display of good taste in private and public life.[88] Within this central bourgeois canon of values, a calm and law-abiding attitude was also considered an important virtue. This was sometimes expressed in loyalty to the authorities, which was decisively influenced by the Coburg bourgeoisie's connection to the ducal house. This is how shared experiences, mentalities, and worldviews can be defined, which outlined and united the value system of the often heterogeneous bourgeoisie.

2.1.1.1 Economic and identity uncertainty

The revolution brought about a sudden upheaval for the duchy, not only in political and economic terms. The transition from empire and monarchy to the Weimar Republic with its democratic constitution represented a profound break with the past for urban life, affecting all areas of society and having an even greater impact in Coburg due to its union with Bavaria. The economy in and around the Vestestadt, which was largely export-oriented, now found it difficult to regain its footing in peacetime. Among other things, the end of army deliveries, a lack of coal supplies, increased wages, and a shortage of capital led to considerable unemployment, which plunged many Coburg residents into severe financial hardship. By the end of 1923, 6,000 fathers in the Coburg district were dependent on public or private charity, leading the state police to conclude that "half of Coburg is starving."([90]) In 1925 alone, 23 long-established Coburg companies filed for bankruptcy and more than eleven other businesses were placed under business supervision.[91] The failure of the Coburg Chamber of Commerce to reopen the American consulate in the city after the end of the war can be seen as symbolic of the economic adjustment difficulties that were now becoming apparent.[92] Whereas before the war, the German Empire had been dominated by "an image of advancement in all areas of human activity" [93], this had caused noticeable cracks in the apparent idyll of Coburg, confronting the bourgeoisie with the need for change and a loss of power and control. [94]

88 Hans von Bomhard, a notary who moved to Coburg in 1933, describes how this type of social interaction still characterized Coburg in the 1930s. See Bomhard, Hans von: Lebensstufen. Acht Jahr-zehnte – gelebt in diesem Jahrhundert. Augsburg 1984, pp. 170–172. On the cultural practices of the bourgeoisie, see Schäfer: Geschichte, pp. 114–125.

89 See transcript of the 159th public meeting of the Coburg Chamber of Commerce on January 16, 1919. Bavarian Economic Archive K6/1126. In some cases, three-quarters of the products were sold abroad.

90 Report of the Coburg State Police dated December 28, 1923. StACo State Police Command 30.

91 See Mahnke, Fritz: 75 Years of the Coburg Chamber of Industry and Commerce. Coburg 1971, p. 71.

92 See minutes of the 159th public meeting of the Coburg Chamber of Commerce on April 11, 1922. Bavarian Economic Archives K6/1137.

93 Hirschfeld: Administration, p. 311.

94 The book "Coburg im Weltkrieg 1914–18. Ein Denk- und Dankstein" (Coburg in World War I, 1914–18: A Memorial and Monument of Gratitude), initiated by State Councilor Dr. Quarck in 1917, is an impressive testimony to the profound upheaval and bitterness felt by Coburg's leading officials in the face of political developments. Originally intended as a tribute to the glorious achievements of what was expected to be a successful outcome to the war, work on the war chronicle was initially suspended for several years after Germany's defeat and was only resumed and completed in 1922 on the initiative of Mayor Gustav Hirschfeld.

The Coburg bourgeoisie was primarily composed of those groups that were particularly hard hit by the economic difficulties following World War I. The long period of increasing prosperity in the German Empire until 1914, albeit often modest and unevenly distributed, but nevertheless noticed and generally welcomed by contemporaries, was followed by a reversal of this trend in the form of deep and rapid impoverishment, particularly among the middle and lower-middle classes. This was mainly due to the war and its financing on credit through war bonds, which to a large extent represented the savings of the middle class and, after the defeat, were not repaid with interest as promised, but were lost. This was followed by years of inflation and general upheaval until 1923, during which the costs of the war were finally paid, namely by people who had possessed savings and assets and thus enjoyed self-confidence and security, and who now had to forfeit all of this.[95] In the wake of inflation in the early 1920s, investments such as government bonds, fixed-income securities, mortgages, and war bonds, on which many private individuals and pensioners without actual income had relied, lost their value. The educated middle class, which traditionally owned few tangible assets, lost all its financial wealth. With large parts of family fortunes disappearing, the bourgeois lifestyle of many seemed to be in jeopardy. The fixed salaries of civil servants and employees also suffered from inflation, leaving civil servants with a lingering feeling of mistrust despite compensation after 1923. A 38% salary increase in April 1922 for municipal civil servants and employees in Coburg was offset by an inflation rate of 118%.([96]) In addition, small pensioners, who lived on their savings and the interest on their assets and had often been particularly patriotic in subscribing to war bonds, were extremely hard hit by the loss of value.[97] The destruction of their capital left them dependent on public welfare, which, in their bourgeois worldview, amounted to considerable humiliation and declassification. Since economic development in Coburg had been rather positive during the war, these economic challenges of the postwar period had an even more drastic effect and permanently shook bourgeois confidence in the state. Supply difficulties with food and coal and the resulting restrictions on public and private life intensified the sense of crisis and ran counter to the bourgeois desire for peace and order. In particular, the significant price increases further fueled economic concerns within the urban community and left small pensioners and those on social security pensions facing real hardship due to the imbalance between income and expenditure. In January 1921, the Coburg region recorded

95 See Herbert, Ulrich: Geschichte Deutschlands im 20. Jahrhundert (History of Germany in the 20th Century). Munich 2014, pp. 139–142.; Momm-sen, Wolfgang J.: Bürgerstolz und Weltmachtstreben (Civic Pride and the Quest for World Power). Germany under Wilhelm II. 1890 to 1918. Berlin 1995, pp. 672–682. See also: Feldmann, Gerald D.: The Great Disorder. Politics, Economics, and Society in the German Inflation, 1914–1924. Oxford 1997.

96 See Erdmann: Coburg, p. 66.

97 The term "small pensioner" refers primarily to the welfare category of those who, due to their own capital or that of relatives, would not be dependent on public welfare if it were not for currency devaluation. On small pensioners, see Reichel, Johannes: Secure retirement or increased risk of poverty? Welfare for small pensioners in the Weimar Republic after war and inflation. In: Historical Social Research 24,1 (1999), pp. 32–74.

the highest food prices in all of Bavaria.[98] With an unemployment rate of 6.5%, the city also ranked at the top in Bavaria.[99]

The impending and actual social decline of parts of the bourgeoisie called for a revision of the existing conditions, all the more so as contemporaries were often unaware of the connection between war financing and inflation and blamed the existing system. War, revolution, and inflation, along with political unrest and upheaval, had disrupted the central points of reference in everyday and private life, and bourgeois categories such as righteousness and modesty had lost their value. Economic uncertainty accordingly fueled a search for identity. War, the end of the war, and revolution thus left behind a bourgeoisie that was largely collapsed and seeking stability. The fall from bourgeois existence was very great. The end of the monarchy and the revolution, the Treaty of Versailles, which was perceived as humiliating, and the smoldering danger of a "red supremacy" had completely disrupted the old world order of the bourgeoisie, and a feeling of permanent and comprehensive crisis dominated the thoughts and actions of many. The experience of losing the monarchy and the socio-political order it guaranteed was accompanied by the questioning of previously accepted and internalized beliefs and values. The advent of democracy initially brought a cascade of upheavals, crises, and humiliations, including revolution, attempted coups, uprisings, a dictated peace, territorial cessions, and, in the case of Coburg, even more decisively, the loss of independence and its role as a royal seat. Even though the experiences of individual members of the urban bourgeoisie varied in the wake of the economic crises, especially between owners of property and financial assets, they all shared a desire for peace and order, simplicity and clarity. Even after the crises had subsided and a phase of economic and political stabilization had begun, this created a basis for mistrust and rejection of the new state. The confrontation with the loss of status had long-term effects on political allegiances and the tendency to cling to tradition.

2.1.1.2 Orientation toward the ducal house

Orientation towards the ducal house and awareness of the residence were among the most decisive components of the shared civic experience and sphere of action. This was the basis for the unique blend of megalomania and petty bourgeoisie that had combined national sentiment with pride in Coburg's European connections for decades. A description of the duchy stated: "There was always a certain interesting, international 'glory' spread over the small residential city of Coburg, which was equally blessed with princely care and the favor of a benevolent nature. The citizens and the purveyors to the court always harbored a little pride in a corner of their otherwise quite German hearts.

98 See bi-monthly report of January 3, 1921. StadtACo A 6586.
99 See *Coburger Zeitung* of March 31, 1934. The figures refer to the 1925 census.
100 See Schäfer, Michael: Geschichte des Bürgertums. Cologne et al. 2009, pp. 189–199; Erdmann: Coburg, p. 64 and Herbert: Geschichte, pp. 141, 201–206.
101 See Quarck: Letzten Zeiten, p. 78.



Fig. 3: Design of the market square for the arrival of the princely couple in Coburg in 1905, photographer: Prof. Eduard Uhlenhuth Coburg

that 'one' was related to half of Europe, and accordingly he usually kept a potpourri of flags and colors in a corner of the attic of his house, which, when the occasion arose, were put to excellent and loyal use during princely visits from all over the world."[102]

The Ducal House and the Coburg Bourgeoisie since the 19th Century

On the other hand, the ducal house represented a social, political, and economic anchor that fostered a positive sense of belonging to a larger whole among the city's bourgeoisie. The local press had always featured a section entitled "From the Court" that reported on the exact activities of the duke and duchess as well as on princely visitors, thus allowing the city's population to participate in the life of their

102 Quarck: Recent Times, p. 15.

aristocratic role models and created a daily connection between the courtly and bourgeois spheres. The fact that even in the course of the emancipation of the bourgeoisie, the struggle for civil rights and the implementation of liberal ideas such as a constitution, a representative assembly, or the granting of freedoms and civil rights did not have to be fought against the authorities and in opposition to the nobility had a particularly formative effect on the close relationship between the bourgeoisie and the Dukes of Coburg. The ducal house, and Ernst II in particular, led the way with a policy that sought an alliance with the bourgeois elites. Throughout the centuries, the Coburg bourgeoisie remained loyal to its princes, even in times of upheaval. Neither the revolution of 1848 nor that of 1918 gave rise to a dominant anti-monarchist sentiment.

Ernst II had already fulfilled the key liberal demands of the time in Coburg, which from 1821 onwards was organized on the basis of provincial representation in contrast to Gotha, between 1844 and 1846. The revolution of 1848/49 was therefore much calmer here than in other small states. Ernst II had also responded to the demands of the Coburg citizens presented in an address by the Coburg magistrate, recognized the imperial constitution, and thereby guaranteed the repeal of emergency laws, freedom of petition and assembly, and the abolition of censorship. Not least by renouncing the title of Duke "by the grace of God," Ernest II made it clear that, compared to many other contemporary princes, he based his claim to power less on the absolutist ideal of divine right and more on an alliance with the rising bourgeoisie.

When, during the revolution of 1848/49, questions of liberal reforms became linked to those of national unity, the people of Coburg were less enthusiastic about democratic ideas. Here, the focus of interest was rather on the constitutional idea of a firmly anchored monarchy. While the people of Coburg showed "lively interest in national events" [107], they stood out for their calm attitude and their willingness to remain within the bounds of the law, so that Ernst II could be confident of his position and safety at all times.([106] The revolution was carried out with "love of country and order"([107], as Mayor Leopold Oberländer announced in an address to the people of Coburg. The motto "Long live freedom through law and order" ([108]shaped the course of the revolution in the duchy. Parades, folk festivals, and balls took place in the presence of the duke, the state councils, the municipal authorities, the clergy, and the teaching staff, decorated with an abundance of black, red, and white.

103 These included, for example, public state parliament sessions, regulated elections of state parliament representatives, liberal suffrage, the accountability of state officials for constitutional violations, and the guarantee of a contribution to the state budget from the ducal domains.

104 See Wolz, Alexander: The political influence of Duke Ernst II of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha. In: Melville, Gert; Wolz, Alexander (eds.): "The world in an unpredictable development of previously unimagined forces." Studies on Duke Ernst II of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha (1818–1893) (= Schriftenreihe der Historischen Gesellschaft Coburg e. V. 29). Coburg 2018, pp. 7–29.

105 Quarck, Tobias: Coburg in the revolutionary years of 1848 and 1849. In: ibid.: Images from Old Coburg. New series of collected essays. Coburg 1918, pp. 125–154, here p. 125.

106 Cf. ibid. pp. 125 f.

107 Ibid. p. 130.

108 Ibid. p. 131.

golden flags and accompanied by drum rolls and cannon fire, the solemn unity of the bourgeoisie and its allegiance to the ducal house. The indirect election of a representative to the Constituent National Assembly in 1848 resulted in a clear majority for the court lawyer Moriz Briegleb,[109] an ardent supporter of constitutional monarchy. Initiatives to arm the people were not directed against the ducal house, but were organized in harmony with it. For example, the establishment of a militia between March 1848 and 1850 was approved by Ernest II and partly equipped with rifles from the ducal armory, with the other part financed by the magistrate. In addition, the defense troops were sworn in to the state constitution and swore an oath of "loyalty to the duke, obedience to the law, observance of the state constitution, so help us God and his holy word through Jesus Christ, Amen!"

Even in the reactionary period, the "Hero of Eckernförde"[112] , Ernst II, emerged as a pioneer of liberal bourgeois politics, modernizing the duchy's constitution with a new code of criminal procedure featuring jury trials and the separation of the judiciary and the administration, and acting as a princely protector of singers, marksmen, and gymnasts. The emerging political mass movement in Coburg was thus massively influenced by the support and leadership of Ernst II and the establishment of liberal networks between the bourgeoisie and the aristocracy. Liberal and national ideas entered into a symbiosis with the idea of distinguished leadership. In the stable liberal-constitutional system under Ernst II, the monarchical prerogative remained untouched and the duchy was characterized by a high degree of security and order. The fact that, a few months after the Duke's death in April 1894, a committee of honorary citizens was formed on the initiative of the city and its citizens with the aim of erecting a monument to Ernst II in Coburg in Coburg, was testimony to the deep reverence for the Duke among the town's citizens, which was soon to lead to the glorification of Ernst II's reign as the "good old days" or "court theater era."([113])

The 1918/19 revolution in Coburg unfolded in the tradition of a bourgeoisie that largely lived in harmony with the aristocracy that had established itself around them. Initiatives to depose the duke and end the monarchy did not begin until

109 Moriz Briegleb, born on November 10, 1809, studied law in Jena and Heidelberg. From 1832, he worked as a lawyer in Coburg and was also a member of the Coburg Assembly of Estates. After serving in the Frankfurt National Assembly, the Assembly Committee, the Imperial Delegation, and the Erfurt Union Parliament, he sat in the Reichstag as a representative of the National Liberal Party for Saxe-Coburg and Gotha until April 1872, following the founding of the German Empire. Briegleb received 224 of 248 votes.

110 Only six electors from Sesslach were impressed by the democratic cause and advocated for a republic under the leadership of Feodor Streit. For more on Feodor Streit, see Chapter II2.3.2.

111 Quarck: Revolutionary Years, p. 128.

112 As the victor of Eckernförde, Ernst II made a name for himself within the German national movement after being the only prince to take part in the campaign against Denmark in the Schleswig-Holstein War of 1848/49, where parts of the Danish fleet were forced to surrender their position in Eckernförde.

113 See Boseckert, Christian: "... to make known to the general public at his discretion." Ernst II as a polarizing media figure of the 19th century. In: Melville, Gert; Wolz, Alexander (eds.): "The world in an unpredictable development of previously unimagined forces." Studies on Duke Ernst II of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha (1818–1893) (= Schriftenreihe der Historischen Gesellschaft Coburg e. V. 29). Coburg 2018, pp. 129–146.

by external influences. The lack of anti-monarchical traditions made the downfall of the ducal government in Coburg a particularly painful experience. As little as Carl Eduard's unspoken abdication was desired by the majority of the bourgeoisie, the more they held on to their ties to the ducal house even in the republic. The *Coburger Zeitung* newspaper announced on behalf of the Coburg population upon Carl Eduard's abdication: "And if the Duke and Duchess continue to live among us as free citizens, may they be comforted by the certainty that respect and grateful devotion will remain palpably close to them even from afar."[114]By clinging to the duke as an idealistic fixed point, the Coburg bourgeoisie in particular also clung to its past. The luxuriously furnished princely residence of the Veste, which Bodo Ebhardt furnished with public funds for Carl Eduard as a "shrine to traditional monarchical insignia" ([115])and in which the former sovereign could wait comfortably for his second chance, was symptomatic of the perseverance in waiting for the great aristocratic leaders to regain their strength. ([116])

The role of the ducal house in the Weimar Republic

Protecting and defending the duke and what he still stood for remained an expression of civic honor even within the republican system. This was realized in concrete terms by a group of prominent Coburg citizens when, in 1922, the danger of communist attacks on Carl Eduard at Callenberg Castle appeared to be a threat. A troop led by Fritz Höhn, leader of the veterans' association and senior teacher, in collaboration with Karl Schrumpf, leader of *the association of former members of the class of 1895,*([117]) felt called upon to protect the duke and kept night watch at Callenberg Castle for several weeks without an official mandate. Generously cared for by Duchess Viktoria Adelheid, the self-appointed fortress guard was also equipped with extensive weapons for its defensive struggle, despite demobilization.Even when, among other things, Carl Eduard's victory in the Leipzig Imperial Court against the expropriation of his properties in the Free State of Saxe-Gotha without compensation sparked a debate in the Reichstag about a law for the expropriation of princes, voices against the demands of the Social Democrats and Communists were raised among the Coburg bourgeoisie, as they were throughout the Reich.[119]In the referendum in the spring of 1926, in which 35.5% of eligible voters throughout the Reich participated, only 13.68% of the eligible urban population in the city of Coburg signed the lists that were available. An overwhelming majority voted in favor of the right of the princes, and thus also of Carl Eduard, to receive his compensation. While in many places middle-class voters from the Center Party and the liberal parties had also voted in favor of a uniform expropriation of the princes, under

114 *Coburger Zeitung* newspaper, November 16, 1918.

115 Büschel: Herzog, p. 74.

116 See Doering, Oskar: The Restoration of Coburg Fortress by Professor Bodo Ebhardt 1898–1924. In: Zeitschrift für das Bauwesen 77 (1927), pp. 1–24. On the expansion of the fortress for Carl Eduard as the "leader" of tomorrow, see Büschel: Herzog, pp. 73–82.

117 These were members of the 6th Thuringian Infantry Regiment No. 95.

118 See *Bayerische Ostmark*, July 3/4, 1937. The weapons may have come from the weapons cache that Carl Eduard had set up at Callenberg Castle, according to statements by Friedrich Josias von Sachsen-Coburg und Gotha. See Prince Andreas von Sachsen-Coburg und Gotha: The Duke, p. 140, and Büschel: Herzog, p. 84.

119 On Carl Eduard's behavior in the course of the expropriation of the princes, cf. Büchel: Hitlers, pp. 90–95 and Chapter II2.4.1.

Coburg even had the second lowest voter turnout in Bavaria and the Reich, at 16.8%.[120] After 4,359 people in the city of Coburg had voted for one of the left-wing parties in the 1924 Reichstag elections alone, only 2,331 people signed up for the referendum.[121] Although more voters were motivated to cast their ballots in the final referendum in June 1926, only 20.85% voted "yes."[122] The nationalist and pro-ducal associations in Coburg had prevented their members from voting by, for example, founding a "main committee to combat the referendum" and through targeted appeals and campaigns.[123]

The fact that the new republic officially left little room for the celebration of monarchical traditions caused considerable unrest within the bourgeois camp. When, for example, upon the death of the former Empress Auguste Viktoria in April 1921, the municipal authorities rejected a request by the city council for official mourning bells to be rung, on the grounds that members of the royal family were no longer entitled to bells of honor or remembrance ordered by secular authorities, there was considerable resistance among the city's population.[124] The situation was similar when, for example, the Social Democrats criticized the former duke, who was still held in high esteem by the majority of the population. On Carl Eduard's birthday in July 1922, the *Coburger Zeitung* printed a significant and clearly anti-Semitic letter to the editor, which defended the former duke against attacks by *the* social democratic *Coburger Volksblatt* in connection with a charity event at the Veste. It read:

> "As planned, he is portrayed as an Englishman—a prince of German blood and German sentiment who, at considerable sacrifice, has professed his German identity, is considered a foreigner by the same circles that regard every sleazy chestnut Jew from Tarnopol or Vilna as a highly valuable, almost sacred addition to their citizenry. (...) But it is the height of nonsense, to say the least, to disparage a charity event at the fortress – a few days before the deceased Jewess Rothschild is being praised to the skies for a modest donation – as any level-headed person will readily understand. When the ducal couple, at considerable sacrifice in terms of time, money, and comfort, puts itself at the service of charity and raises a considerable sum for small pensioners, it does infinitely more for these poor compatriots than the entire legal machinery of social democracy. Therefore, let us say openly: if there is a royal house in Germany that is sincerely striving to serve the fatherland and the people in accordance with the changed circumstances, if there is a royal house that follows the noble motto, "Nobility obliges," then it is our ducal couple. And that is why they rightly enjoy a respect and love that the republic is unlikely to achieve through exceptional laws and force."([125])

120 On the referendum in Bavaria, see Gerhard Immler: Referendum "Expropriation of Princes without Compensation," 1926. In: Historical Dictionary of Bavaria. URL: http://www.historisches-lexikon-bayerns.de/Lexikon/Volksabstimmung_„Entschädigungslose_Fürstenenteignung“,_1926 (last accessed August 19, 2021).

121 See *Coburger Zeitung newspaper* dated June 21, 1926.

122 See ibid.

123 See the behavior of Franz Dehler, chairman of the Coburg War Veterans' Association and the Patriotic Working Group, in Chapter II2.2.1.

124 See the report and the "voices from the audience" in *the Coburger Zeitung* of April 20, 1921, and the statement by the municipal authorities in *the Coburger Zeitung* of April 26, 1921.

125 *Coburger Zeitung newspaper* dated July 18, 1922.

2.1.1.3 Liberalism, conservatism, nationalism

Among the cities that had established themselves as centers of liberal bourgeois politics during the 19th century, the royal seat of Coburg was able to distinguish itself in particular because liberalism and liberal ideas were firmly anchored in Coburg life under Ernst II. With his national-liberal politics, the duke continued to influence the political spectrum within the urban bourgeois milieu. From 1871 to 1918, with the exception of 1909, the members of the Reichstag from the Coburg region were liberals and the Coburg state parliament was also dominated by national liberals and liberals over conservative agrarians and the SPD, which succeeded in winning a single seat in 1908. Since its founding in 1861, the *Coburger Zeitung* had established itself as a political daily newspaper and mouthpiece for the National Liberals. Founded by Ernst II, it remained the only daily newspaper in Coburg until 1886 and was also read by conservative circles, especially in the agrarian Coburg countryside.[127] A prominent representative and key figure in the National Liberal camp was Dr. Hermann Quarck.[128] As head of the Coburg department in the State Ministry and member of the three-member government of the Free State of Coburg, he played a decisive role in shaping it until his resignation in July 1919. After entering Bavarian civil service, he continued his involvement in Coburg as chairman of the veterans' association. The *National Liberal Association for the Duchy of Coburg,* founded in 1890 and chaired by Professor Dr. Rudolf Gebhardt at the end of the German Empire, had about 600 members.[129] In the course of *a deliberalization of the bourgeoisie*[130], however, national-conservative forces beyond agrarian conservatism gained more and more influence, especially in the national-liberal camp. Due to the Protestant dominance in the duchy, the Center Party was not considered a conservative umbrella party here. It was not until the founding of a local branch of the German National People's Party (DNVP) in December 1918 that conservative forces were also represented in party politics, creating the opportunity to gather conservative currents behind a Protestant milieu party. The economic crises of the 1920s had fueled mistrust of liberalism and capitalism and weakened the attachment to a liberal economic and social model, which contributed to this development.

In addition, a dominant left-liberal, liberal-minded movement had formed within the urban middle class, which was represented in the press from 1886 onwards by the *Coburger Tageblatt*, after the German Liberals had gained a firm foothold in Coburg in 1881. Founded by publisher Ernst Friedrich Riemann, the newspaper saw itself as an advocate for economic and political freedom and achieved a

126 The National Liberals provided the representatives from 1871 to 1881, from 1903 to 1909, and again from 1912 to 1914. In 1909, the SPD succeeded in asserting itself against the bourgeois supremacy for once. From 1881 to 1903 and from 1914 to 1918, the Liberals provided the Reichstag candidates for Coburg. See Hambrecht: Nicht durch Krieg, p. 35 f.

127 See Sauerteig, Alfred: Coburger Zeitungsgeschichte. Coburg 1949, pp. 101–104.

128 Hermann Quarck was born on August 16, 1873, in Coburg. From 1909, he served as a government councilor and district administrator in Coburg, and from 1914 onwards as a state councilor and finally as head of the Coburg department in the State Ministry and in the government of the Free State of Coburg.

129 See Address Book of the Ducal Residence City of Coburg for the Year 1913, p. 292.

130 Langenwiesche, Dieter: Liberalism and the Bourgeoisie in Europe. In: Kocka, Jürgen (ed.): The Bourgeoisie in the 19th Century, Volume 3. Munich 1988, pp. 360–394, here p. 376.

Circulation of over 13,000 copies. [131] *Founded* in 1892 *the Progressive People's Party in the Duchy of Coburg* was headed by magistrate and doll manufacturer Karl Senkeisen on the eve of World War I and had 300 members.[132] The most prominent representative of the liberals or progressives was Max Oskar Arnold, a manufacturer from Neustadt and member of the state parliament, who had provided crucial support for the economy of the duchy, particularly during the war, by securing defense contracts.[133] Jewish Coburgers, who were firmly anchored in the bourgeois milieu, also found themselves represented in left-liberal politics. Kuno Hirsch, a lawyer born in Coburg in 1868, who was active as legal advisor to the Chamber of Industry and Commerce and on the theater committee, among other things, was one of the prominent left-liberal representatives in the city council.[134] Together with Dr. Hans Schack, later director of the Coburg Regional Court and chairman of the Coburg Regional Foundation, Julius Mai, Jewish commercial councilor and financial administrator of the Chamber of Commerce, and peace activist Anna B. Eckstein, he founded a local branch of the DDP in Coburg in December 1918.

The power of German nationalism

The link that amicably united the various currents of liberalism and conservatism and enabled political cooperation despite sometimes divergent views was the enormous power of a growing German nationalism. In the course of its development, this had detached itself from its exclusive connection with liberal ideas and was usurped by conservatism. A populist renewal of conservatism enabled it to resonate with broader sections of society, with elite nationalism giving way to mass nationalism, particularly after the First World War. ([136]) However, the bourgeoisie had always played a pioneering role in interpreting the national idea. After a fusion of bourgeois and national ideals, the bourgeoisie dictated the content and forms of the emerging national cult. Nation and people represented constructs that were realized, ritualized, and thus made tangible through myths and symbols.

Even during the revolution of 1848/49, the idea of nationalism had become firmly established among the bourgeoisie. Members of the militia, high-ranking officials, manual workers, and students began wearing black, red, and gold cockades. The establishment of a militia linked the idea of nationalism with military ideals, as

131 See Sauerteig: Zeitungsgeschichte, pp. 118–123.

132 See Address Book of the Ducal Residence City of Coburg for the Year 1913, p. 295.

133 Born in Neustadt near Coburg in 1854, the successful entrepreneur had been a member of the Coburg state parliament since 1884 and became its vice president in 1897. From July 1914 to November 1918, he represented the Duchy of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha in the Reichstag as a member of the German Liberal People's Party, was a member of the State Assembly of the Free State of Coburg in 1919, and served in the Bavarian state parliament for the German Democratic Party (DDP) from 1920 to 1924. On Max Oskar Arnold, see Reinhart, Esther: Max Oscar Arnold (1854–1938). Leben und Wirken für das Coburger Land (= Schriftenreihe der Historischen Gesellschaft Coburg e. V., vol. 21) Coburg 2007.

134 See Fromm: Jews, p. 217 and Amend: Integration, p. 133 f.

135 See *Coburger Zeitung*, December 12, 1918.

136 See Langewiesche, Dieter: Nationalism in the 19th and 20th Centuries. Between Participation and Aggression. Bonn 1994, p. 15.

that the military salute became common practice.[137] Under Ernest II, Coburg had become a central home of nationalist sentiment, which had a significant impact on the city and its inhabitants. The drive towards nationhood was not directed against a head of state, but was promoted, institutionalized, and enshrined in symbols and political liturgy with his support. After the German National Association moved its headquarters to Coburg in 1859 under the protectorate of Ernst II and held its first general assembly here in 1860, the first German gymnastics and youth festival also took place in the Coburg riding hall in 1860, and the first German singers' association was founded in Coburg in 1862, the city, with Ernst II at its helm, became a gathering place for organized nationalism. Stylized as a pioneer of the national movement, the propagation of nationalist ideas became part of the city's self-image.

With the founding of the German Empire, however, this nationalism began to display increasingly chauvinistic traits, as it did throughout the empire, after it had been inflated by the triumphant mood of 1870/71 and an exaggerated sense of self-confidence. It was displayed at numerous events such as the emperor's birthday, Sedan Day, and the anniversary of the founding of the empire, and served to reinforce the national self-confidence of the urban bourgeoisie. With the same symbols, rites, and myths, sacred fires, marches, and communal singing became condensed into a national ceremony. The recurring cult rituals became an expression of a political style that radically focused on the nation and surrounded it with a sacred aura. Nationalism had a highly participatory and inclusive power within the bourgeoisie.([139]) This integrative character of the national idea, which united the bourgeoisie as a whole, became particularly evident during the celebration of national holidays, when representatives of the magistrate, higher educational institutions, and military associations, city councilors, singing clubs, officers of the battalion stationed in Coburg, and church representatives such as the general superintendent jointly pledged their love for their fatherland and homeland.[140] In Coburg's schools in particular, anniversaries and commemorative days were celebrated ritually, and pupils were socialized and mobilized in the national spirit through speeches emphasizing the greatness of German history, solemn songs, and pieces of music. Through this type of festival and celebration, nationalism, along with its symbols and rituals, was integrated into the bourgeois framework of interpretation, and fundamental beliefs centered on the nation became firmly anchored in the urban bourgeois milieu. Due to Coburg's status as a garrison town until 1918 and the III Battalion of the 6th Thuringian Infantry Regiment No. 95 stationed here, the military also played a central role in national commemoration and was always involved in national ceremonies. Military parades became part of bourgeois celebration culture, and many retired officers and military personnel who had settled in Coburg as pensioners shaped the orientation of the bourgeoisie as local dignitaries. These included, for example, the commanders

137 See Quarck: Revolutionsjahren, pp. 127–129.
138 See, for example, the Sedan celebration in 1910: *Coburger Zeitung* newspaper dated September 3, 1910.
139 See Langewiesche: Nationalism.
140 See, for example, the laying of the foundation stone for the Bismarck Tower in Coburg on Sedan Day in 1900. *Coburger Zeitung*, September 2, 1900.

of Infantry Regiment 95, Fritz von Selle and Kurt Freiherr von Wangenheim, as well as retired Lieutenant General Karl Hoefer.

Nationalism and the First World War

When World War I broke out, feelings of national pride finally sparked unparalleled enthusiasm and confidence in victory. Especially during the war, the integrative aspect of nationalism had a heightened effect by contrasting it with the image of the enemy. The war was seen as a defensive war that had been forced upon the people, in which they had to defend their fatherland. In Coburg, too, young men flocked to take up arms. At the beginning of the war, the nailing of the "Iron Moriz" statue, depicted in a victorious pose, to the Schlossplatz and the Ehrenburg was a public display of national pride and solidarity among the people of Coburg, creating a bond of cohesion in their homeland. Led by members of the ducal family, who decorated the "Coburg soldier" with golden nails, the population contributed to the war effort by purchasing golden, silver, and iron nails for the "Iron Moriz" or "Iron Crosses" collected money for Red Cross war donations for widows and orphans. [143] The good economic situation in the duchy allowed the bourgeois camp to demonstrate its support for the war through a conspicuously high willingness to make sacrifices and by subscribing to war bonds far above the Reich average.[144] Similarly, celebrations on Sedan Day, the birthdays of the emperor, the duke, or Hindenburg now served as public demonstrations of the Coburgers' certainty of victory, willingness to make sacrifices, and national solidarity.[145] Through the ritual awarding of orders and medals to his subjects, Carl Eduard contributed to the stabilization of power and the maintenance of the will to persevere. [146] However, as the war dragged on, the scope of all celebrations became increasingly modest.

By the time war broke out, pride in the international connections of the royal seat had turned into chauvinism and a conscious rejection of everything non-German. The mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion inherent in nationalist thinking now had a stronger effect, giving rise to exaggerated nationalism. At the highest level, Carl Eduard agreed in 1917 to a law passed by the state parliament in a spirit of national fervor, according to which foreigners from non-German states were not allowed to rule the Duchy of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha if they were at war with the German Empire.[147]By excluding foreign dynasties from the Coburg succession to the throne, which was intended to symbolically strike a blow against England, the former globally networked duchy demonstratively reaffirmed its German core to the great enthusiasm of the population. As a result, the English monarchs also removed all references to their German origins with the establishment of the name *Windsor* for the

141 For General Hoefer, see Chapter III1.1.6.
142 See Sauerteig: Administration, p. 314.
143 See *Coburger Zeitung*, July 20, 1915, and October 19, 1915.
144 See Hambrecht: Zwischen Bayern und Thüringen, pp. 186–196.
145 A chronology of events in Coburg during the First World War can be found in: Habel: Gewissheiten, pp. 11–30.
146 See ibid., pp. 40 f.
147 The exception was Bulgaria, which fought alongside Germany in the First World War.

The royal family was eliminated, sealing this development in impressive fashion. [148]The fear of espionage that was rampant in many places at the beginning of the war took on almost xenophobic traits in Coburg, as the ducal relations with a large number of princely houses on the now opposing side meant that there were quite a few foreigners in the Vestestadt. After rumors spread that France was supplying gold to Russia and that cars were being driven secretly through the German Empire for this purpose, roadblocks were set up in Coburg using trucks, Three English women were arrested near Weidhausen as alleged Russian spies, and Grand Duchess Maria Alexandrovna Romanova, the widow of Duke Alfred of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, who was staying in Coburg, felt compelled to donate 15,000 marks to the Red Cross and to support soldiers' families in order to reaffirm her German sentiments. The authorities also did not shy away from harassing Russian members of the Grand Duchess's entourage and persuading them to leave the country.

Following the symbolic figure of Hindenburg, the bourgeois camp now pledged itself to a "victory peace," unity, and the rejection of party politics. The aforementioned conferral of honorary citizenship on Paul von Hindenburg served to reinforce national commitment and hopes for victory.[150] By forming a united front, the bourgeois camp even attempted to mobilize together with the Social Democrats against the acceptance of the enemy forces' peace terms. [151] In November 1918, the bourgeois women of Coburg also became active in the national cause. Several prominent women among the local dignitaries, such as the wives of Mayor Altenstädter, State Councilors Quarck and Baudler, Professor Gebhardt, court banker Schraidt, and the Baronesses von Meyern-Hohenberg and von Werthern, as well as Countess Westarp, issued an appeal to "all women of Coburg who love their fatherland" to sign a petition to the Reich Chancellor asking him not to accept the terms of a peace agreement. ([152])

Nationalism after the end of the war

Defeat in war, the end of war, revolution, and inflation brought with them a resurgence of nationalism, fueled by a loss of confidence in liberalism and the experience of seemingly omnipresent crises. While there was a palpable spirit of optimism for a new beginning in the republic among the left-liberal and democratic camp, the nationalistic and conservative attitudes and anti-socialist orientation that had been invoked many times during the war continued to have an impact in the post-war period. They merged with the slogans of the "stab-in-the-back myth" and
"war guilt lie" and radicalized them noticeably. In addition, in the aftermath of the war and the revolution of 1918/19, strong nationalism seemed to form an effective bulwark against the danger of a "red revolution." The shift from the liberal and national traditions of Ernest II to a national-conservative conviction had now finally taken place in large parts of the bourgeoisie, beginning with the conservative shift since Carl Eduard came to power in 1905.

148 See Nicklas: Sachsen-Coburg, p. 212.
149 See Sauerteig: Verwaltung, p. 314; Albrecht: Avantgarde, p. 57 and Habel: Gewissheiten, p. 34 f.
150 See *Coburger Zeitung*, October 4, 1917.
151 See *Coburger Zeitung*, November 9, 1918.
152 *Coburg newspaper* dated November 7, 1918.

At that time, the old ceremonial traditions were still upheld, so that even in the "days of the lowest ebb of all nationalist sentiment" after the revolution, the celebration of Sedantag, on which the veterans of the war of 1870/71 were honored with a ceremony in the packed Hofbräusaal, "a loud and masculine declaration of commitment to our people and for our people" ([153]) . In a shared memory of the time when "the sun of power and glory still shone" ([154]) ·looking back served as an impetus to find hope and direction for the present. N a t i o n a l ism became a helpful tool for coping with contingency, providing a one-dimensional interpretation of the world even in the seemingly hopeless post-war situation. The ritualized celebration continued to serve as a regular reassurance and was an expression of participatory nationalism. In 1923, Sedan Day was again celebrated in Coburg with official festivities as the Sedan-Tannenberg Celebration in the style of a folk festival on the Brandensteinsebene, on the initiative of *the Bavarian and Reich Federation* and the German Officers' Federation. General Erich Ludendorff, the ducal couple, and many high-ranking officers of the old army, as well as "thousands of enthusiastic people lining the streets," celebrated in Coburg, which was draped in black, white, and red flags. Festive church services and parades by patriotic associations, military, shooting, and gymnastics clubs formed the framework for the celebrations, at which all reconciliation was renounced and the path to Germany's liberation was propagated in "blood and iron."[155] In 1924, Sedan Day was again celebrated as a major local festival to commemorate the city's history and showcase Coburg's identity and urban self-confidence.[156] The fortress was invoked as a "symbol of the Coburg region, (...) witness not only to Coburg's history, but also to German history" and a "sign of salvation" for the German people, which "shines out of the darkness of the present, offering both warning and comfort."[157]Afterwards, the *Patriotic Working Group* organized *the* annual Sedan and Tannenberg celebrations, which were always staged in the presence of the ducal family. Together, they swore allegiance to duty, obedience, and love of the fatherland·

Within this revisionist commemorative culture, Otto von Bismarck was stylized into a central bourgeois-national symbolic figure. Combined with a German sense of mission, the search for a new statesman of Bismarck's stature gave rise to a pronounced expectation of leadership within the urban bourgeois milieu. In 1922, the *Coburger Zeitung newspaper* sought to speak on behalf of bourgeois Coburg: "We know that the mission of the German people is not yet accomplished, that we still have much to give to the world, to humanity; many forces still lie dormant in the soul of our people. Only one man can be called upon to unleash these positive forces

153 State Councilor Dr. Quarck's commemorative speech on the 50th anniversary of the Sedantag. *Coburger Zeitung*, September 4, 1920.

154 Ibid.

155 *Coburger Zeitung*, September 8 and 11, 1923.

156 The celebration was held here together with a fortress consecration ceremony after the completion of renovation work on the Veste, with the participation of the war veterans', riflemen's, gymnasts', sports associations and singing clubs, the Coburg schools, the guilds and industry, the theater and the entire rural population.

157 Lorenz: History, p. 23 See *Coburger Zeitung* newspaper dated September 13, 1924. For the fortress consecration, see the commemorative publication: Herold, Emil (ed.): Festungsweihe verbunden mit Heimatfest in Coburg 1924 (Fortress consecration combined with local festival in Coburg 1924). Coburg 1924.

158 See *Coburger Zeitung* of September 5, 1925, and September 3, 1926.

who thinks clearly through and through and has correctly recognized the needs of his people. (...) What we need today are real leaders, leaders (...) who do not adhere to the template of a party, but who put the fatherland above everything else."([159]) In August 1923, the Coburg pastor and later dean Curt Weiß also stated that a strong leader was needed to solve the plight of the German people.([160])

Rejection of the Weimar system was often linked to the desire for an authoritarian solution that would guarantee peace and order. For the part of the population that remained monarchist, this expectation of a leader was to be realized in the form of a new, strong monarch who would act as a balancing factor above the parties, someone who could be looked up to as "a refuge of grace or a national sanctuary."([161])Contrary to the "selfishness of democratic culture" and the
"noise of the streets," it was expected that the rebirth of the monarchy would
"arising from such national necessities with the force of nature (...)", and included the Duke of Coburg in this. [162]

The idea of strong leadership, contrary to all particular interests, was seen as an expression of the true will of the people and the only way to lead the German people back to greatness.[163] The unity of the German people, embodied in the idea of the "Volksgemeinschaft" (people's community) and united by a strong man across political and social barriers, became a key objective and prerequisite for the hoped-for and sought-after resurgence of the nation. It was linked to a rejection of pluralism of interests and modern mass society. The national unity of 1870/71 and the glory achieved by the German people in the process were seen as proof of what could be achieved through unity and a will to fight, and as a decisive model for future action. The national idea therefore propagated values such as willingness to make sacrifices and fulfillment of duty, as well as a social order that was hierarchical in nature and required the subordination of the individual. Closely linked to national ideas was the concept of military preparedness, which always had a warlike component and rejected any form of pacifism as treason against the German people.

The völkisch ideology

These ideas were increasingly mixed with a radical form of nationalism, the völkisch ideology, according to which the nation was now a community based on ancestry and blood.

159 *Coburger Zeitung*, February 10, 1922.

160 See *Coburger Zeitung*, August 7, 1923. See also: Gailus, Manfred: Führer Erwartung im Protestantismus. In: Frei, Norbert (ed.): Wie bürgerlich war der Nationalsozialismus (= Vorträge und Kolloquien, vol. 22). Berlin 2018, pp. 20–36.

161 Quarck: letzten Zeiten, p. 21. Hermann Quarck wrote the text, which was published in 1933 after his brother's death, only a few years after the events.

162 Quarck: Last Times, p. 22.

163 See Dr. Quarck's commemorative speech on the 50th anniversary of the Sedantag. *Coburger Zeitung*, September 5, 1920.

164 In Dr. Quarck's speech marking the 50th anniversary of the Sedantag, he said: "Of course, many people are already whispering, in an attempt to appease their consciences, that the Bismarck era (...) was only a 'grand interlude' (...) and that, having rejected Bismarck's megalomania, we have now returned to our true global calling: to promote international understanding without any thoughts of p o w e r , in accordance with our cosmopolitan disposition. German women and men, whoever tells you this is undermining the rebirth of his people!" Ibid.

which specifically excluded the Jewish population. Once nationalist aggression was no longer directed solely against the enemies of the German nation conjured up during the war, but Catholics, Social Democrats, and Jews within the German people also found themselves marginalized as anti-national elements, the floodgates were opened to völkisch ideas. In addition, fueled by economic turmoil and anti-Semitic conspiracy theories, the distorted image of Jewish "crisis profiteers" and "big capital" persisted, offering apparent explanations and an outlet for the political and economic chaos. The conservatism modernized and given a populist veneer by the national movement in the Weimar Republic was now increasingly embodied in the völkisch movement. The political program of the völkisch movement was no longer seen as a mere reversal or revision, but also stood for a modern new beginning. It was precisely this combination of nationalism and populism that made up the dynamic of the völkisch movement. On this basis, the bourgeoisie, even from a defensive position, became increasingly open to völkisch and radical nationalist ideas.

In the 1920s, an ideological mindset had become increasingly established in bourgeois circles, in which nationalist themes and ideologies were widely accepted and an extensive preoccupation with racial and hereditary theory within bourgeois circles became evident. Opposition to the Treaty of Versailles and calls for its revision, the desire for a strong government without party politics, rejection of cultural modernism and a leveling welfare state, and anti-Semitic and biological thinking had all come together to form a worldview.[165] In 1923, the city council prepared a law for the expulsion of foreigners, who were primarily immigrant Jewish businesspeople.[166]In 1926, Coburg district physician Oskar Hönisch publicly advocated the "purification" of German blood and called for preventing the proliferation of the "great army of drunkards and inferior people" and "gradually freeing ourselves from them."[167] Until 1920, Alfred Lorenz, a general music director at the Coburg State Theater, was also a supporter of Arthur Gobineau and described himself as a standard-bearer of *the* anti-Semitic *German League* [168] in Coburg. [169]The widespread admiration for the ideas of Houston Stewart Chamberlain and Gobineau [led] to a fusion of racist and social Darwinist ideas. Anti-Semitic outbursts by students and teachers were a recurring phenomenon in schools, and posters calling for a boycott of Jewish businesses appeared repeatedly in the city from 1919 onwards.

With the rise of nationalism as a central ideology, a decisive change also took place in the bourgeois value system, with categories such as property and education

165 S e e Herbert: Geschichte, p. 364 f.

166 See Dr. Fritsch, December 4, 1923. StACo LRA 10373.

167 See Hönisch, Oskar: Overview of the Coburg welfare system with an outlook on the study of heredity. Lecture given at the opening of Reich Health Week on April 19, 1926.

168 The German League was one of the first nationalist associations in the German Empire. Its members were primarily recruited from the bourgeois, Protestant, conservative milieu. It can be regarded as a precursor to the NSDAP.

169 See Alfred Lorenz to the Prussian Ministry of Science, Art, and Education on June 19, 1933. BA R 9361-II/652836.

170 On the history of the Jewish community in Coburg, see: Fromm: Jews.

increasingly faded into the background. Bourgeoisie now defined itself more as a worldview in which the nation ranked at the top. This ultimately enabled a certain dissolution of bourgeois isolation and the political participation of a group of people outside the traditional dignitaries. It was no longer exclusively professional success, an appreciation of art, and a high level of education that were decisive for prestige within urban society, but rather a commitment to the national cause. National aspirations thus formed a link within bourgeois urban society and at the same time served to distinguish it from social democracy.

2.1.1.4 Anti-socialism

Although nationalist mobilization had already taken hold among workers during the German Empire and had a considerable influence on them, the bourgeoisie demonstratively accused the social democratic movement of anti-nationalist aspirations. The internationalism and pacifism of the political left was diametrically opposed to the nationalist ideology, and class struggle to bourgeois ideas of order. An important determinant of the bourgeoisie's self-definition can therefore be seen in its demarcation from below. Alongside and connected with nationalism, anti-socialism generated the binding element that united the broad bourgeois strata. The participatory and inclusive power of nationalism thus unfolded in an aggressive and exclusionary manner in its demarcation from the working class. After the bourgeois parties were able to wrest back the only victory a Social Democrat had achieved to date in the Duchy of Coburg in the 1912 Reichstag elections,[171] the *Coburger Zeitung* proudly reported: "The unanimous loyalty of the bourgeoisie has succeeded in ousting social democracy from the Duchy of Coburg and replacing the red banner with the national banner."[172]

Downward differentiation

Especially in the situation after the First World War, group cohesion as a spatial identity became increasingly evident in contrast to the identities of foreign groups. The new, frequently used slogan of national unity, in the sense of standing together for the German nation and against any form of particular party interests, made it possible to defame social democracy, which advocated for workers' rights, as anti-national and a vehicle for the destruction of national unity. Fear of the movement that wanted to challenge the urban bourgeois milieu's traditional lifestyle, order, and prosperity, or at least the prospect of prosperity, played a decisive role in this. The vehement invocation of bourgeois unity after the revolution can thus also be seen as an attempt to prevent the middle class, now threatened with impoverishment, from sliding to the left. Despite all the liberal traditions in the Duchy of Coburg, the working class had always been excluded from the proclaimed and demanded equality of opportunity and rights. The rejection of social democracy was increasingly linked to a rejection of the republic, which was seen as dominated by social democrats. Upon the death of Reich President Friedrich Ebert, the city prohibited

171 See Chapter II2.3.2.
172 *Coburger Zeitung newspaper* dated January 23, 1912.

For example, the provision of the State Theater for a memorial service and during a "Republican Day" organized by the SPD in the summer of 1928, the majority of the citizenry refused to participate, prompting Coburg Social Democrat Franz Klingler to complain to the out-of-town guests about the "reactionary attitude of the Coburg philistines, who just can't get over the title of purveyor to the court."[173] Even the officially invited representatives of the authorities stayed away from the event, some without even sending a letter of apology.

However, the actual threat from the left proved to be much less real in Coburg than in its Thuringian neighbors. There were no communist assassination attempts or bomb threats here, so anti-Marxism tended to have pathological traits. In a continuation of the rivalry with Gotha, the former sister city and "red" Thuringia, which had been shaken by communist unrest in the early 1920s, now served as a negative foil and had an enormous influence on the political orientation and mood in Coburg. On the one hand, the demarcation from "red" Thuringia and the "red stronghold" of Gotha actively contributed to the establishment of a bourgeois identity in Coburg. On the other hand, the communist threat in the immediate vicinity and its influence on the working-class villages in the Coburg area became a specter that had a direct impact on the thinking and behavior of the bourgeoisie in Coburg and became an instrument for anti-socialist politics. The Coburg civil service, which had already attracted attention during the German Empire for its anti-worker stance,[174] now made no secret of its anti-socialist attitude. District administrator Franz Dehler, who was appointed as a political police officer within the district office and openly rejected the republic despite his position as a Bavarian civil servant, is a prime example of this.[175] The behavior of district administrator and city commissioner Dr. Ernst Fritsch [176] was also primarily characterized by fear of the working class, and preventing left-wing unrest was the main motive behind his actions.[177] As a prominent representative of Coburg's bourgeoisie and an important political decision-maker, his actions had a significant influence on political developments in the Vestestadt. Fritsch repeatedly opposed the actions of the working class and, for example, banned advertising rallies for the republican idea of the state. [178]

173 *Coburger Volksblatt*, July 2, 1928.

174 See ibid.

175 See Schmehle: Arbeiterbewegung, p. 69.

176 See in particular Dehler's role as chairman of the Coburg veterans' associations and the Vaterländische Arbeitsgemeinschaft (Patriotic Working Group) in Chapter II2.2.1.

177 Born on August 9, 1880, in Grein an der Donau, Fritsch studied law in Munich, Berlin, and Jena before completing his preparatory service at the public prosecutor's office and the Coburg Regional Court, among other places. After obtaining his doctorate and passing his second state examination, Fritsch initially worked as a district judge in Neustadt bei Coburg from 1911, from 1912 as a district administrator assessor in Coburg, and after completing his military service, as a government councilor at the State Ministry in Coburg and finally as a ministerial director and board member at the State Ministry in Coburg, where he continued Hermann Quarck's national-liberal course after the latter's resignation. Playing a key role in the negotiations for annexation to Bavaria, the senior government councilor took over as chairman of the Coburg district office and the city commissariat for the cities of Coburg, Neustadt b. Coburg, and Rodach, as well as the Coburg administrative district. See Penzholz: Beliebt, p. 472.

178 See Fritsch's conduct in the run-up to the "3rd German Day" in Coburg in 1922 in Chapter II2.2.3.

179 See, for example, Dr. Fritsch to the Neustadt City Council, July 16, 1923. StadtACo A 8376; Dr. Fritsch to Franz Klingler, September 13, 1923. StadtACo A 8377.

The constant spread of rumors about communist crimes or alleged deaths further fueled the situation.[180] As a result, the state police, stationed in Coburg from 1921 onwards, felt compelled to conduct numerous exercises simulating a communist takeover of Coburg or the liberation of the fortress from communist hands, which had a decisive impact on the daily work of police officers. Consisting of career officers and many professional soldiers, the members of the state police under Major Hans Bernhardt, with their national-conservative attitude rooted in the German Empire, had a formative influence on the public climate in Coburg. ([181]) Similarly, the members of the Hundertschaft attracted attention with their anti-Semitic insults and willingness to use violence against Klingler, the Social Democratic member of the Coburg state parliament.[182] The situation escalated for the first time on the so-called "Coburg Bloody Saturday" in September 1921, when an unauthorized demonstration by Coburg workers was violently broken up by the state police.[183] Coburg police chief Hermann Worch, who was very pro-worker in his official capacity and had been elected to the city council for the SPD in 1919,[184] had antagonized large sections of the population and the civil service and was replaced in 1922 by the more nationally reliable candidate Wilhelm Janzen after numerous investigations and disciplinary proceedings.[185]

Nevertheless, the bourgeoisie was by no means blind to the pressing social issues of the time. However, it was not a say for the working class on an equal footing, but rather charity that had been the means by which the bourgeoisie had sought to solve the social question in a hierarchically structured society since the German Empire. Numerous charitable associations, such as the Alexandrinen-Diakonissen-Verein für Armen- und Krankenpflege (Alexandrine Deaconess Association for the Care of the Poor and Sick), the Erziehungsverein (Education Association), the Frauenverein (Women's Association), the Landesverein für Innere Mission im Herzogtum Coburg (State Association for Inner Mission in the Duchy of Coburg) and the Marienverein (Marian Association) addressed various social problems. A number of foundations and legacies provided the financial basis for their work. Traditionally, citizens initially took on the care of the poor on a voluntary basis, with the urban area divided into districts, each of which was supervised by a head and ten poor relief workers, who each looked after and supported a few poor people.

2.1.1.5 National Protestantism

Religion served as another link connecting the bourgeois world. A purely Protestant state church had developed in Coburg, which was particularly liberal in character, especially under Ernst II. Even after joining the Bavarian regional church, church life in Coburg was characterized by a number of distinctive features that affected both the pastors, who were traditionally trained at the University of Jena, and the faithful. Neither the revivalist movement that permeated the Franconian environment nor t h e firmly established

180 See *Coburger Zeitung* of September 9, 1923.
181 See Erdmann: Coburg, p. 61.
182 See various tasks for inspections and exercises of the Coburg Hundred. StACo Landespolizeikommando 14; *Coburger Volksblatt* of October 9, 1922. On the Bavarian State Police, see Schuler, Emil: Die Bayerische Landespolizei 1919–1935. Munich 1964.
183 See Chapter II2.3.2.
184 See *Coburger Zeitung newspaper* dated May 13, 1919.
185 See municipal council resolution of October 7, 1921. StadtACo A 6417.

Neither Pietism nor the "Erlangen School" had a significant influence on the development of piety and church attendance in Coburg. [186]Since Protestant dominance meant that there was little contact with the Catholic Church and the Catholic faith, there was initially no direct confrontation promoting confession of faith until the annexation to Bavaria. In terms of church attendance and willingness to donate to the church,Coburg was well below the average of other Bavarian Protestant communities. Although the religious character of the former duchy differed from that of the rural national Protestant milieu in the surrounding Protestant Franconia, the church in the Coburg region also remained a meaningful and politicizing institution. Here, too, Protestantism was permeated by nationalist and monarchist elements in the contemporary interpretation of Luther's "two kingdoms doctrine," resulting in a close connection between nationalist religion and religious nationalism.

Protestantism and German Christianity

The influence of national conservative to völkisch-oriented pastors in the tradition of Protestant thinking, who understood Lutheranism as German Christianity and invoked national uniqueness and superiority, led to Christian bourgeois values becoming intertwined with the national worldview. The traditionally close ties between political and ecclesiastical issues in Coburg were particularly conducive to the process of merging national and religious identities within Protestantism.[189] Curt Weiß,who served as a pastor in Coburg from 1918 and as dean from 1928, and the parish newsletter of the city and countryside of Coburg, the *Heimatglocken*, for which he was jointly responsible, propagated slogans of perseverance in the spirit of a theology of war and "war Protestantism" during the First World War and underlined the expectation of leadership in the bourgeois camp with specifically Christian and Protestant elements. ([190]) Curt Weiß,born in Sonneberg in 1886, was influenced by a theological

186 For more on the specific characteristics of the Coburg regional church, see Axmann: Landeskirche and Weber: Hand-lungsspielräume, pp. 95–115.

187 See Weber: Handlungsspielräume, pp. 98 f., 106 f.

188 See Hübinger, Gangolf: Sakralisierung der Nation und Formen des Nationalismus im deutschen Protestantismus (Sacralization of the Nation and Forms of Nationalism in German Protestantism). In: Krumeich, Gerd; Lehmann, Hartmut (eds.): Gott mit uns (God with Us). Nation, Religion, and Violence in the 19th and Early 20th Centuries. Göttingen 2000, pp. 233–247. On the national Protestant milieu, cf. Gailus, Manfred; Lehmann, Hartmut (eds.): National Protestant Mentalities. Contours, Developmental Lines, and Upheavals of a Worldview (= Publications of the Max Planck Institute for History, vol. 214). Göttingen 2005 and Kittel, Manfred: Province between Empire and Republic. Political Mentalities in Germany and France 1918–1933/36 (= Sources and Representations of Contemporary History, Volume 47). Munich 2000.

189 See Becker, Frank: Protestant Euphoria. 1870/71, 1914 and 1933. In: Gailus, Manfred; Lehmann, Hartmut (eds.): National Protestant Mentalities in Germany (1870–1970). Konturen, Entwicklungslinien und Umbrüche eines Weltbildes (= Publications of the Max Planck Institute for History, Volume 214). Göttingen 2005, pp. 19–44, here p. 33.

190 Cf. Habel: Gewissheiten, pp. 52–57. On the specifics of wartime Protestantism, cf. Brakelmann, Günter: Der Kriegsprotestantismus 1870/71 und 1914–1918. Einige Anmerkungen. In: Gailus, Manfred; Lehmann, Hartmut (eds.): National Protestant Mentalities in Germany (1870–1970). Contours, Lines of Development, and Upheavals of a Worldview (= Publications of the Max Planck Institute for History, Volume 214). Göttingen 2005, pp. 103–114 and Bergen, Doris: "War Protestantism" in Germany, 1914–1945. In: Gailus, Manfred; Lehmann, Hartmut (eds.): National Protestant Mentalities in Germany (1870–1970). Konturen, Entwicklungslinien und Umbrüche eines Weltbildes (= Publications of the Max Planck Institute for History, Volume 214). Göttingen 2005, pp. 115–131.

Studying at the University of Jena, he was socialized in the traditional sense of liberal theology and in the 1920s emerged as a typical representative of a national Protestant mentality and a pastor with a clear political stance. Weiß appeared as a church official primarily at flag consecrations of various clubs and associations based in Coburg, ritually linking Protestantism and nationalism. By invoking national and ethnic unity across party lines in order to overcome the plight of the German people, he served the bourgeois-nationalist narrative.[191] The *Heimatglocken,* which remained the dominant church newspaper in the Coburg area and was not displaced by the Bavarian Sonntagsblatt, was also notable for the publication of numerous anti-Catholic, anti-communist, and racist-ethnic articles, thus reflecting the attitude of the national bourgeoisie and reinforcing it in turn.[192]

The Protestant heritage was also emphasized by a display of veneration for Luther, whereby the reformer's stay at the Veste was reinterpreted nationally. Coburg's close connection with Luther after his six-month stay at the Veste in 1530 was stylized as proof of its chosen status in order to construct a cultural tradition, which was commemorated above all with ritual monuments in the Luther years of 1917 and 1930. A stone memorial, which was planned in 1917 in the form of a five-meter-high statue on the Veste itself, was intended to make the connection between Coburg's landmark and the reformer visible from afar, but could not be realized due to financing difficulties during the World War. Instead, Duke Carl Eduard donated the equestrian sculpture *Licht und Kraft (Light and Power),* designed by Hans Klett, from his own pocket, which stylizes the reformer naked on a horse as a bringer of light. In addition, Carl Eduard forged plans to have the Veste officially renamed Luther-Veste. For the Luther Year in 1930, a Luther relief by Edmund Meusel was installed in the courtyard of the Veste, and Coburg's Protestant tradition was celebrated in many different ways. Numerous publications and events ensured that the anniversary year had a lasting impact on the everyday life of Coburg's residents, both in terms of time and space. Through a combination of festive church services, lectures, concerts, theater performances, a Luther exhibition, and large-scale commemorative and thanksgiving celebrations, which culminated in the Luther Days on May 17 and 18, the entire cultural life of the city and the activities of its associations were united around the reformer and his connection to Coburg.[193] The participation of the former Duchess Viktoria Adelheid in all events also served to build bridges to the ducal past. [194]

After 1920, this cultural Protestantism also found its justification in a clear distinction from Catholic Bavaria and social democracy. The emphasis on their own Protestant tradition also served as a means of self-assurance and self-assertion, especially since Protestant Coburg had been absorbed into Catholic Bavaria. Questions of independence and confessional concerns became intertwined when the government in Munich was accused of confessional paternalism. When, in July 1925, at a meeting of the hospital association committee, senior government official Viktor

191 See, for example, Curt Weiß's speech at the flag dedication ceremony of the Upper Franconian Sharpshooters' Association in August 1923 in: *Coburger Zeitung*, August 7, 1923.
192 See Weber: Handlungsspielräume, p. 110.
193 For the program of the Luther Year, see *Coburger Zeitung*, February 20, 1930.
194 See *Coburger Zeitung newspaper* dated May 19, 1930.

When Blum from the Ministry of Finance brought up the idea of hiring Catholic nurses as maids at the Coburg hospital, he sparked a scandal that lasted for over half a year. After Munich raised the specter of Coburg becoming Catholic, only the intervention of district administrator Dr. Fritsch was able to resolve the conflict.[195] It was already clear at this point that Coburg's unique situation after World War I presented very specific challenges for local politics in Coburg, which were similar in some respects to developments in the Franconian region surrounding the city, but at the same time also constituted a special case.

2.1.2 Bourgeois local politics in Coburg

2.1.2.1 Fundamentals and history of bourgeois local politics

Since 1331, Coburg had enjoyed the right to free self-government and its own jurisdiction. In 1381, Heinrich Münzmeister was mentioned as Coburg's first mayor, who, together with a council of 12 members elected since 1424, governed the city. The organizational patent of March 12, 1803, established the city administration, now titled the magistrate, consisting of a police mayor, a justice mayor, a syndic, and six senators, who were to belong not to the learned but to the commercial class.[196] In the 1820s, the citizens of Coburg finally demanded that the participation of the people in the administration of the city be institutionalized. After lengthy disputes between the citizens of Coburg and the state government over the creation and formation of an independent administration, a *provisional* Coburg city ordinance was enacted in 1846, which, in addition to a magistrate consisting of a mayor, a city treasurer, and six magistrate councilors, introduced a city councilassembly consisting of 18 members, who were elected for four years by absolute majority in each district. While the mayor presided over the magistrate, the city council was headed by a representative who changed annually. Together, they presided over the large municipal council, which met monthly, and the joint meetings of the magistrate and the city councilors. If there were differences of opinion within this body, the large municipal council was to meet under the sole chairmanship of the mayor. The city council had the right to information on all municipal matters, with the exception of justice and police, reviewed the cash reports, and had to give its approval for contractual matters, the issuance of bonds, changes in municipal taxes, and the granting of honorary citizenship. The magistrate's responsibilities, in turn, consisted of "the appointment of municipal employees, the preparation of the deliberations of the city council, the incurring of debt, church and school matters, the administration of public institutions and foundations, and the admission and obligation of new citizens."([197]) The approval of the state government was then only required for the

195 See various letters: Blum to Fritsch, November 30, 1925, Fritsch to Blum, December 2, 1925, Weiß to Fritsch, December 12, 1925, minutes of the meeting between Weiß and Fritsch, December 8, 1925, Pastor Ott to Weiß, September 15, 1925, Fritsch to Ernst Külbel, December 14, 1925, Fritsch to Blum, January 27, 1926. StACo LRA 12855.

196 See Reißenweber, Salomon: Das Rundauge. Coburg und seine Geschichte. Coburg 1869, p. 75.

197 Dressel, Carl-Christian: Die Entwicklung von Verfassung und Verwaltung in Sachsen-Coburg 1800–1826 im Vergleich (Schriften zur Verfassungsgeschichte, vol. 79). Berlin 2007, p. 530.

The collection of taxes, the annual budgets, the sale of real estate, and the raising of loans were necessary.[198] Following minor changes in the wake of the founding of the German Empire and due to the city's steadily growing population, the municipal administration was headed by two mayors, a city planning officer, and, from 1901 at the latest, eight magistrates and 18 city councilors.[199] In addition, there was an administrative staff of 75 municipal officials, excluding those of the municipal savings bank and the municipal utilities, for a total population of 23,649, which was a significant increase compared to 28 officials in 1865 for a population of 10,463, and disproportionate to the growth in the city'sproportionally to population growth. [200]

The magistrate was primarily made up of representatives of the upper middle class and business community, i.e., merchants, purveyors to the court, private individuals, manufacturers, and judicial officers, which allowed the economic and social elites to secure their influence on municipal affairs.[201] The city council elected the mayor before he was confirmed by the duke. As a result of the special electoral law of the Coburg Municipal Act of February 22, 1867, it initially remained merely a representative body of the civic community, rather than an actual community of residents. Only those who could purchase citizenship for 10 marks were eligible to vote in the city council elections. ([202])However, only about one-third of the workers were able to afford this sum due to their financial situation and the need to change their place of residence frequently in order to earn a living, so they were unable to express their will to vote and be represented politically. In addition, they had to prove to the magistrate that they had "legal independence and independent means of subsistence," a "good reputation," and "proof of assets securing their livelihood or a certain secure source of income."([203])Despite significant population growth, the number of citizens did not increase proportionally due to this extremely restrictive suffrage. The lack of proportional representation in the election of city councilors also made it difficult for workers' representatives to actively participate in city administration.([204]) This imbalance was clearly reflected in the fact that, until 1918, the proportion of eligible voters in state and Reichstag elections was always significantly higher than in municipal elections. The city council was therefore dominated by representatives of the economic and educated middle classes, who sometimes rose to positions in the municipal administration. Only in 1917 did a Social Democrat, Karl Wöhner, enter the city parliament.

198 See Sauerteig: Bürgerbuch, pp. 6–15, and Dressel: Verfassung, pp. 477–486, 516 f., 529–531.
199 See city directories from 1893, 1897, 1899, and 1901.
200 See Dehler, Franz: The Administration of the City of Coburg in the Last 70 Years. In: Commemorative Publication for the 600th Anniversary of Coburg's Self-Government. StACo LRA 12855.
201 See address books of the city of Coburg.
202 For sons of citizens and persons irrevocably employed in domestic court, state, school, and church service, the citizen's tax was only 2 marks. See Address book of the ducal residence city of Coburg for the year 1913, p. 302.
203 See Sauerteig: Bürgerbuch, p. 4, and address book of the ducal residence city of Coburg for the year 1913, p. 302.
204 See *Coburger Volksblatt* of March 13, 1914.
205 See address books of the city of Coburg.
206 See Schmehle: Arbeiterbewegung, p. 166.

The politics of dignitaries

The hallmark of bourgeois local politics was dignitaries acting as links between the urban bourgeoisie and political events. Dignitaries held a prominent position within society, were usually also established in bourgeois associations, and volunteered their time to guide the fortunes of the city. Their economic independence allowed them to take on leading positions on a part-time basis while maintaining their own financial interests. Their commitment to the bourgeois community was an honorary service and part of the bourgeois self-image. (207) Accordingly, political parties played a subordinate role in local politics in the German Empire. Moreover, there was broad consensus that they had no role to play in the success of bourgeois local politics. Thanks to their elevated economic status and social prestige, the city's dignitaries were entrusted with acting for the benefit of the entire population and dealing primarily with factual issues. At the swearing-in of Mayor Gustav Hirschfeld in December 1897, Privy Councilor Edmund von Wittken emphasized: "Nothing is more dangerous for local government than party politics. All authorities called upon to participate in local government must always and solely have the welfare of the city in mind and not allow any other considerations to prevail."[208]Although bourgeois interest groups repeatedly joined forces, they did so primarily in connection with elections, for which they mobilized voters within the urban bourgeois milieu. There was no real party affiliation in the bourgeois camp; rather, the political level remained person-centered.

Local politics was therefore bourgeois interest politics, whereby the liberal ideals and principles of the leading gentlemen, such as equality before the law or the emphasis on political freedom, did not extend to the working class. Since social prestige was an important element in the self-definition of the dignitaries, the representatives of the workers remained excluded from this understanding. The lack of social status among workers was equated with a lack of competence within the urban bourgeois milieu, disregarding all social realities. Until 1918, social democratic representatives were thus largely excluded from local politics, in contrast to state and imperial politics.

Within this system, the mayor was measured by the same standards. Impartiality and political neutrality were therefore among the cornerstones of the office, and the welfare of the bourgeois urban community was the consensual goal of his work. In the interests of the bourgeoisie, it was emphasized "that a mayor must above all, without looking to the right or left, independently follow the path that the law and his conscience show him to be the path of justice, that a mayor must never allow himself to be influenced by partisanship. If he always follows the straight path and never allows himself to be influenced, he will be able to maintain the trust that the citizens placed in him when he took office, and it is only the trust of the citizens that promises him success in his work."(209)

207 See also on the administration of dignitaries: Weber, Max: Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft (Economy and Society). Tübingen 1922, p. 170.

208 *Coburger Zeitung* newspaper, December 2, 1897.

209 Ibid.

Within the urban bourgeois milieu, a system had thus been established that satisfied its members and met their demands for order and tranquility. Hermann Quarck characterizes the nature of the Coburgers in the German Empire, somewhat disrespectfully and certainly exaggeratedly, as follows: "He was proud of his princely house and of its and the government's care in many matters, and he was also happy to claim the achievements of the past, including the favor of nature, which smiled on Coburg, as his own merit, especially in front of strangers; but on the whole, he wanted to be left in peace and did not like to be disturbed by difficult questions in his somewhat Phaeacian existence."[210] A key pillar of the townspeople's self-confidence was the prosperity of the town itself, which was achieved through deliberately low tax rates, particularly to the benefit of the many private individuals and members of the economic bourgeoisie. The town's ownership of forests, fields, and the municipal savings bank, which proved to be a
"true gold mine" for the city, the city's municipal budget was generous.[211]

2.1.2.2 Structural change after 1919/20

The foundations of this proven system changed permanently with the outbreak of the revolution. The law of March 29, 1919, abolished the regulations governing the acquisition of citizenship, i.e., the hurdle of the citizen's income, the census, and proof of self-employment, so that it was now available to all German men and women who had reached the age of 20 and had been resident in Coburg for at least six months or who had Coburg-Gotha citizenship. The number of eligible voters thus rose significantly from 1,652 in 1913 to 15,590. The official initiation ceremony, the citizen's oath, was also abolished from then on. ([212])This democratization of the right to vote had an immediate effect in the first election to the city council on May 11, 1919. Twenty-one representatives were now elected to the city council according to proportional representation. The Social Democrats, who were now represented in the city parliament for the first time in proportion to their share of the population, won nine seats with 4,288 votes. The DDP also won nine seats with 3,872 votes and provided the city council chairman, while the national-liberal German People's Party (DVP) won three seats with 1,601 votes. Four Social Democrats, three Democrats, and one member of the People's Party were elected to the magistrate by the city councilors.

New forms and developments in local politics

After joining Bavaria, Coburg finally introduced the Bavarian unicameral system, so that an elected city council consisting of 25 honorary members was established, headed by the first mayor. The first mayor was assisted by the second mayor, a professional lawyer, and a building inspector. Within the local parliament, Mayor Gustav Hirschfeld had retained his office even after the revolution, thus representing a personified line of continuity between the German Empire and the Weimar Republic. He embodied a typical

210 Quarck: letzte Zeiten, p. 13.
211 *Coburger Zeitung*, December 2, 1897.
212 See Sauerteig: Verwaltung, p. 318.
213 In local government, most (lord) mayors and councilors remained in office even after 1919. Cf. Schäfer: Geschichte, p. 201.

Representative of the era of great mayors, having served a total of 27 years as mayor and 38 years in the service of the city. Even his contemporaries spoke of a "Hirschfeld era," which was honored by the city with the award of honorary citizenship and the naming of a street after him upon his retirement in 1924.[214] Hirschfeld was originally from Kassel. After studying law in Fritzlar, he worked as an assistant judge and joined the city's civil service as treasurer in 1887. He served as deputy mayor from 1894 to 1897 and was also a member of the Coburg state parliament.[215] He did not belong to any party, but was considered a national liberal in his basic attitude. During the revolution, Mayor Hirschfeld, in consultation with the city council chairman, had submitted to the demands of the workers' and soldiers' council as representative of the municipal administration and continued to run the city's affairs under the council. Although the workers' and soldiers' council moved into a room in the town hall and held office hours there, it did not interfere in any way with the management of the city administration. ([216])

While the traditional lines of pre-war local politics remained the interpretative framework even after the revolution, the changed circumstances presented them with decisive challenges. The bourgeois world continued to uphold local self-government as a *neutral* field in which party politics should take a back seat to practical issues, as the ideal for local politics. However, the democratization of local politics brought about by the revolution and the upheaval could no longer be reconciled with purely bourgeois interest politics. The SPD now represented a force that could not be ignored, and the Social Democrats' claim to solve the problems of the working class themselves, rather than relying on mere bourgeois welfare policies, put particular interests on the agenda.[217] This political change also took place in relation to the public sphere. Whereas this had initially been dominated by the liberal to conservative urban elite, which had a kind of monopoly on interpretation in the *Coburger Zeitung* and the *Coburger Tageblatt*, the establishment of *the* social democratic *Coburger Volksblatt* brought about a noticeable democratization and diversification of the dissemination of information. It was now no longer possible to successfully suppress social democratic influences from the centers of power and social interaction.

The city's once stable financial policy became a disruptive factor and a persistent problem in post-revolutionary local politics. The city administration had taken on the new task of managing and running the former court theater in order to ensure its continued existence. As the new sponsor of the state theater, it had to cover 60% of the costs, which significantly exceeded the city's financial capacity. While the city budget had remained stable during the war and even recorded additional revenue from 1916 to 1920

214 *Coburger Zeitung* newspaper, April 24, 1924.
215 *Coburger Zeitung newspaper* dated January 5, 1887, and December 2, 1897.
216 See Sauerteig: Verwaltung, pp. 313–319.
217 See Schäfer: History, pp. 202 f. Hermann Quarck saw social democracy as the destroyer of "God's peace," allowing "party spirit" to enter local politics. See Quarck: Recent Times, p. 38.
218 The citizens' association, as a body that prepared the mayoral election, for example, represented a last bastion of the bourgeoisie's claim to leadership in local politics. See *Coburger Zeitung* of February 22, 1924.
219 See Chapter IV1.2.1.1.

From 1920/21 onwards, it reported considerable deficits, such as RM 47 million on the eve of hyperinflation in December 1922. The new Reich order also no longer allowed municipalities to levy income taxes according to actual needs. The favorable taxes that had attracted wealthy residents were now abolished as a result of the tax reforms introduced by Finance Minister Matthias Erzberger in 1920.([221) In return, the city administration was forced to raise taxes and introduce special taxes to relieve the burden on the city budget. The enactment of a railway and paving tax, a luxury housing tax, a tourist tax, a beverage tax, and a housing construction tax, as well as increases in entertainment tax and surcharges on trade, property, and building taxes, significantly curtailed commercial and civic life in Coburg.[222]Only by taking out loans and bonds, receiving Reich subsidies, and printing emergency money was it possible to prevent the city from becoming insolvent.

After 1920, one of the most important tasks of city politics was to explore the relationship with the Free State of Bavaria and the Reich and to find and assert a place within the Bavarian state. The fact that the Duke no longer held the political leadership role, that the immediacy of the decision-making process was no longer there, and that instead politicians and authorities in distant Munich determined the fate of the Vestestadt, required a long process of adjustment, in which the Bavarian state was often constructed as a common enemy. The fact that in 1920 a Coburg hundred-strong force was set up from parts of the Bamberg state police to maintain peace and order and to counter espionage, and in May 1921 was transferred to the Selle barracks in Coburg, which was under the authority of the Upper Franconia Regional Council and the Bayreuth State Police Command, repeatedly led to clashes with the city administration.with the city administration. [223]

In particular, Coburg's special rights, which were guaranteed by the state treaty, such as co-financing of the state theater or issues relating to Coburg savings bank law, caused political controversy in the 1920s and became points of contention in the struggle for recognition. The lines of conflict became clearly apparent in 1928, when the dispute over the revaluation of the savings banks in the Coburg region came to a head. On the one hand, the Bavarian representatives were accused of deliberately deceiving the people of Coburg with their promises during the transition to Bavaria and now squeezing the city like a lemon. On the other hand, they argued that the state treaty had been entirely in favor of the Vestestadt and that Coburg had to abandon the idea of seeing the treaty as a tool for getting everything it needed out of Bavaria.

2.1.2.3 Political change

Against the backdrop of these problems, local politics underwent significant change in the 1920s. On the one hand, the liberal traditions of the duchy were lost

220 See minutes of the city council meeting of December 29, 1922. StadtACo A 8070.
221 See Altenstädter, Ernst: Finances. In: Ungelenk, Ludwig (ed.): Coburg in World War I, 1914–18. A memorial and monument of gratitude. Coburg 1922, pp. 322–327.
222 See Erdmann: Coburg, pp. 68–70.
223 See ibid., p. 84.
224 See minutes of the city council meeting of April 12, 1928. StACo LRA 12855.

rapidly declined in importance and were supplanted by an increasingly nationalistic ideology. On the other hand, a process of dissolution of the traditional legitimization of political responsibility emerged, as the weaknesses of the system of local dignitaries in local politics were exposed and the bourgeois dignitaries had lost the trust of a majority of Coburg's citizens.

In the first election to the city council in May 1919, the left-liberal DDP still rejected an electoral alliance with the national-liberal DVP,(225) but the bourgeois forces already ran as a united front on a united citizens' list in the city council election on November 13, 1921, as they had done in the election to the Coburg state assembly in February 1919[226] , as a united front on a *United Citizens' List*.[227] With the aim of defending the bourgeois economic and social order against socialist aspirations, the city's bourgeoisie had joined forces against social democracy. At the same time, this election was a clear commitment to bourgeois local politics. The SPD, with 26% of the vote, together with the USPD, with 8% and eight seats, now faced a bourgeois unity that had won 65% of the vote and 17 seats.[228]Contrary to the decisions of their Reichstag faction, the liberal-democratic forces, which were part of the Weimar coalition at the Reich level together with the Social Democrats, formed an alliance with the anti-republican DNVP in Coburg. As a result, the Jewish lawyer Kuno Hirsch now sat side by side with representatives of an openly anti-Semitic party on the Coburg city council. In addition to Hirsch, other former city councilors or magistrates, such as the merchants Alexander Koch, Karl Balzer, and Max Lenk, the court baker Wilhelm Feyler, and the wood products manufacturer Karl Senkeisen, also gained seats on the city council.

However, in the wake of the political and economic unrest of the early 1920s, it became apparent that, beyond a shared nationalism and anti-socialism, cracks were appearing within the bourgeois camp as a result of the crisis. In particular, the fact that the democratically oriented left-wing liberals were in part willing to cooperate with the Social Democrats drew an increasingly clear dividing line within the bourgeois camp. The once strong left-liberal camp within the city rapidly declined in the years following the inflation crisis, and a large part of its supporters had migrated to the national-liberal, conservative to völkisch camp. Even the once left-liberal *Coburger Tageblatt* declared in an advertisement in November 1924 that it no longer wanted to function as a party newspaper, but was committed to neutral reporting. The newspaper even added the subtitle "impartial organ" and was thus able to maintain its readership as the leading daily newspaper in the Coburg region.[229] A de-liberalization of the bourgeoisie became apparent. The founding of a Coburg local group of *the National Liberal Party in Bavaria* (NLLP) revealed the programmatic crisis and disorientation within liberalism in Coburg as well. [230] Due to an overly left-liberal

225 See *Coburger Zeitung* of May 11, 1919.

226 In the city of Coburg, this "bourgeois list" was able to gain a 51% share of the vote at the beginning of 1919, ahead of the SPD with 49%.

227 See *Coburger Zeitung newspaper* dated November 2, 1921.

228 See *Coburger Zeitung newspaper* dated November 14, 1921.

229 See Sauerteig: Zeitungsgeschichte, pp. 118–123.

230 On the National Liberal Party of Bavaria, see Müller, Petrus: Nationalliberale Landespartei in Bayern (NLLP), 1924–1927. In: Historisches Lexikon Bayerns. URL: https://www.historisches-lexikon-bayerns.de/Lexikon/Nationalliberale_Landespartei_in_Bayern_(NLLP),_1924–1927 (last accessed September 17, 2021).

Under the leadership of Gustav Stresemann, the Coburg representatives of the NLLP announced their withdrawal from the DVP in January 1924. Under the chairmanship of Third Mayor Dr. Gebhardt, the NLLP in Coburg advocated a policy oriented toward the German People's Party and thus exemplary for national Protestant Franconia, where the NLLP was able to achieve electoral success. The Coburg National Liberals' affiliation with the NLLP can therefore be seen as an attempt to represent an anti-democratic and republic-skeptical stance while at the same time distancing themselves from the nationalist camp.

The 1924 mayoral election

In the midst of this process of upheaval, the mayoral election in May 1924 made it very clear what conflicts were brewing behind the façade of bourgeois unity and leading the traditional conventions of local politics into a dead end. To succeed Mayor Gustav Hirschfeld, the election committee of the citizens' association nominated Dr. Roesener, a government councilor from Würzburg, and Franz Dehler, the co-burgher district administrator and chairman of *the Patriotic Working Group*, who wanted to win the votes of the nationalist camp, among others. The third candidate, Erich Unverfährt, the independent mayor of Arnstadt, had particularly impressed the audience with his rhetorical skills during the candidates' personal presentations and was supported in particular by the liberal-democratic forces of the bourgeoisie.[232]The Social Democrats, whose own candidate would not have been able to achieve an absolute majority of the votes due to bourgeois opposition and who wanted to prevent a candidate supported by the nationalists from winning, decided not to field their own mayoral candidate and called for the election of Erich Unverfährt. With the support of the Social Democrats, Unverfährt ultimately received 4,964 votes, Dehler 4,155, and Dr. Roesener 1,717. The majority of the bourgeois camp had visibly thrown its support behind the "local candidate" Franz Dehler[233], who was backed by the *Patriotic Working Group* and several clubs and associations from the national-military camp. During the election campaign, Dehler, a lawyer and district administrator, presented himself as a nationalist and patriotic representative of the middle class, but also of the economically disadvantaged, who would stand up against the corruption of the upper-class dignitaries in the city council. By propagating his obvious lack of political impartiality, he also attempted to appeal to the bourgeois camp as a whole.

231 See *Coburger Zeitung newspaper* dated December 15, 1923, and January 10, 1924.

232 See *Coburger Zeitung newspaper* dated May 23, 1924.

233 Born in Coburg on June 1, 1888, Wilhelm Franz Dehler soon became a promising candidate for a civil service career in the Duchy of Coburg after studying law in Kiel, Heidelberg, and Jena. After completing his preparatory service, including in the ducal Saxe-Coburg civil service, interrupted by military and war service at the Coburg district office, he served as district administrator in Coburg from November 1920 to October 1928. As an expert lawyer, he was involved in key areas of the Coburg administration, made proposals for simplifying the state, and, under the patronage of district administrator Dr. Fritsch, was firmly established in the bourgeois camp. See reference for Franz Dehler by Ernst Fritsch. StACo LRA 12855 and curriculum vitae in the personnel file of Franz Dehler. BayHStA MInn 83342; *Bayerische Ostmark* of July 27, 1938. For more on Franz Dehler, see also Chapter III.2.2.4.2.

234 See leaflet from the Coburg Patriotic Working Group on the mayoral election. StACo Contemporary History Collection.

Since none of the candidates had achieved the necessary absolute majority, the final decision had to be made by the city council in accordance with Bavarian self-government law. This was an election result that the conservative-nationalist camp had been determined to prevent. (235) Although Dehler had received the majority of votes from Coburg residents in the national camp, only four city council members voted for him in the first round, ten for Dr. Roesener, and 13 for Erich Unverfähr. In the subsequent runoff election, in which Dehler was completely eliminated, Dr. Roesener received 13 votes and Unverfähr 14, with eight votes coming from the Social Democrats and six from the bourgeois camp.[236] During the mayoral election campaign, District Administrator Dehler, who initially appeared to be the most promising candidate, had antagonized several Coburg dignitaries, such as the chairman of the local NLLP group, Dr. Gebhardt, with his behavior. Dr. Rudolf Gebhardt[237] as chairman of the Bismarck Tower Association, advocated national-liberal to conservative politics and, as a member of the educated middle class and acting third mayor, embodied Coburg's dignitaries. A generational conflict within the national camp was now becoming apparent, arising from differing responses to the current crises. While the long-established representatives of political life in Coburg insisted on the traditional neutrality of bourgeois local politics, the 36-year-old Dehler presented a new style of politics that did not shy away from personal attacks and sharp political debates. When he was presented as a candidate for mayor, members of various nationalist groups and veterans' associations had loudly supported him, and instead of calmly and objectively developing a program for the city administration, he had used his speech to sharply criticize the city council at the time.[238] Dr. Gebhardt, deterred by this, had actively contributed to Dehler's defeat in the city council election and supported candidates who were more in line with local political conventions.

Ultimately, however, it became apparent in the months that followed that Gebhardt's policies as chairman of the Civic Working Group had lost him the support of the majority of the national-liberal camp, which was increasingly aligning itself with the nationalist camp. At the extraordinary city council meeting to elect the mayor, city councilor and manufacturer Max Brose expressed his dissatisfaction with Gebhardt's conduct, blaming him for the fact that the bourgeois camp had not presented a united front on the mayoral issue. Brose immediately resigned from the city council and announced his withdrawal from the NLLP. (239)As a result, Dr. Gebhardt, who was denied
"patriotic reliability" in national and ethnic circles, also had to resign as chairman of the local group. A group of patriotic men submitted a statement against his re-election as city councilor, and he was not re-elected as third mayor of the city by a black-white-red majority. Instead, the position of honorary third mayor was abolished altogether.[240]

235 See *Coburger Zeitung* of May 21, 1924.
236 See *Coburger Zeitung* of June 5, 1924.
237 Dr. Rudolf Gebhardt was born in Coburg in 1859 and, after completing his studies, taught ancient languages at the Casimirianum in Coburg. He was also active in the Coburg branch of *the Pan-German League*. See *Coburger Zeitung*, January 13, 1927.
238 See Dr. Gebhardt's letter to Dr. Fritsch dated June 1, 1925. StACo LRA 12855.
239 See *Coburger Zeitung newspaper* dated June 5, 1924.
240 See letter from Franz Dehlers to Dr. Fritsch dated June 1, 1925. StACo LRA 12855.

Gebhardt's policy of avoiding political scandals and maintaining peace and order at the local political level through mediation, even with democratic forces, had failed against the backdrop of a tense political, social, and economic situation.

Although Erich Unverfähr, a moderate bourgeois candidate, had been elected mayor, the atmosphere within the city council had become significantly more tense. As the new mayor of Coburg, Erich Unverfähr had a difficult start from the outset due to the circumstances surrounding his election. Born in Lichterfelde near Berlin in 1885, Unverfähr was very experienced in local politics. After studying law and completing his legal clerkship in Berlin, he had already worked in local politics in Jena, as the mayor's representative in Gotha, as an assessor in Treptow, and as mayor in Arnstadt. With his emphatic non-partisanship and political neutrality, he represented the classic type of bourgeois administrative mayor. Despite his qualifications, the fact that he had only come to office with the help of the Social Democrats was to remain a millstone around his neck throughout his entire term of office. This was despite the fact that the NSDAP had confirmed Unverfähr's national reliability through Artur Dinter.[242]However, large sections of the bourgeois camp did not accept Unverfähr as head of the city in the following years, so that the 1924 mayoral election and Dr. Gebhardt's actions had considerably increased the loss of confidence in the local political system among parts of the Coburg population.

The city council election on December 7, 1924, finally revealed the newly differentiated political landscape in Coburg. The once dominant left-liberal DDP was only able to garner 9% of the vote. While the SPD, after merging with the USPD, ranked at 32% with slight losses, the nationally oriented bourgeoisie had gathered in the Vaterländischer Bürgerblock Schwarz-Weiß-Rot (Black-White-Red Patriotic Citizens' Bloc) with 28% and an association of the economic bourgeoisie, the Wirtschaftsblock (Economic Bloc), with 14%. For the first time, representatives of the Völkisch movement also stood for election and won 15% of the vote and four seats on the city council. Due to the ban on the NSDAP, the three National Socialists who stood for election joined the National Socialist Freedom Party.

Voter migration to conservative and nationalist agitation parties

Outside the city parliament, too, there was a clear shift among the middle classes away from moderate liberal parties toward conservative and nationalist agitation parties and ultimately the NSDAP. While in the election for the German National Assembly in the city, the SPD and the DDP each won 46% of the vote, and the DVP together with the DNVP only 8%, the Weimar coalition had already lost a significant number of votes in the Reichstag elections in June 1920. Here, the SPD won

241 See personnel file of Erich Unverfähr at the Ministry of Justice. BA R 3001/78836.

242 In May 1924, Georg Linke had sought information about the mayoral candidate from Artur Dinter, who later became Gauleiter of Thuringia. Dinter was friends with Unverfähr's father-in-law, Justice Councilor Jaenicke, who had been an avid nationalist and National Socialist in Arnstadt, and attested to Unverfähr's national reliability despite his official party political neutrality. In his letter, Dinter even stated that Unverfähr was secretly embarrassed to have been supported by Marxists and Democrats. See Artur Dinter to Georg Linke, May 31, 1924. StadtACo A 7894.

243 See *Coburger Zeitung*, December 8, 1924.

The USPD received 28% of the vote, the DDP 25%, and the DVP and DNVP, which ran on a joint ticket with the Coburg Farmers' Association, increased their share of the vote to 24% and 10%, respectively. The Catholic Bavarian People's Party (BVP) remained insignificant with only 2%.[244] The results in the district of Coburg were even more pronounced. [245] The year 1924, when voters were able to vote in mayoral and city council elections as well as one state parliament and two Reichstag elections, was to prove to be a year of crisis-induced flare-ups of radical voter potential in Coburg. In the state elections on April 6, the Protestant pastor Helmut Johnsen from Gauerstadt, a prominent representative of *the Young German Order (*Jungdo), ran for the Völkisch camp and immediately achieved an absolute majority in Coburg with 53% of the votes. While the SPD remained relatively constant at 31.78% and the KPD at 1.88%, the *United Patriotic Coburgers* achieved 12.60%. This electoral alliance brought together a broad spectrum of left-liberal, national-liberal, conservative, and völkisch parties that wanted to distinguish themselves from the Völkischer Blockin that they represented bourgeois unity as the only political dividing line against social democracy and, despite their undeniable national and, in some cases, völkisch orientation, did not want to see anti-Semitism placed above all else. [246]

However, following the crisis of the early 1920s, radical agitation had swept away a majority of Coburg's citizens, despite the bourgeois ideals that had been cultivated for decades. The Coburg vote for a radical right-wing course was much clearer than in the Reich, where the DNVP received 19.5% and the Völkischer Block and the National Socialist Freedom Party received 6.6%.[247] In the Reichstag elections on May 4, 1924, with a stable left-wing camp receiving 1.2% for the KPD, 0.5% for the USPD, and 32.5% for the SPD, the classic bourgeois parties DDP, DVP, and BVP together received only 11% and the DNVP 12%.[248] The Völkischer Block now accounted for 43% of the votes. However, the Reichstag elections on December 7, 1924, already showed that with the noticeable end of the economic and political crisis, which became apparent at the end of the year after inflation subsided and the Reich government and the Bavarian government stabilized, the radical voter potential was equally weakened. The radical Völkisch, who had joined the NSDAP's successor organization, the National Socialist Freedom Party, again lost significant votes to the DNVP. In contrast to the NSFP, it now regained 30% of the vote, up from 20%.([249])

With the formation of constantly new electoral alliances, which mobilized the bourgeois camp for the elections, and the continuation of interest-based politics, the politically active representatives of the urban bourgeoisie continued a characteristic of classic honorary politics in the Weimar Republic. However, they also contributed to the fact that the

244 See *Coburger Zeitung* of June 7, 1920.

245 Here, the DVP received 14%, the DNVP 22%, the DDP 18%, the SPD 32%, the USPD 12%, and the KPD and BVP 1% each. See ibid. and Stadtrat1: Overview of the election results in Coburg

246 See the report on the election meeting of the Heimattreuen Coburger (Coburg Loyalists) on March 27, 1924. In: *Coburger Zeitung*, March 29, 1924.

247 See Statistics of the German Reich 1928, III, pp. 96–98 and City Council1: Overview of the election results in Coburg.

248 See *Coburger Zeitung*, May 5, 1924.

249 See *Coburger Zeitung newspaper* dated December 8, 1924. See also City Council1: Overview of election results in Coburg.

The bourgeois milieu, which was in a state of upheaval, did not commit itself to any party, and none of the political parties in question was able to establish a solid membership base at the local level.[250] The formation of a bourgeois working group after the 1924 local elections under the leadership of the National Liberal Max Lenk initially continued to project an image of bourgeois unity to the outside world, but at the latest after the NSDAP left this alliance, the internal divisions within the bourgeois camp became evident. As the centrist parties oscillated between joining forces and voting in concert with the Social Democrats and the national conservative camp, fluctuations were also noticeable in day-to-day urban politics. For the population, accustomed to unanimous bourgeois local politics, this often amounted to political failure on the part of the city council. The imperial structures that people tried to hold on to proved outdated against the backdrop of the changed political reality, and their representatives were overwhelmed by the changed circumstances.

Added to this was the problem that the bourgeois parties were no longer able to cope with the advancing, exaggerated nationalism dominated by völkisch ideas. It was clear from the local elections that, with voter turnout at around 60%, which was noticeably lower than in national elections, many bourgeois citizens in particular did not cast their votes.[252] The success of the Völkisch movement in mobilizing voters for the 1924 state elections also indicates that those who abstained from voting were largely affiliated with the Völkisch camp, which no longer felt represented by bourgeois local politics. This resulted in a certain paralysis of the bourgeois political system and a loss of authority on the part of its representatives, leading to a slow alienation of parts of the petty bourgeoisie in particular from local politics. In return, the political sphere for this group had shifted to associations, where they were active as representatives of "true nationalism" and the Völkisch ideology. The fact that Pastor Johnsen, as a representative of the völkisch association system, which had fundamentally excluded itself from elections, achieved such a successful mobilization in 1924 demonstrates the enormous political power of this extra-political sphere.

2.2 Associations

2.2.1 Bourgeois association culture

A flourishing system of associations, guilds, and federations had been an integral part of bourgeois life since the heyday of the bourgeoisie in the 19th century. [253] Associations trusted

250 On the dissolution of the liberal "milieu," see Langewiesche, Dieter: Liberalismus in Deutschland. Frankfurt a. M. 1988, pp. 240–251.

251 The establishment in 1921 of a third, political mayor's office to represent the political parties and respond to the emerging differentiation between parties proved impracticable in everyday local politics due to the associated costs and administrative disruptions, and was withdrawn in 1924.

252 See complaints along these lines in *the Coburger Zeitung* of November 14, 1921.

253 On the interplay between party politics and associations in terms of socio-moral milieus, see Bösch, Frank: Das konservative Milieu. Vereinskultur und lokale Sammlungspolitik in ost- und west-

political and economic interests and promoted the bourgeois ideal of education. As in local politics, local dignitaries with high status and good reputations also headed associations, thus forming a link between the two spheres. The urban bourgeois milieu sometimes gathered less in political parties than in associations and clubs, which became the center of social, cultural, and political life and decided which intellectual currents could prevail in the community and therefore occupied a large place in the reporting of daily newspapers. While the 1864 address book of the city of Coburg listed a total of 36 associations, the number of associations, federations, and guilds had increased sixfold to 227 by the eve of World War I.In addition to special professional associations, Coburg's specific character and its bourgeois-national interpretation of the world were also expressed in its bourgeois association system, which served as a hinge between the private and public spheres. In addition to exclusive civic associations for each district of Coburg, which were founded at the turn of the century, there were also a number of associations representing specifically Protestant interests[255] or the cultivation of artistic sensibilities.[256] In particular,the *Art and Trade Association,* founded in 1824, was one of the most important associations in Coburg even before the turn of the century.[257] The Coburg Masonic Lodge *Ernst zur Wahrheit, Freundschaft und Recht* (*Ernst to Truth, Friendship, and Justice*)also became an important social meeting place for the bourgeoisie.(258)

Gymnastics, singing, and shooting clubs had a special tradition in Coburg, where Ernst II's targeted club work had also placed the national idea on a broad organizational footing. With a character somewhat similar to that of a militia, they had carried forward the idea of arming the people and were present in a wide variety of clubs in Coburg, in which a large part of the bourgeoisie was involved. The Coburg Shooting Society, founded in 1354, had been organizing the *Coburg bird shooting competition* since 1599, which became a folk festival and an integral part of the Coburg festival calendar in the 19th century. Even at the beginning of the 20th century, the

German regions (1900–1960). Göttingen 2002; Lösche, Peter; Walter, Franz: Catholics, Conservatives, and Liberals. Milieus and Living Environments of Bourgeois Parties in Germany during the 20th Century. In: History and Society 26 (2000), pp. 471–492. For more on workers' associations, see Chapter II2.3.2.

254 See, for example, the address books of the city of Coburg from 1864 and 1913.

255 Purely Protestant associations included the *Evangelical League for the Preservation of German Protestant Interests* and the *Liberal Church Association in the Duchy of Coburg*. The state association of the Evangelical Alliance, under the leadership of retired Lieutenant Colonel Baron von Tettau, had 2,949 members, while the Coburg branch had 776 members. The *Liberal Church Association*, under the leadership of the director of the municipal school system and school inspector Dr. August Reukauf, had 180 members.

256 Several hundred members were also counted in the *Art and Trade Association,* led by building trade union director Ernst Wustandt, with 360 members, and the *Art Association,* led by Privy Councilor and head of the Coburg ministerial department Edmund von Wittken, with 430 members.

257 See Reißenweber: Rundauge, p. 44 and Address Book of the Ducal Residence City of Coburg for the Year 1913, pp. 286–296.

258 Founded in 1816 with the approval of Duke Ernst I, he assumed the protectorate of the lodge, thus establishing a tradition that his successors also followed. While the founding members were nobles, officers, civil servants, court officials, and artists, the dominant bourgeois character of the lodge became even more apparent in the course of its development. After the revolution of 1848/49 and thanks to the targeted support of Ernst II, the Freemasons experienced their first heyday under the leadership of Chief Medical Officer Dr. Schieglitz. For the history of *the Lodge of the Franconian Crown*, see Hamisch, Rüdiger: The Masonic Lodge "Zur Fränkischen Krone" in Coburg. A building hut in the stream of time (1816–2016). Coburg 2016.

Under its first shooting master and merchant Max Lenk, the shooting club, with its 150 members, was firmly integrated into Coburg's civic life and helped decorate numerous parades and processions in the city.

The *Sängerkranz*, founded in 1843, played a key role in the pompous celebration of the Sänger-tage (singers' days) in Coburg in 1851, 1855, 1860, and 1862, and thus in the founding of the German Singers' Association. This established a singing tradition in the Ves-testadt, which was expressed in more than a dozen men's choirs such as the *Liederkranz,* the *Liedertafel,* the *Alpenrose*, and the *Sängerlust* until the beginning of the 20th century, focusing on camaraderie and patriotism in addition to German singing. In the course of the practical implementation of nationalism in everyday life, singers became an integral part of national liturgy, so that no celebration of national sentiment could take place without the contribution of one of the men's choirs.

The Coburg *Gymnastics Association*, founded in 1848, and the *Gymnastics Cooperative*, established in 1861, also fully embraced the national tradition, according to which sporting activities could serve as a means of national and military education for their members, and gymnasts could act as catalysts for a national rebirth.[261] In particular, gymnastics festivals, such as the first German Gymnastics and Youth Festival, which took place in Coburg in 1860 and attracted around 1,200 guests to the city, promoted the *nationalization of the masses*[262] by linking national symbols and rituals with physical exercise. In 1913, the *gymnastics association,* with its mission of national and physical education under the leadership of head gymnastics instructor Emil Rädlein, had 520 members, while the women's section under Ms. L . Götz had 150 members. The *gymnastics club,* which had set itself the

"education in German manliness and love of the fatherland"[263] as its goal, united 250 gymnasts under the chairmanship of master basket maker Adam Fischer and 16 gymnasts in its women's section.[264]

The broad spectrum of national, imperialist, and military associations also achieved remarkable success in mobilizing support within the empire. Following the founding of the empire, these associations placed national interests at the center of their activities in keeping with the spirit of the times. The *Coburg Warriors' Association,* founded in 1879, had 4,500 members on the eve of the First World War under the chairmanship of District Court Judge August Moritz and was committed to"cultivating love for the Emperor and the Empire, the Prince and the Fatherland" ([265]). The *Military Comradeship Association*, founded in 1872 with around 400 members, the *War Veterans Association*, founded in 1868 with 176 members, and the *Landwehr Association*, founded in 1877 with 163 members, were also able to develop a wide range of activities with the aim of strengthening the national consciousness of their members. The *regional association of the German Fleet Association* in the duchy, with its 610 members, set itself the task of "promoting the understanding and interest of the German people

259 See Reißenweber: Rundauge, p. 39 f.
260 See Mosse: Nationalization, pp. 163–176.
261 See ibid., pp. 151–163.
262 Ibid.
263 Address book of the ducal residence city of Coburg for the year 1913, p. 294.
264 See ibid., pp. 286–296. Similarly, the *Coburg Scout Association* made a decisive contribution to the military training of young people and organized practical air raid drills before this became routine throughout the Reich. See City of Coburg (ed.): Cities of the Bavarian Ostmark: Coburg. Bayreuth 1938, p. 105.
265 Address book of the ducal residence city of Coburg for the year 1913, p. 287.

to awaken, cultivate, and strengthen awareness of the importance of a strong fleet."[266]The *Coburg Bismarck Tower Association,* founded in 1900 for the purpose of national commemoration and homage to Bismarck under the leadership of Prof. Dr. Gebhardt, had 450 members in 1913.[267]

This type of club culture created a practical and participatory form of nationalism in the German Empire, which had a decisive influence on the everyday life of the bourgeoisie and, with its religious-like culture of festivals and celebrations in the spirit of nationalism, contributed significantly to the nationalization of society. With their fundamental beliefs aimed at unity and struggle, singers, gymnasts, and marksmen, as well as members of various veterans' associations, created their own liturgical forms that became part of bourgeois festive culture, as well as their own symbols and rites that dominated the public sphere. This gave rise to a ritualized culture that contributed decisively to the formation of identity, the shaping of a culture of interpretation, and cohesion within the bourgeoisie. With an initially seemingly apolitical, charitable, patriotic, or otherwise purpose-oriented orientation, bourgeois associations became important social hubs and spaces for political communication.

Militant sociability and social change in civic associations

The sharp break of the First World War intensified the *militant sociability*[268] of bourgeois associations and had an even stronger impact on political culture, as it was disappointed by the defeat in the war and local politics. During the war and in the post-revolutionary phase, the residents' and citizens' militias created a new opportunity for the bourgeoisie to come together, in which they could put their anti-socialist and anti-Marxist attitudes into practice in the continuation of the idea of bourgeois defense. As early as September 21, 1914, a vigilante group had been formed to support the security forces on the initiative of the Ducal State Ministry and the General Command of the 11th Army Corps. Under the leadership of merchant Anton Jacobi, around 200 men set themselves the goal of maintaining peace and order in Coburg. To protect property and prevent Bolshevik attempts at revolution, 120 men, mainly from the gymnastics association, the men's gymnastics club, and the association for movement games, gathered on June 1, 1919, under the leadership of trade school director Fritz Dürr and founded the Coburg Citizens' Guard, after Reich Minister of Defense Gustav Noske had ordered this in April 1919. Later, the workers' gymnastics club also joined the defense force, but the proportion of workers in the formation remained low overall. Without having a specific mandate to do so, Carl Eduard, in his anti-socialist zeal, also became an active promoter and supporter of the Citizens' Militia and sought the advice of Hermann Ehrhardt, the leader of the anti-Semitic and republic-

266 Ibid., p. 288.

267 See ibid., pp. 286–296.

268 See Bösch, Frank: Militante Geselligkeit. Formierungsformen der bürgerlichen Vereinswelt zwischen Revolution und Nationalsozialismus. In: Politische Kultur der Zwischenkriegszeit 1918–1939 (Special issue Geschichte und Gesellschaft 21). Göttingen 2005, pp. 151–182.

269 See Dürr, Fritz: Selbstschutzmaßnahmen (Self-Defense Measures). In: Ungelenk, Ludwig (ed.): Coburg im Weltkrieg 1914–18 (Coburg in World War I 1914–18). Ein Denk- und Dankstein (A Memorial and Monument of Gratitude). Coburg 1922, pp. 306–310.

enemy Freikorps *Marine Brigade Ehrhard*. [270] Under the leadership of Professor Konrad Gerstenmeier, the Coburg city militia grew to around 900 men and, together with the militias of the rest of the district, formed the Gau Coburg.[271] Although the actual military significance of the residents' militia, which had to be disbanded and disarmed again in June 1921, remained very low, as a non-partisan "great comradeship association"[272] it served to quickly consolidate the bourgeois association world and created a form of integrative conviviality.[273]

As a result of the political and economic consolidation that followed the overcoming of inflation, the bourgeois-national association system finally began to expand, with those associations that built on the structures and comradeship relationships of the war years gaining particular popularity. The experience of war and the demobilization that followed defeat thus had a decisive influence on the development of bourgeois club culture by reinforcing national and military elements. In the formation of bourgeois mass associations, left-liberal or democratic ideals in particular found little resonance. Within this association system, it was easy, compared to the political sphere, to compensate for the apparent loss of meaning of the nation, the city of Coburg, but also of bourgeois existence, and to redirect national energies. These associations and federations, in their seemingly apolitical sphere, therefore became the center of a new politics in which the urban bourgeoisie participated much more actively than in local politics, expressed its political will and political participation in rituals and symbols, and was able to connect with the nation as a whole. A distinctive culture of celebration was accordingly an integral part of national associations, with flag consecrations, parades, marches, and festive services reminiscent of the pompous parades of the empire, while at the same time expressing the longing for a new glorious future for the German people.

Sports and shooting clubs were tasked with the physical education and training of young people, as the military was excluded from this role due to the restrictions of the Treaty of Versailles. Manliness and physical activity were combined in club life, and the idea of military preparedness was actively promoted. ([274]) War veterans' associations also took an active role in military training by promoting small-bore shooting, which was not subject to the restrictions of the Treaty of Versailles. By the spring of 1926, 30 small-caliber shooting divisions had been founded or were in the process of being founded within the Coburg veterans' associations. These were trained by gendarmerie officers, much to the displeasure of the working class, and represented the close connection between state authorities and national club life.

270 See Erdmann: Coburg, p. 87 and Büschel: Herzog, p. 83 f. On the civil defense forces, see Mauch, Hans-Joachim: Nationalistische Wehrorganisationen in der Weimarer Republik. Zur Entwicklung und Ideologie des „Paramilitarismus" (Nationalist Defense Organizations in the Weimar Republic. On the Development and Ideology of "Paramilitarism"). Frankfurt am Main, 1982, and Thoß, Bruno: Einwohnerwehren, 1919–1921. In: Historisches Lexikon Bayerns, URL: https://www.historisches-lexikon-bayerns.de/Lexikon/Einwoh-nerwehren,_1919–1921 (last accessed on September 27, 2021).

271 See Dürr: Self-Defense Measures.

272 Lecture "Einwohnerwehr und derzeitige Lage" (Civil defense forces and the current situation) by Dr. Eifel in *Coburger Zeitung* on April 13, 1921.

273 See Bösch: Geselligkeit, pp. 153–155.

274 See Franz Dehler's speech at the Coburg War Veterans Association Day in November 1925. *Coburger Zeitung* newspaper, December 3, 1925.

275 See Franz Dehler to Dr. Fritsch, February 1926. StACo LRA 12855.

The veterans' and military associations continued to form an important basis for militant socializing in the interwar period, but found themselves increasingly confronted with nationalist ideas both from within and outside their ranks. In the spring of 1924, 31 associations, including veterans' associations, gymnastics clubs, singing clubs, and the *Jungdeutscher Orden (Young German Order),* joined together to form a *patriotic working group in Coburg* under the leadership of the Coburg Veterans' Association, which was headed by Franz Dehler.[276] The association can be interpreted as an attempt to integrate the widely diversified national association system, which wanted to clearly distinguish itself. In § 3 of its statutes, the working group introduced a Jewish clause that excluded all Jews from participation, thus triggering a controversy among the citizens organized in associations. A total of 17 associations([277]) refused to join the working group, including the Bismarck Tower Association led by Professor Gebhardt, which had actively and proactively participated in the establishment of the association but was outvoted by the anti-Semitic and nationalist elements.([278])Gebhardt and the NLLP thus represented sections of the national bourgeoisie who, although they often agreed in their rejection of Jews and even more so of "Eastern Jews," still rejected the radical and categorical exclusion of all Jews. As a result, the Bismarck Tower Association and Gebhardt himself found themselves politically and socially marginalized. The Vaterländische Arbeitsgemeinschaft took over the organization of a Bismarck celebration in 1925, which had been the responsibility of the Bismarck Tower Association for years, without asking Gebhardt, taking his preparations into account, or even informing him.[279]A generational change had also become necessary in the national association world, with older bourgeois dignitaries having to give way to their more radical successors.

Under the influence of its chairman, Dehler, the Coburg veterans' associations became increasingly active politically, bringing them into direct confrontation with the Social Democrats. At the 1925 association conference of the Coburg veterans' associations, Dehler had polemicized against Social Democrats, the *Reichsbanner Schwarz-Rot-Gold (Black-Red-Gold Reich Banner),* pacifists, and the International in a closing speech, describing the Reichsbanner, the military association that had been founded by the SPD, among others, to protect the republic, as
"an organization for the preparation of civil war"[280]. He called on the members of the veterans' associations to join forces with other patriotic associations to
"fight for Germany's freedom"[281] together with other patriotic associations, but this led to a fierce newspaper dispute with the Coburg leadership of the Reichsbanner and he was publicly denounced as an "object of the authoritarian state" by the Hof SPD member of parliament Max Blumtritt in the Bavarian state parliament.[282] As early as 1924, Dehler had sent a circular letter to the

276 See bi-monthly report of the district president of Upper Franconia dated March 3, 1924. BayHStA MA No. 102155/1–102155/3.

277 Professor Gebhardt cites this figure in a letter to Dr. Fritsch written from memory approximately one year after the events. The number of associations could not be verified by other sources.

278 See Dr. Gebhardt's letter to Dr. Fritsch dated June 1, 1925. StACo LRA 12855.

279 See ibid.

280 *Coburger Tageblatt* dated December 3, 1925.

281 Ibid.

282 See *Coburger Volksblatt* of December 3, 7, 8, and 9, 1925, and minutes of the Bavarian State Parliament meeting of May 6, 1926. See also Dehler's personnel file. BayHStA MInn 83342. In this context, the *Coburger Volksblatt* published poems with titles such as "What is civil war?" and
"Bezirksamtmannla" (District Administrator), which were openly directed against Dehler and his politicization of the veterans' associations.

War veterans' associations, in which he called for the colors of the republic, black, red, and gold, to be rejected, contributed to the politicization of associations.

However, the climax of this political instrumentalization was the issue of the expropriation of the princes and the corresponding referendum in 1926, when a *main committee* was formed in the ducal territory *to combat the referendum*, comprising and uniting all political parties, associations, and patriotic organizations that were not socialist in orientation. As its chairman, Dehler had, among other things, sent a secret letter to the members of the Coburg veterans' associations, which, however, had fallen into the hands of *the Coburger Volksblatt newspaper*, which published it, causing another national scandal and subsequent debate in the Bavarian state parliament. In the circular, Dehler not only appealed to the soldierly virtues of each member who took part in the vote, threatening them with expulsion from the veterans' associations and a loss of honor for their uncomradely behavior towards Carl Eduard. He also called on his fellow veterans to engage in criminal activity by encouraging them to remove or cover up opposing election posters. In addition, he ordered men to be stationed outside polling stations on election day to pressure other association members, prevent them from voting, and report directly to him. Although this action resulted in Dehler, as a civil servant, receiving an administrative penalty notice and the district office where he was employed had to request the Coburg gendarmerie to prevent such behavior around the time of the vote, Dehler's instructions were nevertheless carried out by some members of the veterans' associations.

The traditional, non-national association system found itself challenged by this exaggerated nationalism and was not always able to withstand it. This is particularly evident in the example of the Coburg Masonic Lodge. In keeping with the spirit of the times, the Coburg Lodge, which had decided in 1847 to admit Israelite brothers and had welcomed the Jewish merchant Richard Löwenherz as a guest member of a Hamburg lodge on several occasions, resigned from the Frankfurt Grand Lodge in 1918 because the "Jewish element had come to the fore" ([284])there. Under Bernhard Stetefeld, the lodge united all the heads of secondary schools, the directors of important authorities such as the second mayor Altenstädter, and the owners of well-known Coburg companies, thus representing a decisive social force. Although apolitical in nature, the lodge was firmly anchored in the bourgeois spectrum and brought together both liberal-democratic and national-liberal forces in its ranks. However, one lodge member who found a political home in the SPD after the 1918/19 revolution was forced to resign his membership. The need and pressure to give the lodge a staunchly national orientation, which contradicted the international orientation of Freemasonry per se, became increasingly noticeable in the course of the 1920s. This development was fueled from the mid-1920s onwards by the increasingly vocal attacks by the nationalist camp against the lodge, which criticized, for example, its peace work or the humanist ideals of the

283 See *Fränkische Tagespost*, June 14, 1926; *Coburger Volksblatt*, June 17, 1926; Dr. Doebel to the Coburg gendarmerie stations, June 16, 1926, and Ludwig Zink, Government of Upper Franconia to District Administrator Dehler, August 16, 1926. BayHStA MInn 83342.

284 According to the statement by second master and basket manufacturer Reinhold Götz. Minutes of the public hearing at Coburg District Court on August 13, 1931. Private archive of the Loge zur Fränkischen Krone lodge.

Freemasons. Fueled by conspiracy theories linking the Freemasons to the defeat in the war, which were spread by General Erich Ludendorff, among others, these campaigns resulted in a significant decline in membership. Many civil servants and public employees suspended their membership, with the result that the number of lodge members more than halved between 1914 and 1931, falling from 400 to 187.(285)

In sports clubs, too, the question of the political neutrality of sport almost inevitably came into focus. The sports club, founded in 1907 and renamed VfB Coburg in 1918, which also had Jewish members in its ranks and two on its board, became the focus of public interest in 1921 when a 19After the student was expelled from the sports field, a debate flared up in letters to the editor in the Coburger Zeitung about the legality of this action, with the *völkisch associations* arguing that the club had no right to expel the student. After the student was expelled from the sports field, a debate erupted in letters to the editor of the *Coburger Zeitung newspaper* about the legality of this action, with the nationalist associations accusing the club's board of lacking "racial awareness" and not being "German" enough. Similarly, it had already caused a furor within the club when a Jewish member of the club's board had crowned the club's competition winners on the decision of the city association. (286)

2.2.2 Ethnic associations

However, the challenge posed to the bourgeois world by the consequences of defeat in the war and the labor movement found its clearest expression and political impact in the strong influx of members into nationalist military associations such as the *Deutschvölkischer Schutz- und Trutzbund* (German Nationalist Defense and Resistance League), the *Jungdeutscher Orden (Young German Order)*, and the *Wiking-Bund (Viking League)*, which soon turned Coburg into a nationalist stronghold.287 The foundation for nationalist work in Coburg had already been laid by the *Deutschnationale Handlungsgehilfenverband*, a trade union-like organization for employees, whose Coburg local group was founded in 1898 and had over 300 members in 1927. 288Around 1902, the Jewish community in Coburg accused the association of constantly working to prepare the ground for anti-Semitism in the Duchy of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha. (289)Similarly the *Pan-German League, with* its nationalist orientation, had found supporters in Coburg, especially among elementary school teachers, civil servants, and businesspeople. (290)

The DVSTB in Coburg

In February 1919, on the initiative of this very association, the DVSTB was founded in Bamberg, which soon became one of the most important nationalist-anti-Semitic mass organizations.

285 See private archive of the Lodge of the Franconian Crown and Hamisch: Freemason Lodge.
286 See "Voices from the Audience" in *the Coburger Zeitung* of July 16, 19, 22, and 23, 1921.
287 On the defense associations, see: Erdmann: Coburg, pp. 88–90.
288 See Address Book of the Ducal Residence City of Coburg for the Year 1913, p. 288, and Register of Residents of the City of Coburg from 1927, p. 345.
289 See *Der Israelit*, February 6, 1902.
290 See City of Coburg (ed.): Cities of the Bavarian Ostmark: Coburg. Bayreuth 1938, p. 105.

organizations in the early postwar period. The association combined a rejection of the political system of the Weimar Republic with the fight against Judaism. In Coburg, a local group was founded at the suggestion of DVSTB advisory board member Artur Dinter, who had spoken about the Jewish question at a DNVP meeting in February 1920. The close connection between the DVSTB and the DNVP in Coburg was already evident at this point.[292] In its founding year, the association was already engaged in lively agitation, publicly visible through the distribution of leaflets, the posting of anti-Semitic posters, and public lectures.[293] With strikingly aggressive anti-Semitism, the DVSTB spread its tirades against the Jewish population, particularly through the *Coburger Zeitung*, where it engaged in battles of letters to the editor with the Coburg local group of the Central Association of German Citizens of the Jewish Faith.[294] The leading members initially included retired Major General Otto Schneider, one of the prominent representatives of the DNVP in Coburg, and his assistant Paul Rieger, who eventually set up an office in his home at Oberes Bürglass 13. By 1922 at the latest, Gustav Neutsch, a pipe and wooden furniture manufacturer born in Schönebeck in 1882, took over the office of First Group Leader of the DVSTB. However, the most prominent figure of the DVSTB in Coburg was elementary school teacher Hans Dietrich[295], who was to play a prominent pivotal role within the nationalist camp in and around the Vestestadt.

As part of a targeted campaign to educate the population about the "Jewish spirit," the DVSTB distributed a leaflet in 1920
"Millions of unsuspecting people" brought the "scandalous story" of the discovery of the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion" to Coburg, allegedly to expose a Jewish world conspiracy. With a summary of the Protocols, which are said to have been written in 1897 at the Zionist Congress in Basel, on four large pages, the Coburg local group of the DVSTB provided a scapegoat for everything that nationalists considered to be the oppressive burden of their days, with seemingly fact-based insider knowledge. With

291 On the DVSTB, see Lohalm, Uwe: Völkischer Radikalismus. Die Geschichte des Deutschvölkischen Schutz- und Trutz-Bundes 1919–1923 (= Hamburger Beiträge zur Zeitgeschichte, Volume 6). Hamburg 1970 and Jung, Walter: Deutschvölkischer Schutz- und Trutzbund (DVSTB), 1919–1924/35. In: Historisches Lexikon Bayerns. URL: https://www.historisches-lexikon-bayerns.de/Lexikon/Deutschvölkischer_Schutz-_und_Trutzbund_(DVSTB),1919–1924/35 (last accessed October 7, 2021).

292 See *Völkischer Beobachter*, February 25, 1920.

293 On the DVSTB in Coburg, cf. Albrecht: Avantgarde, pp. 65–75.

294 See *Coburger Zeitung*, June 1 and 7, 1920.

295 Born in Seugast in the Upper Palatinate in 1898, Dietrich enrolled in the Bavarian 9th Infantry Regiment in Schweinfurt as an ensign during his time as a high school student, first in Regensburg and then in Würzburg. in 1916 as an ensign in the Bavarian 9th Infantry Regiment in Schweinfurt, continued his military training with the 2nd Replacement Battalion of the 9th Infantry Regiment, and served on the front lines from March to June 1917 with Field Recruit Depot 3 of the
1. Bavarian Infantry Division and with the 6th Company of the 9th Infantry Regiment. In Flanders, he suffered a serious injury that led to the amputation of his right thigh. After his discharge from the army in 1918, he began studying at the universities of Würzburg and Erlangen, fought in the Freikorps in the 1st Company of the 3rd Bavarian Infantry Regiment No. 45 and in the Dittmar Volunteer Battalion in Würzburg before continuing his education at the teacher training college in Bayreuth. In 1920, he was finally transferred to the Rückert School in Coburg as an elementary school teacher. Having been part of the völkisch movement since 1919, he rose to become district leader of the DVSTB in Upper Franconia in 1920 and, at the age of 24, Gauwart of the DVSTB in Northern Bavaria in 1922. See SS Stammrollen Auszug, November 28, 1933; letter from retired senior teacher Rud.,
March 26, 1953, Denazification Tribunal Box 284, Denazification Tribunal File Hans Dietrich.

Section headings such as "Subversion, Overthrow of Princes," "Instructions for Revolution and Civil War," "Decay and Bolshevism," and "The Downfall of the People and the Establishment of the Jewish World State" [296]addressed deep-seated fears and stirred up emotions. Jewish influences were blamed for the defeat in the World War, the revolution, and all discord among the German population. At the same time, newspaper campaigns exploited the difficult food supply situation in the immediate postwar period, attributing it to a "Jewish spirit of usury." In public lectures with invited and seemingly knowledgeable speakers, such as private lecturer Dr. Arnold Ruge from Heidelberg on the Jewish question in November 1920, Berlin publishing director, member of the Reichstag, and nationalist publicist Reinhold Wulle on the "politics of fulfillment" in December 1921, and Alfred Roth, managing director of the DVSTB, on "The Struggle for Germanness" in May 1922, the association attempted to convince hundreds and in some cases thousands of listeners of its anti-Semitic and anti-republican ideology. However, it was not uncommon for DVSTB events to be broken up by the police or prevented from taking place altogether, as large groups of workers repeatedly mingled with the visitors and the lectures ended in physical altercations. ([298]) At times, the workers took action against the blatant anti-Semitism and the fact that Jews were categorically banned from attending the association's lectures. The DVSTB had argued to the authorities that the exclusion of Coburg's Jews was necessary in order to ensure that its lectures could be conducted in a businesslike manner and to prevent heckling. Since the association had initially committed itself primarily to an information campaign, the Coburg administration allowed the DVSTB's agitation as long as it had an "educational" effect and was not "provocative," i.e., did not disturb the peace and order. Nevertheless, the DVSTB's meetings were always subject to police surveillance, and it was pointed out in advance that inflammatory agitation could lead to intervention.[299] When police commissioner Hermann Worch, who was sympathetic to the labor movement, confiscated the above-mentioned leaflet about the "Wise Men of Zion" from the apartment of managing director Paul Rieger in July 1920, the Coburg District Court, responding to a complaint by DVSTB member and bank clerk Edmund Bauernsachs, intervened on the grounds that the police department had approved the leaflet and that its content did not incite violence – and obtained the release of the leaflets.[300] In 1920, the Coburg police department also provided the DVSTB with the names of foreign Jews with itinerant trade licenses when chairman Schneider reported that too many foreign Jews were wandering around in rural areas and the DVSTB wanted to report those without itinerant trade licenses. The Coburg

296 Flyer from the Coburg branch of the DVSTB (German Workers' Party) entitled "Millions of unemployed." StadtACo A 8375.

297 *Coburger Zeitung newspaper* dated October 17, 1921.

298 See report by the Coburg police department dated November 27, 1920; *Coburger Zeitung newspaper* dated November 27, 1920, and *Coburger Tageblatt newspaper* dated April 2, 1921.

299 The instructions issued by the State Ministry of the Interior in Munich were also along these lines. See, for example, Bavarian State Ministry of the Interior, October 5, 1920, or Bavarian State Ministry of the Interior, July 3, 1922. StadtACo A 8375.

300 See Edmund Bauernsachs to the Coburg Magistrate, July 9, 1920, and decision of the Coburg District Court dated July 23, 1920. StadtACo A 8375.

In return, the police asked the major general for the names of the illegal itinerant traders so that they could be dealt with by all means necessary.

The anti-Semitic "educational work" of the association, which had about 400 members in 1923 and about 500 in 1927, had a direct impact in Coburg.[302] In 1921, when the Coburg Swimming Club closed its bathing area on the Main River to Jews, a club member thanked the "educational work of nationalist associations" in the *Coburger Zeitung newspaper* for making it known "how Jews think about women and girls of other races"[303] , thus making such a ban necessary. A major factor in its flourishing was the fact that Carl Eduard himself was one of the supporters and presumably also one of the financial backers of the association and maintained contact with its chief executive, Alfred Roth.[304]Since the DVSTB, which was jointly responsible for the murder of Walter Rathenau, was not banned in Bavaria as it was in many other places on the basis of the emergency decrees for the protection of the republic of June 26 and 29, 1922, it was able to continue to develop its radical potential.

The Young German Order *in Coburg*

Even more successful than the DVSTB was the more radical and action-oriented *Jungdeutscher Orden (Young German Order)*, which had been active in the Coburg area since 1922.[305] The order, which emerged from a Freikorps in 1920 and was founded by Artur Mahraun in Kassel, saw itself as the successor to medieval knightly orders and was structured accordingly into bailiwicks and brotherhoods. With its anti-Catholic and anti-Semitic orientation, it found supporters especially in northern Franconia, with Coburg becoming its center. Here, it established a lasting link between Protestant and völkisch teachings. Under the two pastors Helmut Johnsen from Gauerstadt and Willi Döbrich from Neustadt near Coburg and the DVSTB Gauwart Hans Dietrich, who headed the Bailiwick of Franconia(306) founded in April 1923, the *Young German Order* was able to build up a considerable base. In February 1923, the Coburg state police reported: "Pastor Johnson from Gauerstadt is the grand master of this organization. He has managed to gain great prestige in a short time, mainly because he is a good speaker and, with his clear language, says exactly what right-wing circles want to hear. It will soon be the case that the entire district is thoroughly organized."(307) Helmut Johnsen(308)

301 Letter from the local branch of the DVSTB to the Coburg magistrate dated June 15, 1920, letter from the police department to Major General Schneider dated June 21, 1920. StadtACo A 8375.

302 See bi-monthly report of the government of Upper Franconia dated January 19, 1923. BayHStA MA 102155/1–3 and 1927 population register of the city of Coburg, p. 348.

303 *Coburger Zeitung newspaper* dated July 13, 1921. See also the letter to the editor on this topic in the *Coburger Zeitung* dated July 12, 1921. On the phenomenon of anti-Semitism in spas, see Bajohr, Frank: "Unser Hotel ist juden-frei" (Our hotel is free of Jews). Bäder-Antisemitismus im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert (Our hotel is free of Jews. Anti-Semitism in spas in the 19th and 20th centuries). Frankfurt am Main, 2003.

304 See Lohalm: Radikalismus, p. 103.

305 See *Coburger Volksblatt* of July 7 and 8, 1922.

306 Before Johnsen established his own bailiwick in Franconia, the Coburg brotherhood was assigned to the bailiwick of South Thuringia. See Küssener: Johnsen, p. 6, FN 18.

307 Report by the Coburg State Police from February 1923. StACo State Police Command 30.

308 Born in Neustadt in 1891, Helmut Johnsen, the son of a pastor, first studied law in Kiel after attending the Casimirianum, but then followed in his father's footsteps and switched to studying theology in Halle. After a formative period of military service, working as a Freikorps fighter and passing his theological exams, he was appointed vicar of the Coburg Regional Church and later Bavarian pastor in Gauerstadt. There he married the daughter of the court forester and granddaughter of the

had found particular resonance with the younger generation, whom he was able to win over to the *Young German Order* on the basis of their shared frontline experience, giving them orientation through a bond with the people, the nation, and Germanism, as well as allegiance to him.[309] By publishing his own newspaper, the *Coburger Warte*, for whose content he was responsible, and by appearing at numerous events where he promoted his nationalist, völkisch, and anti-Catholic ideology, he appealed to those young, action-oriented segments of the population who were hoping for a leader and who did not feel represented by the party system of the Weimar Republic. Although some workers also found their way into the ranks of the order, young men from the petty bourgeoisie and middle class made up the main recruitment base of *the Young German Order*. The order's young and dynamic image was underscored by its own youth division. In April 1923 according to a report by the state police, the Ballei Franken already had about 4,000 members, 1,800 of whom came from Coburg.

Unlike the Grand Master of *the Young German Order*, Johnsen focused on an anti-Semitic orientation of the Order in the Bailiwick of Franconia, thereby picking up on and simultaneously reinforcing the prevailing hostility towards Jews in the region. The first issue of *the Coburger Warte* clearly underscored Johnsen's racist and anti-Semitic worldview when it stated: "We will fight the foreign elements in our national body with all the means at our disposal."([311]) In contrast, he wanted to promote the "cultivation of Germanness" and called on the younger generation of First World War veterans in particular not to leave the "fight for Germany" to the political parties, but to now "to step onto the stage with [their] whole soul." [312] Hans Dietrich wrote in the *Coburger Warte*: "Being Young German means crushing the heads of all the horrible vermin, the Jews and Jewish servants, and eliminating them completely."[313] He initiated a targeted smear campaign against the Jewish merchants of Coburg. Again and again, the *Coburger Warte* called for a boycott of Jewish businesses and merchants, advocated the labeling of Jewish fellow citizens, bans on contact with Christians, and the closure of Jewish institutions.[314] It was therefore not Artur Mahraun, with whose association Johnsen ultimately broke in October 1923, who was the prominent leader at the center of the Young German movement, but Hermann Ehrhardt, who founded the *Wiking Association* in 1923 as the successor organizationof *the Marinebrigarde Ehrhardt* in 1923 and found temporary refuge with Carl Edu-ard at Callenberg Castle and at the Veste after the *Consul organization* had carried out the murders of Erzberger and Rathenau. This resulted in close cooperation and the formation of a tightly knit völkisch network between *the Jungdeutscher Orden* and *the Bund Wiking* in Coburg. In addition, one of the founding members of the SA and a close associate of Ehrhardt, retired Navy Lieutenant Hans Ulrich Klintzsch, was the military organizer of the Order in the Bailiwick of Franconia in 1923, who had already been a

Court preacher Alice Hansen. See Kuessner, Dietrich: Regional Bishop Dr. Helmuth Johnsen (= Works on the History of the Brunswick Evangelical Lutheran Regional Church in the 19th and 20th Centuries, Number 1). No place, 1982, pp. 1–22.

309 See Herbert: Geschichte, pp. 241–244, and Peukert, Detlev: Jugend zwischen Krieg und Krise. Cologne, 1987.

310 See report by the Coburg State Police dated April 26, 1923. StACo State Police Command 30.

311 *Coburger Warte*, April 1, 1923.

312 Ibid.

313 Ibid.

314 See *Coburger Warte*, May 17, 1923, and October 18, 1923; Kuessener: Johnsen, pp. 9 f.

prominent role. [315]On July 20, 1923, the order held an Ehrhardt evening in the Hofbrauhaus beer hall, where Ehrhardt presented himself in martial fashion as the liberator of Germany from Judaism and Bolshevism. Im[mediately] after the lecture, the *Jungdeutscher Orden* was able to welcome 50 new members into its ranks thanks to its persuasive efforts.

While the working class and the *Coburger Volksblatt newspaper* vehemently opposed the *Young German Order* and Johnsen and disrupted several meetings, important pillars of Coburg society stood behind him. The state police in Coburg asked the deputy city commissioner whether the *Coburger Volksblatt* could be temporarily banned due to its numerous attacks on Johnsen,[317] and a number of patriotic associations in Coburg officially expressed their "highest esteem and recognition" for him in the *Coburger Zeitung*, seeing him as "a shining example of a genuine, true leader."[318] Carl Eduard demonstrated his solidarity by attending a festive service with the consecration of the Order's banner in July 1923 on the Schlossplatz. His son, Prince Johann Leopold, was an active member of the Order and is said to have participated in its anti-Semitic attacks. ([319])The procession following the flag consecration, in a form that "Coburg had not seen for a long, long time" and in which, in addition to foreign associations, all the patriotic and nationalist associations of the city took part, was allegedly greeted by "thousands of people from the city and countryside of Coburg waiting in the streets and at the windows of their houses with cheers and cries of 'Heil'."[320] The close cooperation with the military and patriotic associations was also reflected in the f a c t that the former Regiment 95, which had planned a meeting for the same day, canceled its afternoon program and marched in unison with *the Young German Order*. [321] When the Central Association of German Citizens of the Jewish Faith finally

315 See Hans Dietrich to Adolf Hitler, June 29, 1923. IfZ Munich MA 144/3. Alongside Röhm, Hermann Ehrhardt was actively involved in expanding the gymnastics and sports division of the NSDAP, whose military command he took over in 1921. Ehrhardt appointed Hans Ulrich Klintzsch to provide military training for the department, which was renamed the SA in 1921. Klintzsch was temporarily imprisoned for his involvement in the assassination of Matthias Erzberger. At the beginning of 1923, the dominance *of the Consul organization* in the SA came to an end with the appointment of Hermann Göring. See Hoser, Paul: Sturmabteilung (SA), 1921–1923/1925–1945. In: Historical Dictionary of Bavaria. URL: http://www.historisches-lexikon-bayerns.de/ Lexikon/Sturmabteilung_(SA),_1921–1923/1925–1945 (last accessed on December 8, 2021).

316 See report by Police Sergeant Gerber dated July 21, 1923. StadtACo A 8374.

317 See report by the Coburg State Police dated April 24, 1923. StACo State Police Command 30.

318 *Coburger Zeitung newspaper* dated May 29, 1923.

319 See *Coburger Zeitung*, July 10, 1923; Urbach: Go-Betweens, p. 155; and Büschel: Herzog, p. 85. The former ensign Wolfgang Goetze, who was convicted by the Bamberg Grand Jury in September 1924 for his involvement in the attacks on the Gutmann brothers in Autenhausen, initially took all the blame, but in 1930 he made serious accusations against several people. Among them was Crown Prince Johann Leopold, whose involvement in the attack he put on record. Goetze also claimed that he had been visited in prison in Bamberg by the Coburg lawyer Stammberger, who had encouraged him to remain silent about the ducal son's complicity and ultimately to refrain from appealing. See Welt am Sonntag of June 15, 1930, reprinted in *Coburger Volksblatt* of June 17, 1930.

320 Ibid. Dietrich also invited Hitler to *the Jungdeutsche Orden's* "German Day," hoping that his presence would enhance the event. See Hans Dietrich to Adolf Hitler, June 29, 1923. IfZ Munich MA 144/3.

321 See Hans Dietrich to Adolf Hitler, June 29, 1923. IfZ Munich MA 144/3.

When he asked the government of Upper Franconia to intervene against the agitation of Johnsen and the *Coburger Warte*, District Administrator Dr. Fritsch obtained a warning from the newspaper to ensure that "the anti-Semitic agitation did not exceed certain limits" [322], he also showed clear sympathy for the two commanders of the Order, Johnsen and the Coburg teacher Hans Dietrich. The Coburg police director Janzen and his wife were also among the personally invited guests at the events of *the Young German Order*.([323] In a letter to the Munich Regional Church Council in 1923, the Coburg dean Kükenthal remarked about Johnsen: "The entire right wing, from the duke to the bank apprentice, stands behind him; he is currently probably the most popular man we have here." The majority of his colleagues in the Coburg deanery also supported Johnsen. However, the Coburg dean and the president of the church, Dr. Friedrich Veit, viewed the pastor's political activities with concern. Although both appreciated his patriotic and nationalistic commitment and treated him with sympathy, they considered the radical excesses of anti-Semitism in the *Coburg Warte* to be unchristian behavior and called on Johnsen to choose between politics and the pastorate.

Even though there was a clear male dominance in the völkisch camp, women were also attracted by radical nationalist propaganda and contributed their commitment to their own völkisch associations, such as the *League of German Women and Girls "Mein Deutschland"* or the *Young Girls' League*. Special women's evenings, at which the well-known völkisch itinerant preacher Andrea Ellendt, who appeared several times in Coburg, was to give a lecture on "The German Woman," also helped to shape a distinct female sphere within the völkisch camp, which placed women's service within the family and declared the education of German youth to be a "service to the fatherland."[326] In June 1925, the second Reich Order Sisters' Day took place in Coburg with around 800 participants. Although its scope was considerably reduced by state restrictions, it nevertheless underlined Coburg's importance for the female völkisch movement.[327] According to a police report, visitors and locals, a total of around 2,000 people, most of them women, gathered at the festive service on Schlossplatz to listen to Pastor Döbrich's sermon on the duties of German women. [328]

The Wiking League *and the* Stahlhelm *in Coburg*

The aforementioned *Wiking League* gained popularity and significance in Coburg through the close connection between Carl Eduard and Hermann Ehrhardt, but remained in its membership

322 District Office Coburg to the Government of Upper Franconia, November 13, 1923. StadtACo A 8374.
323 Cf. Coburg Brotherhood of the Young German Order to Police Director Janzen, June 9, 1925. StadtACo A 8374.
324 Dr. Kükenthal to the Evangelical Lutheran Regional Church Office in Munich, November 6, 1923. LAELKB Bavarian Deanery Coburg 124.
325 See Kuessener: Johnsen, pp. 14–17.
326 See approval for distribution of a poster by City Commissioner Dr. Fritsch, September 26, 1923. StadtACo A 8375. The meeting ultimately had to be canceled due to a ban on assemblies. Quote: *Coburger Zeitung*, June 15, 1925.
327 See ibid.
328 See report by police sergeant Gerber dated June 14, 1925. StadtACo A 8374. The report mentions 70 male visitors out of a total of around 2,000.

far behind the *Young German Order* or the DVSTB in terms of strength. [329]With a pronounced anti-republican orientation, the alliance, which was supported by many former officers, sought to establish a military dictatorship and revise the Treaty of Versailles. Its honorary protector, Carl Eduard, had already been involved in both predecessor organizations: as leader of the Coburg district group of *the Ehrhardt Brigade,* which Ehrhardt had founded in the course of his advisory activities for the establishment of the Einwohnerwehr (citizens' militia), and as a member and district leader *of the Consul organization,* which was responsible for numerous political murders and was banned in 1922.[330]He and Viktoria Adelheid acted as proven recruiters for the right-wing extremist organization, made a meadow near Callenberg Castle available for banned military training exercises, and participated in a representative capacity in the events of the association.To celebrate the *Wiking Federation's* 1924 anniversary of the founding of the Reich, the duke had the flags of the patriotic associations present decorated with black, white, and red commemorative ribbons, and on Pentecost 1925, he reviewed a parade march of assembled parts of *the Wiking Federation of* the Coburg district on the castle square. (332)

The *Stahlhelm – Bund der Frontsoldaten* (Steel Helmet – League of Frontline Soldiers), founded by Franz Seldte in November 1918, was also based on the shared frontline experiences of its members, cultivated the idea of military defense in the postwar period, and aimed to establish a military dictatorship by force.[333] It initially remained closely associated with the DNVP and was characterized by radical anti-Semitism. In 1926, Carl Eduard, who styled himself as a front-line soldier, also joined the association. [334] The Coburg chair was held by Dr. Konrad Gerts-tenmeier, a former teacher and former head of the Coburg residents' militia. As a direct successor organization to the Einwohnerwehren, the *Bund Bayern und Reich (Bav*aria and Reich Association) was also established in 1921. In Coburg, it was headed by retired Major Ernst Neumann and Major Arno Buttmann. The association pursued federalist-monarchist goals and, although it developed into the strongest paramilitary association in Bavaria in the 1920s, it was less popular in Protestant Franconia.At the beginning of 1923, the Coburg branch of the League had about 200 members and about 1,000 men in the entire district of Coburg.(336) Hans Dietrich attested to the League's strikingly nationalistic attitude in the Coburg region after it refused to assist the government in an operation against the right wing.(337)

329 In 1927, the League still had 40 members. See the 1927 population register of the city of Coburg, p. 344. Nöth also gives this figure for 1924. See Nöth, Stefan: Kriegervereine – Wehrverbände. In: Initiative Stadtmuseum Coburg e. V. (ed.): Voraus zur Unzeit. Coburg und der Aufstieg des Nationalsozialismus in Deutschland. Coburg 2004, p. 57 f., here p. 58.

330 See Büschel: Herzog, p. 83 f.

331 See ibid., p. 85 f. and Staffelstein District Office to the Regional Council of Upper Franconia, August 18, 1924. StABa Government of Upper Franconia K3 1648. The Coburg regional group of the Wiking association was led by its managing director, retired First Lieutenant Paul Schmidt.

332 Program for the Great Patriotic Commemoration on January 19, 1924. StadtACo A 8374 and *Coburger Zeitung newspaper* dated June 2, 1925.

333 On *the Stahlhelm*, see Berghahn, Volker R.: Der Stahlhelm. Bund der Frontsoldaten 1918–1935 (= Contributions to the History of Parliamentarianism and Political Parties. Volume 33). Düsseldorf 1966.

334 See Büschel: Herzog, p. 87 f.

335 On the Bavaria and Reich League, see Hübner, Christoph: Bund "Bayern und Reich," 1921–1935. In: Historical Dictionary of Bavaria. URL: https://www.historisches-lexikon-bayerns.de/Lexikon/Bund_"Bayern_ und_Reich,"_1921–1935 (last accessed October 12, 2021).

336 See report by the Coburg State Police dated April 26, 1923. StACo State Police Command 30 and Erdmann: Coburg, p. 88.

337 See Hans Dietrich to Adolf Hitler, June 29, 1923. IfZ Munich MA 144/3.

The "Border Guard" of Northern Bavaria

This broad spectrum of defense associations combined the idea of a nationalist renewal movement with that of civil self-defense. Coburg's location between Thuringia, where radical socialist tendencies were much more pronounced, and Bavaria, which established itself as the "order cell of the Reich" under General State Commissioner von Kahr, had a promoting effect on this development. Through the establishment of the

The "Northern Bavarian Border Guard," whose area of deployment in 1923 also included Coburg, provided the military associations with an active field of activity, enabling them to make a name for themselves as martial protectors and offer supposedly effective protection against the "red menace."[338]After Friedrich Ebert declared a state of emergency throughout the Reich in September 1923 following weeks of political turmoil, and the KPD was included in the government in Thuringia and Saxony, where paramilitary associations were formed, the border around Coburg became the focus of political conflict. The influence of radical socialist groups from Thuringia on the working class in the Coburg area, for example in Neustadt or Rodach, and the strength of the völkisch associations in the Coburg area had provoked a number of clashes between left-wing and völkisch groups. A key figure in this was the former Coburg police commissioner Hermann Worch, who had taken up a position in the Thuringian state police and was responsible for organizing the local workers' militias in the fall of 1923. Plans for coups by both the right and the left were circulating in the border area, further stirring up political tensions.[339] In September 1923, Gustav Kahr finally commissioned Hermann Ehrhardt, who resided at the Veste Coburg, to establish a Bavarian border guard against Thuringia and had the defense associations, deployed as emergency police, armed. The nationalist associations in the Coburg area were thus supported by the state and, in addition to their defensive purpose, were also to be available for an offensive march on Berlin in order to force a Reich-wide coup from Bavaria. Under the leadership of retired Major Kurt Kühme, who was subordinate to the head of the Coburg state police, Captain Bernhardt, the patriotic nationalist associations around Coburg were coordinated. The *Young German Order* with its *Young German Storm Regiment* under Pastor Johnsen, the *Viking League*, and, in part, the *Bavaria and Reich League* provided teams for the emergency police. These consisted primarily of young and, in some cases, unemployed men or schoolchildren, who often had no military training and presented an overall undisciplined image.[340]Due to extraordinary difficulties in obtaining the financial resources to organize and equip the units, the population in and around Coburg bore the main burden of supplying the Coburg subsection. [341]However, the actionist border guards often exceeded their assigned powers. Without specific orders, confiscations were carried out, military ranks were distributed, and there were numerous incidents of violence. Often, the arbitrary and violent actions

338 On "Border Protection in Northern Bavaria," see Erdmann: Coburg, pp. 130–149. Here, too, however, Erdmann is heavily influenced by the anti-socialist and nationalist tone of the official sources.

339 See Erdmann: Coburg, pp. 122–129.

340 Hans Dietrich served as propaganda chief under Kühme in the staff of the Young German Regiment. See Lilla, Joachim: Der bayerische Landtag 1918/19 bis 1933. Wahlvorschläge – Zusammensetzung – Biografien (= Materialien zur Bayerischen Landesgeschichte, vol. 21). Munich 2008, p. 325.

341 On the problem of financing the "Northern Border Guard," see Erdmann: Coburg, pp. 134 f.

Concrete anti-Semitic motives were evident when, for example, the Jewish merchant Karl Goldstein in Untermerzbach or the Jewish cattle dealers Emanuel and Adolf Gutmann in Autenhausen were robbed and severely abused.[342] Spurred on by the expectation of a march on Berlin, such unilateral actions, which bypassed the civil authorities, became the hallmark of the work of the "Grenzschutz Nord" associations and, according to those involved, were also aimed at provoking incidents at the border that could have justified an attack from Munich. However, parts of the civil authorities also supported the activities of the border guards, such as the political police officer at the Coburg district office, the German nationalist Franz Dehler.[343] The influx of nationalists fleeing from the north and east of the Reich into the Coburg area further reinforced the radical nationalist tendencies there. [344] As a result, the majority of members of the Jewish community in Coburg refrained from visiting restaurants or theater events in this charged atmosphere. [345]

Rightward shift in the Coburg region

Although Johnsen von Kahr sought direct orders to march on Berlin when he stated in a resolution to him: "Here in Coburg, certainly not the worst part of Bavaria, everyone is waiting with feverish excitement for Your Excellency to finally give the order to deploy all combat-ready forces!"[346] the decisive call from Munich failed to come. After the "Hitler Putsch" in Munich had failed and the Reichswehr had been deployed in Thuringia and Saxony, the "Grenzschutz Nord" was disbanded again on November 15, 1923. Kühme's staff was dismissed on November 24, and the patriotic associations were no longer allowed to march in closed formations with or without weapons. [347] Despite its short lifespan, the Border Guard had a profound impact on the Coburg area. On the one hand, the self-confidence and reputation of the nationalist defense associations were strengthened in the long term, and on the other hand, the active and tangible field of activity caused an upswing and revival of the nationalist camp. This resulted in a clear shift to the right in the Coburg region. On the other hand, the failure of the counterrevolution due to the failed "Hitler coup" and the backtracking of the Kahr government also brought to light considerable tensions within the nationalist camp, where a right-wing network had formed through cross-connections and dual memberships.

As a result, Pastor Johnsen turned away from the Kahr government in disappointment and toward Adolf Hitler. On top of that, cooperation with Ehrhardt and the *Wiking Bund*, which continued to support Kahr, was significantly strained. Tensions with the *Bund Bayern und Reich*, which had always considered the *Wiking Bund* and the *Jungdeutscher Orden* not radical enough, now reached a peak. After

342 See *Coburger Volksblatt* of September 18 and 19, 1924. See also Asmalsky: National Socialism, p. 78 f. On the Jewish community in Autenhausen, from which many Coburg Jews originated, cf. Wolz: Legal Situation, p. 9.

343 See personnel file Franz Dehler. BayHStA MInn 83342.

344 See Erdmann: Coburg, pp. 137–139. As expected, the penalties imposed on those involved in the attacks during the legal proceedings in 1924 were lenient. Pastor Johnsen did not appear in court as either a witness or a defendant.

345 See Leo Zeilberger to Dr. Ophir, May 1, 1963. Yad Vashem 0.33/985.

346 *Coburger Zeitung* newspaper, November 6, 1923.

347 See Erdmann: Coburg, p. 147.

Major Buttmann of *the Bavarian and Imperial League* had sharply criticized the "Hitler Putsch," he discredited himself permanently in the eyes of the radical nationalists.[348] Johnsen now made it his goal to unite the nationalists behind him as a *nationalist bloc* and form a counterweight to the Kahr government. To this end, he took a path that the nationalist associations had previously rejected and, despite his fundamental rejection of parliamentarianism, allowed himself to be nominated as a candidate for *the nationalist bloc* in the 1924 state elections. First, he brought about a reconciliation between the Franconian Bailiwick of *the Young German Order* and the Grand Master of the Order, Mahraun, among other things by distancing himself from Hermann Ehrhardt, and after the failed armed uprising, he planned to make his way through the institutions.[349] He announced his support for the imprisoned Adolf Hitler, declaring that as a "mortal enemy of the parliamentary racket system" he would work in parliament to dismantle the "November Republic" and stand up for "the protection of the people and the race" and the "exclusion of Jews from all civil rights."[350] In the state elections on April 6, 1924, the *Völkischer Block* won an absolute majority in the city of Coburg with 53% of the vote, and Johnsen thus entered the Bavarian state parliament a s a Coburg representative alongside SPD member Klingler. He was able to far outstrip the *Heimattreuen Coburger (Coburg Loyalists)*, who were backed by an alliance of all liberal to conservative bourgeois parties and only won 12.6% of the vote. Johnsen was able to attribute his success primarily to the mobilization of the völkisch camp, which had been reluctant to participate in elections until then. Voter turnout had risen abruptly to around 80% when a representative of the essentially apolitical nationalist movement stood for election for the first time, and had already made the radical voter potential in the Vestestadt visible to everyone in 1924.

The nationalist associations thus had a considerable influence on both traditional bourgeois associations and traditional bourgeois local politics. The mobilization that took place within the urban bourgeois milieu paved the way for the ideological, personnel, and organizational opening toward National Socialism. A social practice was established that promoted the idea of leadership, emphasized combativeness, and evoked a "people's community" in symbols, rituals, and organizational forms, making it part of mainstream society. The völkisch associations established a culture of celebration, rituals, and symbolism that incorporated traditional elements of bourgeois celebratory culture in the form of flag consecrations, parades, and rallies, supplementing these with specifically völkisch and nationalistic solstice celebrations and so-called "German Days." These now radically focused on national and völkisch ideas. The DVSTB also dissolved the meaning of the swastika as a "German symbol" and definitively assigned it an anti-Semitic character. Before the NSDAP appeared with this symbol, its sight had long since become commonplace due to the strength of the DVSTB in Coburg. Solstice celebrations included inflammatory speeches, round dances and fire jumping, communal singing, fiery speeches, a ceremonial memorial to the fallen, a consecration play, and a communal march home with

348 See bi-monthly reports of the district president in Upper Franconia from November 21 and December 4, 1923. BayHStA MA No. 102155/1–102155/3.

349 See *Coburger Zeitung* of January 7, 1924.

350 *Coburger Tageblatt newspaper* dated April 4, 1924.

ritually permeated with burning torches.[351]However, the central element of the völkisch assembly practice was the "Patriotic" or "German Days." They were held by various völkisch and nationalist groups, usually with the participation of the entire völkisch spectrum. With several thousand participants, the events usually took on considerable dimensions, regularly enveloping Coburg in black, white, and red flags and aiming to demonstrate the strength and unity of the right-wing and nationalist camp.

"German Days"

The highlight of the *Jungdeutscher Orden's* calendar of celebrations was "German Day" on July 7 and 8, 1923, when thousands of people marched through the city in a parade.[353] During an outdoor church service, Pastor Döbrich gave a strongly anti-Semitic and racist sermon based on poems by Schiller, drawing a distinction between "Schiller's spirit and Christ's spirit." At the obligatory festive evening, attended by the ducal couple, the Rütli scene from Wilhelm Tell, which stylized a community of brothers under a strong leader in their national uprising, was performed scenically, and the Rütli oath was recited together by the crowd. In addition, a memorial service was held for Albert Leo Schlageter, a sabotage fighter who had been sentenced to death by a French military court during the "Ruhr uprising" and subsequently glorified as a martyr, taking advantage of the surge in nationalist sentiment that the occupation of the Ruhr had brought with it.[354] Shortly afterwards, the local branch of the NSDAP commented in the *Coburger Zeitung*: "Thank God there were few Jews to be seen on the streets; the air was too thick with swastikas and patriotism, an atmosphere that Jews are known to be unable to tolerate without gas masks."[355]

General Erich Ludendorff and Berlin Cathedral preacher Bruno Doehring were invited as guests of honor by Carl Eduard to the "German Day" celebrations organized by *the Bavarian and Imperial League* and the Coburg branch of the German Officers' League in September 1923, and stayed at Callenberg Castle. The celebrations were supported by the entire spectrum of nationalist Coburg, with the parade led by mounted state police, followed by a car carrying the Duchess and General Ludendorff, the town band, the executive committee of *the Bavarian and Imperial League* with Carl Eduard, and a broad spectrum of Coburg's war veterans' and military associations, marksmen, gymnasts, and German nationalists. The Coburg residents standing on the sidelines filled Ludendorff's car with flowers and greeted him with cries of "Heil." After a church service in the flag-decorated Morizkirche and a march-off by the associations present, State Councilor Dr. Hermann Quarck and Erich Ludendorff, among others, gave speeches on the Brandensteinsebene. Another gathering in the fortress courtyard

351 See, for example, the program for the DVSTB solstice celebration: Gustav Neutsch to the Coburg Police Department, June 18, 1923. StadtACo A 8375.

352 For information on the "German Days" in Bavaria, see Thoß, Bruno: Deutscher Tag/Deutsche Tage. In: Historisches Lexikon Bayerns. URL: https://www.historisches-lexikon-bayerns.de/Lexikon/Deutscher_Tag/Deut-sche_Tage (last accessed October 18, 2021).

353 While the *Coburger Zeitung* reported 6,000–7,000 participants, the *Coburger Volksblatt* reported only 3,000.

354 See *Coburger Zeitung* from July 9 and July 10, 1923.

355 *Coburger Zeitung*, July 17, 1923.

and in the garden of the Festungshotel with singing and music performances was reserved for a select group. [356]

Although the celebration of the union between Bavaria and the German Empire, which was also intended to commemorate the battles of Sedan and Tannenberg, was far less marked by radical anti-Semitic slogans, this major event also created an extremely agitated atmosphere and heightened nationalist sentiments. Numerous anti-Semitic posters were put up in the city, and there were several clashes between left-wing and nationalist groups in and around Coburg. In other cities, too, the "German" and "Patriotic Days" had led to violent confrontations and anti-Semitic incidents. Not least because of the experience of the violent atmosphere in the wake of these large rallies, the Coburg SPD tried vehemently to prevent the Coburg city administration from holding the "German Days" or to have the scope of the events curtailed by imposing strict conditions.[358] Particularly feared was an appearance by Adolf Hitler's Sturmabteilung, which had made its presence felt in Coburg in October 1922 when the Vestestadt hosted its first "German Day," organized by the DVSTB, which was to become particularly significant for Coburg and the history of the NSDAP.

2.2.3 The "German Day" in Coburg in 1922

On October 14 and 15, 1922, the DVSTB, under the direction of Hans Dietrich, invited guests to the "German Day" in Coburg, following similar events in Weimar in 1920 and Detmold in 1921.[359] Ethnic associations and organizations from over 800 locations throughout the Reich and Central Europe were invited to the event, for which Coburg was recommended as a favorable venue due to its central location, the strength of the DVSTB there, and the fact that the ban on the DVSTB had not come into force in Bavaria. Dissatisfied with the DVSTB's work to date, which had focused primarily on raising awareness of the "Semitic threat," and with the previous "German Days" in the style of gatherings of dignitaries, Dietrich pushed for a more radical approach within the nationalist camp. By inviting Adolf Hitler and his still largely unknown Munich SA, Dietrich ultimately hoped to bring new momentum and a certain radicalism to the event in Coburg, which otherwise had a rather classical character with lectures, a "German devotional service," a festive evening, and a parade through the city, even against the wishes of the DVSTB's federal executive committee.

356 See *Coburger Zeitung* of September 11, 1923.

357 See *Coburger Zeitung newspaper* dated September 10 and 11, 1923.

358 See United Social Democratic Party and Coburg Local Group of the General German Trade Union Federation to the Coburg City Administration, June 30, 1923, and United Social Democratic Party and Coburg Local Group of the General German Trade Union Federation to the Coburg City Council, July 4, 1923. StadtACo A 8374.

359 The most detailed description of the "German Day" and its nationwide repercussions is provided by: Erdmann: Coburg, pp. 92–119.

360 See SS Stammrollen Auszug, November 28, 1933; letter from retired senior teacher Rud., March 26, 1953, StAMü Spruchkammer Karton 284, Spruchkammerakte Hans Dietrich; *Bayerische Ostmark*, October 15, 1937.

Adolf Hitler as a guest at the "German Day" in Coburg

The Coburg workers and the *Coburger Volksblatt newspaper* saw Hitler's invitation as a provocation, issued extensive warnings about the National Socialists' appearance, and subsequently attempted to have the "German Day" banned by lobbying the government of Upper Franconia.[361] They succeeded in getting the government to impose restrictive conditions and increase the police presence in the city. [362] Influenced by the events of the aforementioned "Coburg Bloody Saturday," however, it quickly became apparent that those in charge in Coburg were primarily afraid of the workers' reaction. The increased police presence was intended less to de-escalate the situation than to ward off the workers, who had been informed by the Volksblatt newspaper about the exact course of the event and the arrival of the Munich National Socialists. ([363])Adolf Hitler ultimately accepted the invitation to come to northern Bavaria with about 650 men from the growing SA. Two lines of communication between the Munich NSDAP and Coburg ensured that he would find a favorable climate in the former royal seat. Not only did the NSDAP's networks among Russian émigrés in the ducal house have an impact here, but so did Carl Eduard's direct contact with Hermann Ehrhard and thus with the SA. In 1921, Ehrhard had initially taken over the leadership of the gymnastics and sports department of the NSDAP, the predecessor organization of the SA, which had been transferred to Ehrhard's confidant Hans Ulrich Klintzsch in August 1921.[364] Hitler therefore found favorable situational and structural conditions in Coburg to replicate what fascist squads had already demonstrated in Italy.

In addition to around 3,000 visitors on October 14 and 4,000 visitors on October 15, numerous workers from southern Thuringia and the Coburg area also gathered for "German Day" to disrupt the event. The Munich SA, which had traveled to Coburg on a special train, including Dietrich Eckart, Hermann Esser, Anton Drexler, and Julius Streicher from Nuremberg, was already awaited at the Coburg train station by about 200 workers and several Coburg residents and guests. Within the first few minutes of the National Socialists' appearance, it must have become clear to everyone present that Hitler wanted to use the Coburg event as a ruthless demonstration of strength. He rigorously opposed the government's conditions, which had been agreed upon with the workers' leaders and the organizers of the "German Day," according to which Hitler was only to appear in Coburg in loose marching order, with rolled-up flags and without music. The police officers deployed at the site reported with admiration on the advance of the

361 See *Coburger Volksblatt* of October 4, 9, and 13, 1922.

362 The Coburg state police force was placed on alert and reinforced by the Bayreuth state police (a hundred-strong unit and a bicycle squad), the city police were supported by the state police, three detectives from the Nuremberg state police were sent to Coburg, and a special intelligence service was set up. See Erdmann: Coburg, p. 98.

363 See Dr. Fritsch to the Regional Council of Upper Franconia, October 12, 1922. BayHStA MInn 8159; Dr. Fritsch to the Regional Council of Upper Franconia, October 16, 1922. BayHStA MInn 8159.

364 See interrogation transcript of the Munich Police Department dated February 2, 1923. StAMü, Munich Police Department 6704 and interrogation transcripts of Ulrich Klintzsch dated January 10, 1923. StAMü Munich Police Department 6725. Klintzsch led the SA march through Coburg and ordered the SA to move on to Ketschendorf. During his interrogation, he identified Abraham Friedmann as the instigator of the workers, which suggests that it was he who commanded the march in front of Friedmann's house. For Carl Eduard's connections to the völkisch scene, see Chapter II2.4.1.

Hitlerites in orderly military marching formation. A state police officer summarized in a report: "The march with a marching band made an excellent impression, which will certainly not have failed to have an effect on rowdy elements."([365]) The march through the streets of the city was always in rows of eight men, framed by several flags and accompanied by a band. The SA men, aged between 18 and 25 on average, presented a dynamic and powerful image, dressed uniformly, wearing red swastika armbands, and carrying thick walking sticks or rubber truncheons.[366] Since none of the police officers present intervened against the apparent violation, it quickly became clear to those involved that they were operating in a sanction-free space and could exploit their scope for action vis-à-vis the local authorities.

Even during the closed march into the city, the SA disregarded the monopoly on the use of force held by the police, despite their presence, and claimed responsibility for restoring order, even though all state authorities subsequently attempted to conceal this fact.[367] The workers present, who felt deliberately provoked by the disregard for all agreements and often hurled insults at Hitler's men, were rigorously beaten with rubber truncheons and sticks by the violent SA men. Alfred Rosenberg later boasted about how many "bloody skulls" and "dented faces" they left behind. ([368])Through the unrestrained use of violence, they consistently took possession of the small-town area, with the less tightly organized workers clearly losing out. The small-scale structures in Coburg's city center allowed the SA men, even outside of their marching order, to call for reinforcements with whistles in response to any verbal attack and to persuade the workers to give up.[369] Even after the hundreds of SA men were initially pushed back into the Hofbräu restaurants by Coburg police director Janzen in order to prevent a clash with workers, Hitler disregarded the police's instructions and continued the march to the SA's quarters in the shooting club's shooting range on the Anger. Hitler refused a personal meeting with Dr. Fritsch at the district office.

The welcome evening in the Hofbräu brewery's hall, which was packed with 2,500–3,000 people, was used by Hitler, Eckart, Drexler, and Esser, among other outside speakers, to give speeches. Carl Eduard and Viktoria Adelheid sat in the front row as guests of honor. However, the highlight of the demonstration of power on the second day of the celebrations was a procession of National Socialists to the Veste. Reinforced by the

365 Report from the Coburg Hundred to the Bavarian State Police Command, October 17, 1922. StACo State Police Command 46.

366 See report by Hans Hösl, Nuremberg, October 18, 1922. BayHStA Minn 8159.

367 See report by Hans Hösl, Nuremberg, October 18, 1922; Dr. Fritsch to the Regional Council of Upper Franconia, October 16, 1922; report by an unknown person on "German Day"; Dr. Fritsch to the State Ministry of the Interior, November 6, 1922; Dr. Fritsch to the Regional Council of Upper Franconia, January 7, 1923. BayHStA Minn 8159; reconnaissance reports from Saturday, October 14, and Sunday, October 14, 1922. StACo State Police Command 5.

368 See *Völkischer Beobachter*, October 18, 1922.

369 See reconnaissance report from Saturday, October 14, 1922. StACo State Police Command 5; report from the Coburg State Police Hundertschaft to the Bavarian State Police Command, October 17, 1922. StA-Co State Police Command 46.

370 See Dr. Fritsch to the Regional Council of Upper Franconia, October 16, 1922. BayHStA MInn 8159.

Socialists from Halle, Landshut, Bad Tölz, Stuttgart, Nuremberg, and Hanover marched through the city in lockstep, waving flags and singing marching songs, up to the Veste, where they held a victory parade in front of Hitler and his staff. During the march through the city, all symbolically marked locations were visited and a symbolic takeover of public space was carried out. The informal walk to the Veste planned for a few hours later as part of the "German Day" program was canceled due to Hitler's arbitrary plans. Once again, there was no intervention on the part of the authorities. Considerations by Fritsch and the second mayor, Altenstädter, to ban Hitler's march were not pursued for fear of violent riots. Later, it was claimed that technical difficulties had prevented action from being taken.

There were also repeated incidents on the fringes of the event. During the night from Saturday to Sunday, an SA task force was sent to the neighboring workers' village of Ketschendorf after a scuffle broke out between SA men and workers there. The task force searched the village and the surrounding area, surrounding houses and searching them for weapons. Acting on their own authority and convinced that they had a monopoly on the use of force, the SA arrested workers and tortured them until they were handed over to the police. In the same manner, the anti-Semitism that had previously only been expressed verbally was put into practice. After rumors spread that prominent Coburg Jews had provided left-wing extremists with several tens of thousands of Reichsmarks to disrupt the event, 30 to 50 SA men went to the villa of the accused, Abraham Friedmann, and threatened him with murder.[373] Reports from those involved describe how Hitler repeatedly urged the SA men to take uncompromising action, calling on them to report those who acted too cowardly to the hundred-man leaders, thereby creating a dynamic and communal effect in the collective violence that was to become a standard element in the SA's actions.[374] The apparent restoration of order, the demonstration of strength, and the exposure of the weakness of the existing system remained powerfully etched in people's memories from the National Socialists' appearance on "German Day." A literal show of force had thus been carried out against the working class, the existing political order, but also against the entire nationalist movement.

371 At the same time, it was decided that a workers' demonstration could not be banned either. However, while Hitler and his people marched to the Veste, a gathering of workers on the market square was quickly dispersed by the police and the square cleared. See reconnaissance reports from Saturday, October 14, and Sunday, October 14, 1922. StACo State Police Command 5; report from the Coburg State Police Hundertschaft to the Bavarian State Police Command, October 17, 1922. StACo State Police Command 46.

372 See Dr. Fritsch to the Regional Council of Upper Franconia, October 16, 1922; Dr. Fritsch to the State Ministry of the Interior, October 27, 1922; report by an unknown person on "German Day." BayHStA MInn 8159; Münchner Post, October 24, 1922; interrogation transcripts of Max Eltrich from December 15, 1922, Josef Balthasar on December 16, 1922, Emil Petzendorf on December 18, 1922, Johann Wegelin on January 4, 1923, Ulrich Klintzsch on January 10, 1923, Erich Trunzer on January 15, 1923. StAMü Munich Police Headquarters 6725.

373 See inquiry to the district office executive committee, October 23, 1922; Dr. Fritsch to the State Ministry of the Interior, October 27, 1922. BayHStA MInn 8159.

374 See report by an unknown person on “German Day.” BayHStA MInn 8159; *Völkischer Beobachter*, October 18, 1922, and excerpts from the war memoirs of Obersturmbannführer Anton Rossa. Reprinted in: Erdmann: Coburg, pp. 162–165.

which Hitler had dominated in Coburg. This fact was also exploited for propaganda purposes in the aftermath of "German Day." In a publication by Alfred Rosenberg in *the Völkischer Beobachter*, in which he denounced the backward-looking nature of the supporting program of "German Day," the lack of will to fight, and the willingness of the German nationalists to negotiate with the labor leaders, he emphasized that the National Socialists in Coburg had demonstrated how to put internal renewal into practice. Here he wrote: "Either one refrains from holding a German conference if one does not feel strong enough to protect it, or one must not call the gathering 'German Day.'"(375)

Aftermath of the SA's appearance

With their appearance in Coburg, Hitler and his SA had effectively expanded the NSDAP's sphere of influence beyond Munich. The day after the nationalist event, the social democratic *Coburger Volksblatt* ran the headline "Coburg under Hitler's rule" (376), and the state parliament debated how to restore law and order in Bavaria. Contrary to the warnings of the state parliament's SPD, the state and municipal authorities blamed the workers for the clashes.A huge press response beyond Coburg brought Hitler and his movement sufficient attention, and the ban on the NSDAP in Prussia was also justified by the events in Coburg. The approach tested in Coburg to "break the red terror" through orderly behavior and organized use of force was to become established SA tactics and was mythologized shortly thereafter in Hitler's *Mein Kampf* as a "milestone of the movement." (379) Hitler's SA was able to prove itself in the experimental field of Coburg and now appeared stronger both internally and externally.

The "German Day" was thus a complete success for Hitler, and on the basis of the existing völkisch potential in the Coburg area, it provided a guide to action especially for Hans Dietrich's like-minded comrades, who still lacked radical potential in the völkisch movement. The fact that younger circles in particular were impressed by the radical actions of the Munich SA is proven by the fact that, in the aftermath of German Day, anti-Semitic attacks and exclusion occurred at several schools in Coburg, resulting in one case in a suicide attempt by a victim.[380] The people of Coburg themselves had now met another player in the circle of nationalist associations and potential leaders, and during the SA's march back to the train station, they were already accompanied by a few local supporters waving flags. [381] Nevertheless, the response to the events among Coburg's bourgeoisie remained rather

375 *Völkischer Beobachter*, October 18, 1922.
376 *Coburger Volksblatt*, October 16, 1922.
377 See Proceedings of the Bavarian State Parliament 1922/1923, Volume 7, pp. 166–221.
378 Erdmann provides an overview of publications on Hitler's appearance in Coburg: Coburg, pp. 107–109.
379 See Hartmann, Christian et al. (eds.): Hitler. Mein Kampf. A Critical Edition, Volume 2 . Munich 2016, pp. 1382–1397. Hitler used the term "milestone of the movement" to celebrate the 15th anniversary of "German Day" in 1937. See *Bayerische Ostmark*, October 18, 1937.
380 See *Münchner Post*, October 21, 1922.
381 See report by Hans Hösl, Nuremberg, October 18, 1922. BayHStA MInn 8159. Diary entries also refer to the day not as "3rd German Day" but as "Entry of the National Socialists." See diary of Hermann Zang. From the private collection of Gert Zang.

restrained, as can be seen from the reporting in the two bourgeois daily newspapers. Both the *Coburger Zeitung* and the *Coburger Tageblatt* mention Hitler's appearance and the SA only in passing and describe the event primarily as the German nationalist meeting of dignitaries that had been planned. The *Coburger Zeitung* highlighted Hitler's passionate speech in the Hofbräusaal, which "triggered a storm of enthusiasm" [382], while the Tageblatt emphasized the good organization and discipline of the Munich SA, which outdid the workers. [383]

2.3 Political movements

2.3.1 National Socialist movement

Following Hitler and the SA's appearance in Coburg, which coincided with Julius Streicher's allegiance to Hitler's movement, the onset of hyperinflation, and the intensifying opposition of the "Ordnungszelle Bayern" (Bavarian Order Cell) against the Reich, the NSDAP experienced rapid growth in Franconia at the end of 1922.[384] In Coburg too, a few weeks after the "German Day," probably in December 1922 or January 1923, a local NSDAP group was founded with about 30 members.[385] Initially, they were led by Ehrlicher and Ehrhardt from Coburg, but under the influence of the representative Hans Dietrich, who had questioned Ehrhardt's "Aryan" ancestry, they were ousted in January 1923 by the electrical engineer Alfred Riechers, the administrative secretary Heinrich Bergmann, and the master painter Max Brotzmann. At the beginning of February 1923, the local group finally went public with 45 members.[386] Shortly thereafter, the executive committee of the local group, which was primarily made up of members of the petty bourgeoisie and middle class, consisted of First Chairman Heinrich Bergmann, Second Chairman and gardener Johann Reinhardt, treasurers Max Brotzmann and master plumber Ernst Roschlau, as well as secretary Herbert Riehmann, a court assistant, and businessman Alfred Seidler.[387] Also included was electrical engineer Adolf Höh, born in Coburg in 1902, who after moving to

382 *Coburger Zeitung newspaper* dated October 18, 1922.

383 See *Coburger Zeitung* from October 16, 18, and 19, 1922; *Coburger Tageblatt* from October 16 and 18, 1922.

384 See Hambrecht: Aufstieg, p. 38 f.

385 There are various dates circulating regarding the founding date of the Coburg local group of the NSDAP. A founding on October 24, 1922, with 86 members, as Schwede writes in *Kampf um Coburg* in order to link the founding of the local group more directly to Hitler's appearance, as is often done in many places, can be ruled out, even though this date is often given in the literature. See Schwede: Kampf, p. 54. Schwede himself reports on the first founding in December 1922 with 36 members in the course of the party's re-establishment in 1925. See report of the general meeting of the Coburg local group of the NSDAP on December 11, 1925. BA NS 26 2366. A report by the Coburg state police cites January 14, 1923, as the date of founding. See monthly report of the Coburg state police dated January 27, 1923. StACo State Police Command 30. In January 1923, the district president also mentions a local Nazi group in Coburg that had already taken shape and consisted of 25 to 30 people. See bi-monthly report of the district president of Upper Franconia dated January 20, 1923. StABa K3 Government of Upper Franconia XXII.

386 See NSDAP local group Coburg to the NSDAP headquarters, February 3, 1923. BA NS 26 2266.

387 See Executive Committee of the Coburg local group, March 15, 1923. BA NS 26 2266.

Dortmund in 1930 and became known as a "blood witness of the movement," was one of the co-founders of the Coburg local group.[388] Franz Schwede also joined the local group in February 1923 at the latest.[389]

Franz Schwede

Franz Reinhold Schwede was born on March 5, 1888, in Drowöhnen in the district of Memel as the youngest of six brothers. According to his own statements, he was raised by his father to have "soldierly values" and received pre-military training.[390] After a brief stint as an apprentice in a law office, he completed an apprenticeship as a machinist at the Schneider & Co. shipbuilding and engineering works in Memel. In 1907, Schwede joined the Imperial Navy as a volunteer machinist cadet and completed his first shipboard command on the *SMS Wettin* in June of the same year. In 1912, after various assignments, including on the *Emden* in East Asia, he was promoted to chief engineer's mate and initially served on the battleship *Prinzregent Luitpold,* which was also involved in the Battle of Jutland. After attending deck officer school and passing his engineer's exam in Kiel, he was assigned to the small cruiser *Dresden* for military service. In Kiel, Schwede experienced the revolution and, according to his own account, was subsequently involved in the sinking of the German fleet at Scapa Flow on the *Dresden*. He was held as a prisoner of war by the British until the beginning of 1920, then joined the new Imperial Navy, but was discharged on March 31, 1921, due to the restrictions of the Treaty of Versailles. Schwede was thus a typical representative of the First World War generation of front-line soldiers, who found fulfillment in military service and achieved successes in wartime that he was initially unable to replicate in civilian life. In his biographical sketch *Kampf um Coburg* (Battle for *Coburg)*, Schwede himself wrote: "The old soldiers, who had maintained their military bearing even during internment and captivity, could not find their place in the 'new' Germany. They had returned to their homeland and found it to be a foreign place. The impressions were devastating."([391]) Through the mediation of the welfare department of the North Sea naval station, he was able to take up a position in April 1921 as technical operations manager of a sawmill under construction in St. Andreasberg in the Harz Mountains, and in 1922 he finally moved to a position as an electrical engineer.

388 See Thieme, Sarah: National Socialist Martyr Cult. Sacralized Politics and Christianity in the Westphalian Ruhr Region (1929–1939). Frankfurt/New York 2017, p. 498.

389 See NSDAP headquarters to Heinrich Bergmann, February 16, 1923. BA NS 26 2266; BDC registration form. StAMü Denazification Tribunal Box 1736, Denazification Tribunal File Franz Schwede.

390 In his autobiographical sketch, Schwede stylizes himself as a born soldier. The first sentence in "Kampf um Coburg" (Battle for Coburg) is accordingly "I am a soldier." The role of soldier was a decisive component of his political personality. See Chapter III1.3.1.; Schwede: Kampf, pp. 7–19; *Coburger Nationalzeitung* of April 18, 1931; various information from Schwede's denazification proceedings. StAMü Denazification Commission Box 1736, Denazification Commission file Franz Schwede; Joachim Lilla: Schwede, Franz. In: ibid.: Ministers of State, Senior Administrative Officials, and (NS) Functionaries in Bavaria from 1918 to 1945. URL: https://verwaltungshandbuch.bavarikon.de/Schwede, Franz (last accessed October 21, 2021); Habel, Hubertus: The Unstoppable Rise of the Machinist Franz Schwede. In: Initiative Stadtmuseum Coburg e. V. (ed.): Ahead of its time. Coburg and the rise of National Socialism in Germany. Coburg 2004, pp. 49–52.

391 Schwede: Kampf, pp. 16 f.; various information from Schwede's denazification proceedings. StAMü Denazification Commission Box 1736, Denazification Commission File Franz Schwede; *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, April 18, 1931.

and plant inspector at the municipal electricity works in Coburg. Without belonging to a nationalist organization in Coburg, Schwede took part in their events and marches and witnessed Hitler's appearance here, which he retrospectively stylized as a political awakening experience.[392]

In June 1923, Franz Schwede took over the leadership of the Coburg local group from Heinrich Bergmann and initially had to position it within the existing nationalist associations.He became the most important guiding figure, leading the Coburg NSDAP from its initial establishment and cooperation in the völkisch camp, through a conscious separation from other völkisch associations, to finally asserting its claim to sole representation. Compared to the DVSTB and especially the *Jungdeutscher Orden*, the NSDAP's membership base in Coburg remained significantly smaller for a long time. In May 1923, the party reported a membership of 110, and in June 1923, 200 members. In September 1923, the NSDAP was able to set up its own office in Georg Riechers' house at Theatergasse 3, which was later moved to the apartment of local group leader Otto Schmidt at Neugasse 6.[395] Initially, the local group's work was limited to holding lecture evenings to familiarize the Coburg workforce in particular with the ideas and goals of the NSDAP.[396] However, Schwede actively sought to replicate in Coburg the effect that had been achieved by the strict organization and united appearance of the SA on "German Day." After rallies and lectures, the local Nazi group always marched in formation through the city to their party headquarters, and for "German Day" in Nuremberg in 1923, Schwede also rented a special train so that his local group could appear in uniform formation with their own marching band. In addition, conspicuous radicalism modeled on Hitler's approach became an established political tool for the NSDAP in Coburg. As early as 1923, the newly formed Coburg SA, led by Hermann Behringer, demonstrated through a brutal attack on workers that it was in no way inferior to its Munich counterparts and claimed the rank of the most feared SA in Upper Franconia. When the SA returned from the "German Day" in Nuremberg and encountered a train whose passengers were believed to be workers, they stormed the departing train, pulled the handbrake, and brutally beat the passengers.[397] A founding member of the Coburg SA, Ewald Eckardt, an assistant sergeant with the state police, was arrested during a search of a restaurant in Wald-

392 See ibid.; Schwede: Kampf, p. 19; various details from Schwede's denazification proceedings. StAMü Denazification Commission Box 1736, Denazification Commission file Franz Schwede.

393 Schwede himself notes that he had been chairman of the Coburg Nazi local group since April 1923 and previously vice-chairman, but this is contradicted by correspondence between the local group and the headquarters in Munich. See Schwede: Coburg, p. 54 f.

394 See Local group of the NSDAP Coburg to the NSDAP headquarters, February 3, 1923; Local group of the NSDAP Coburg to the NSDAP headquarters, May 2, 1923; Local group of the NSDAP Coburg to the NSDAP headquarters, June 5, 1923; BA NS 26 2263. A strength of 800 men, as stated by Herbert Gaede in his Schwede biography for the fall of 1923 and frequently cited in the literature, seems to be significantly overestimated based on the new registrations in 1923 listed in the correspondence with the NSDAP headquarters in Munich. See Gaede: Schwede-Coburg, p. 11.

395 See Local Group of the NSDAP Coburg to the NSDAP headquarters, September 7, 1923. BA NS 26 2266 and address book of the city of Coburg from 1931. For Georg and Alfred Riechers, see Chapter III2.2.

396 See Franz Schwede to the NSDAP headquarters, May 31, 1923. BA NS 26 2266.

397 See Schwede: Kampf, pp. 58–60.

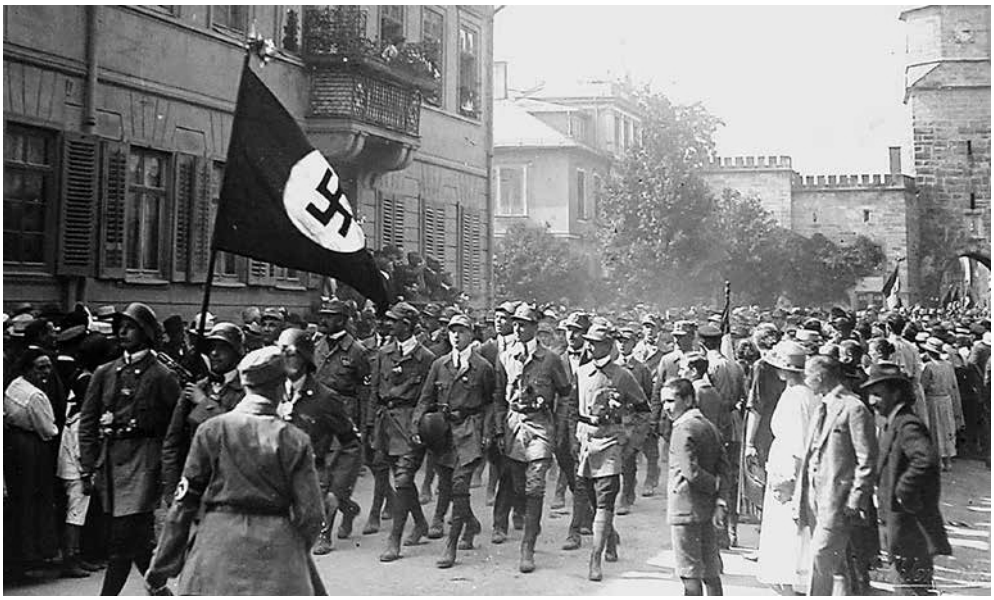


Fig. 4: SA marching through Ketschendorfer Straße in 1923, postcard, photographer: Prof. Eduard Uhlenhuth

Saxony, a working-class district of Rödental, and became the first martyr of the local Nazi movement, without the murder ever being solved.[398]However, the NSDAP and SA were not involved in the mobilization of the "Grenzschutz Nord" (Northern Border Guard) in the Coburg area, but only carried out illegal armed exercises, as the associations called up to form the emergency police would have had to make a declaration of loyalty to the Bavarian state police leadership, which Hitler had not permitted.([399]) The eagerly awaited and then failed "Hitler Putsch" initially left the nationalist camp in Coburg disoriented. Following a secret order from Munich on November 8, 1923, a communications department had been set up at Callenberg Castle with increased radio readiness, which was responsible, among other things, for ensuring that radio contact between Munich and Berlin was maintained under all circumstances. The head of the Coburg communications department, Alfred Riechers, had declared himself responsible for this together with his father Georg Riechers, Fritz Bieler, Karl Schunck, and another person. They waited for their special assignment during the storming of Berlin, which was also to be decisively supported from Coburg through the radio equipment upgrade of the border with Thuringia.[400]Hans Dietrich had already had leaflets printed calling for calm and submission to the new government. However, they soon had to be destroyed again. [401]Pastor Johnsen also unsuccessfully demanded that the city administration provide him with the names of all those who had moved to the city since 1914.

398 See ibid., p. 63, and Schuler: Landespolizei, p. 25.
399 See Erdmann: Coburg, p. 134.
400 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, November 8, 1933.
401 See the main archive of the NSDAP to Robert Dornheim's Hofbuchdruckerei Coburg, October 11, 1937. BA NS 26 973.

Jews in order to apparently control anti-Semitic actions during the coup. Apart from the disarmament of the NSDAP and the brief arrest of Franz Schwede and Hermann Behringer, November 1923 was extremely quiet. On November 10, District Administrator Dr. Fritsch invited the leaders of the völkisch associations to a meeting and asked them to ensure calm within their associations.

The nationalist scene after the failed "Hitler coup"

Not least thanks to Hans Dietrich, a dense network initially established itself within the nationalist scene. He had also joined the NSDAP in the spring of 1923 and, as a representative, had been involved not only in founding the Coburg Nazi local group, but also those in Lichtenfels, Kronach, and Forchheim.[404] After the NSDAP was banned following Hitler's coup, the members of the Coburg local group quickly found refuge, particularly in *the Wiking League* and the DVSTB, where they formed their own sports, singing, and bowling clubs to make their meetings easier.[405] In December 1923, Franz Schwede, together with the technician and toy manufacturer Fritz Müller-Oppel, the merchant Georg Linke, and the telegraphic secretary Gustav Müller, as chairman of the DVSTB, which now had a total of 1,000 members, including about 500 National Socialists, 400 of whom already had dual membership in the DVSTB. A separate security department was formed under Georg Linke. In May 1924, only Schwede and Linke, who had joined the NSDAP in 1923 and had become one of Schwede's closest confidants, were listed as leading officials of the DVSTB. At the same time the German Workers' Party (DAP), founded by Julius Streicher and based in Nuremberg, had only 10 members under the Coburg chairmen, master painter Franz Janson and electrical engineer Ernst Liebermann.

In January 1924, under the leadership of Helmut Johnsen, the DVSTB, the *Jungdeutscher Orden*, and the *women's and girls' association "Mein Deutschland" (My Germany)*, including several National Socialists, finally joined forces to form the *Völkische Verbände Coburg (Coburg Nationalist Associations*).[408] Together, they organized a celebration of the founding of the Reich on January 18, 1924, which was attended by approximately 1,100 guests. It was already clear at this point that, alongside Erich Ludendorff, the figurehead of the völkisch camp, Adolf Hitler was increasingly taking center stage and was being named by Pastor Johnsen, the *Jungdeutscher Orden*, and the Deutschvölkische as a person who could be considered for future leadership of Germany.[409] In the wake of the rift between Hitler and Ludendorff, Adolf Hitler soon became known in Coburg as well.

402 See weekly report to the government of Upper Franconia dated November 14, 1923. StadtACo A 6586.
403 See Schwede: Kampf, p. 66.
404 See SS Stammrollen Auszug, November 28, 1933, StAMü Spruchkammer Karton 284, Spruchkammer-akte Hans Dietrich.
405 See Schwede: Kampf, p. 67.
406 See memo from the Coburg Police Department dated December 19, 1923. StadtACo A 8375 and report from the Police Department dated February 1, 1924. StadtACo A 8373.
407 See list of leaders and senior officials of national associations and political organizations, May 8, 1924. StadtACo A 8373. Denazification Tribunal file Georg Linke. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg City L 372.
408 See Georg Linke to the Coburg municipal police, January 14, 1924. StadtACo A 8375.
409 See report by Commissioner Seidel on the United People's Party's celebration of the founding of the German Empire, January 19, 1924. StadtACo A 8375.

clear winner, primarily due to the fact that Johnsen, the most successful nationalist leader at the time, had actively supported Hitler, contrary to the Reich-wide line of *the Young German Order*. This shift in *the Young German Order* can be seen as a decisive step towards the later success of the NSDAP. He had already begun to embody the radicalism and activism that many members of the völkisch movement, for example in the DVSTB or the *Bund Bayern und Reich* or the *Stahlhelm*, felt was lacking. The fact that the local NSDAP group had chosen the same clubhouse as the *Young German Order* in Spitalgasse before it was banned and had supported Johnsen when he was attacked had been conducive to this development.[410]Among Hitler's visitors in prison in Landsberg am Lech on May 21, 1924, was Hans Dietrich, who, together with Johnsen and Schwede, held the völkisch camp together. [411]In April 1924, the *Völkischer Block* invited guests to a large völkisch celebration in honor of Adolf Hitler on the occasion of his birthday.[412] In the Reich presidential election in March 1925, Ludendorff, as the National Socialist candidate, was only able to garner 5.6% of the vote in Coburg, in contrast to Paul von Hindenburg, who was nominated in the second round of voting and won an overwhelming majority of 67.3% of the Coburg vote after Hitler had also called for his election.[413] The *National Socialist Freedom Movement* (NSFB), into which the *Völkischer Block* had merged in May 1924, was led in Coburg by Franz Schwede. [414]

The Coburg NSDAP after the party was re-established in 1925

There were already signs that the payment arrangements of the Dawes Plan and the domestic political consolidation of economically and politically stable years had an extremely dampening effect on the representatives of radical politics. The nationalist and völkisch camp, which had won landslide victories for the Völkischer Block in the state and Reichstag elections in the spring of 1924, was once again content with more moderate parties such as the DNVP at the national level and the *Vaterländischer Block* at the local level. By now at the latest, the associations united in *the Völkischer Block* were drifting further and further apart, trying to poach members from other associations and reemphasize their own independent profiles. Against this backdrop, the NSDAP, refounded at the end of February 1925, remained a splinter party for the time being. In Coburg, on March 1, 1925, under Franz Schwede, the local groups of Coburg, Tiefenlauter/Neukirchen, Mitwitz, Stockheim, Neustadt, Mönchöden, Rögen, Creidlitz, Michelau, Neuses, Untersiemau/Scherneck, and Oeslau joined together to form the Coburg district group of the NSDAP.[415] In December 1925, the Coburg local group reported 135 members to Munich. [416]

410 See *Coburger Zeitung* of May 14, 1923, and Schwede: Kampf, p. 58.

411 See Fleischmann, Peter (ed.): Hitler als Häftling in Landsberg am Lech 1923/24. Der Gefangenen-Personalakte Hitler nebst weiteren Quellen aus der Schutzhaft- Untersuchungshaft- und Festungshaft-anstalt Landsberg am Lech. Neustadt a. d. Aisch 2015.

412 See *Coburger Zeitung*, April 24, 1924. Julius Streicher, for example, gave an anti-Semitic speech here.

413 See *Coburger Zeitung newspaper* dated March 14 and April 11, 1932.

414 See Schwede: Kampf, p. 67.

415 Before the ban, there were local groups in Coburg, Neustadt, Mönchröden, Michelau, and Stockheim. See Völkischer Block Bezirksgruppe Coburg to the NSDAP headquarters, March 5, 1925. BA NS 26 2366.

416 See the NSDAP headquarters to the Coburg local group of the NSDAP, January 21, 1926. BA NS 26 2366. Contrary to the information provided by the Coburg local group, the headquarters' files had

Even after the local group was reestablished, Schwede strove to ensure that the party in the Coburg district was tightly organized and fought for his vision of a suitable structure with the party leadership in Munich. As chairman of the district group, he took over the correspondence for all local groups with the head office in Munich, had obtained the Coburg office of the NSDAP, and also collected the corresponding membership fees in the Coburg local group. He was convinced that, on his part, "further personal encouragement from above" was needed to "perhaps raise the groups."(417) However, the party leadership initially rejected his approach.(418) Holding mass rallies with Hans Dietrich, Gregor Strasser, or Hermann Esser was still one of the main tools of party work. The educational work was intended to open the eyes of "not only some of the bourgeoisie in Coburg, but also some of the working class." The Coburg local group was led by Georg Linke and Johannes Menzel, the owner of a music publishing and mail-order business, who was soon replaced by the company electrician Willy Schondorff. In December 1925, Albert Schaarschmidt and Gertrud Spichalsky were also appointed as secretaries. In addition, a finance committee, an honorary council or support committee, a press committee, and an advertising committee were formed within the party. The SA was now under the control of tax inspector Fritz von Baczko and his deputy, manufacturer Herbert Grempel. The SS, founded in late 1925 or early 1926, was primarily composed of underemployed or unemployed manual laborers and day laborers and was led by Ludwig Müller.

As a party, alliance, and movement all in one, the growing local group inspired young representatives of the petty bourgeoisie and workers—especially home workers who were oriented toward the bourgeois world—with its dynamism and radicalism.[421] In an effort to maintain an outward appearance of integrity, the years following the reestablishment of the local group saw repeated expulsions from the party when individual members attracted attention through dishonorable behavior and were deemed a threat to the reputation of the NSDAP. Schwede even considered having these expulsions officially announced in *the Völkischer Beobachter* in order to publicly document the honorability of his party members, but the party leadership in Munich rejected this idea.[422] The local group also had an active group of women who held their own Christmas parties and Easter celebrations and engaged in lively promotional activities. Mrs. Schaarschmidt, for example, was described as one of the most enthusiastic members of the local group. In addition to the second secretary, Anni Kösel, the second treasurer on the local group's finance committee was also a woman

At that time, there were 143 members. See: The NSDAP headquarters to the Coburg local group of the NSDAP, April 4, 1926. BA NS 26 2366.

417 NS local group Coburg to the NSDAP headquarters, July 2, 1925. BA NS 26 2366.

418 See: The NSDAP headquarters to the Coburg local group of the NSDAP, July 7, 1925. BA NS 26 2366. Later, the smaller local groups in the district that were not yet viable on their own were placed under the authority of the Coburg local group.

419 Report of the general meeting of the Coburg local group on December 11, 1925. BA NS 26 2366.

420 See Coburg local NSDAP group to the NSDAP headquarters, January 2, 1926. BA NS 26 2366.

421 See Coburg local Nazi group to the NSDAP headquarters, April 9, 1925. BA NS 26 2366.

422 See Coburg local Nazi group to the NSDAP headquarters, September 15, 1925; Coburg local group of the NSDAP to the NSDAP headquarters, January 20, 1925, and the NSDAP headquarters to the Coburg local group of the NSDAP, February 4, 1926. BA NS 26 2366.

set.[423] At the beginning of 1926, with the approval of the NSDAP headquarters, the Coburg women's division of the NSDAP finally joined the German Women's Order, a predecessor of the National Socialist Women's League, which had been founded in Berlin, as an independent group.[424] The local group wanted to expand its influence, but lacked the financial resources to successfully recruit new members. As early as December 1925, an additional special contribution of 15 pfennigs per member was levied for advertising purposes, in addition to the monthly compulsory contributions of 50 pfennigs.[425] In addition, competition with other nationalist associations intensified. After the re-establishment of the NSDAP, Pastor Johnsen had clearly distanced himself from Schwede and the Coburg local group and, with the founding of a *National Socialist People's League*, had created a new nationalist organization that wanted to orient itself more strongly toward Ludendorff and Hindenburg.[426] However, Johnsen's change of course did not meet with much response in the nationalist camp, as the *National Socialist People's League* did not last long and Johnsen himself, as a local leader, had passed his zenith and was appearing less and less in public. In addition, the NSDAP had actively sought to disrupt events organized by *the Young German Order*.[427] As a result, the *Jungdeutscher Orden* lost a large part of its membership to the NSDAP, among others, so that by 1927 it had only 148 members and was led by Reichsbank official Karl Reß. When Johnsen ran again for the *Völkischer Block* in the 1928 state elections, he failed miserably.[428] The relationship with the DVSTB was also increasingly marked by hostile disputes. Symptomatic of this was the fact that in October 1925, the Coburg local group of the DVSTB took legal action against the local group of the NSDAP because the latter had retained a typewriter, a transcript book, and a pennant after the dissolution of the cooperation. [429]The fact that frequent dual membership became problematic against this backdrop is demonstrated by the fact that Ms. Schaarschmidt, who was a member of both the NSDAP and *the* DVSTB's *women's and girls' association "Mein Deutschland*," was denied access to a meeting of the women's association because of her party membership. ([430]) T h e intensifying hostility also led [to]a public outburst within the Völkischer Block faction in the Coburg City Council.

423 See report of the general meeting of the Coburg local Nazi group on December 11, 1925. BA NS 26 2366.

424 See Coburg local Nazi group to the NSDAP headquarters, January 26, 1926. BA NS 26 2366. On women in the Nazi movement, see Kater, Michael H.: Frauen in der NS-Bewegung (Women in the Nazi Movement). In: VfZ 31(1983), pp. 202–241.

425 See report of the general meeting of the Coburg local Nazi group on December 11, 1925. BA NS 26 2366 and Schwede: Kampf, pp. 75 f.

426 See Coburg local Nazi group to the NSDAP headquarters, July 2, 1925. BA NS 26 2366 and Kuessner: Johnsen, pp. 20 f.

427 For example, a lecture by Johnsen and Döbrich, who had taken over the leadership of the order since Johnsen's candidacy for the state parliament, in October 1925. The lecture had to be interrupted several times.

428 See Kuessner: Johnsen, p. 21 f. and the 1927 register of residents of the city of Coburg, p. 346. Johnsen received his doctorate in 1928 at the University of Erlangen and left Gauerstadt in 1929 to take up a parish position at Lübeck Cathedral. In 1934, as a member of the "German Christians," he was elected regional bishop of Braunschweig. After serving as a reserve officer, he was taken prisoner by Yugoslavia and shot there in 1947. See Kuessener: Johnsen.

429 See NSDAP headquarters to the Coburg local Nazi group, October 15, 1925. BA NS 26 2366.

430 See Coburg local Nazi group to NSDAP headquarters, January 2, 1926. BA NS 26 2366.

The three-man faction of the NSDAP in the city council

In the city council elections on December 7, 1924, which were already marked by the aforementioned decline in popularity of radical political options, the SPD won eight seats, the DDP two, the *Citizens' and Economic Bloc* four, the *Patriotic Citizens' Bloc* seven, and the *Völkisch Bloc* four seats. The four seats of the Völkische Block went to the National Socialists Franz Schwede, Georg Linke, master baker Ernst Bernhard, and the chairman of the DVSTB, manufacturer Gustav Neutsch. However, after the NSDAP broke with the Völkisch after the NSDAP was re-founded, considerable disputes soon became apparent within the ranks *of the Völkischer Block*, which ultimately led to Neutsch being expelled from the faction in May 1925 for alleged "gross violations of National Socialist principles"([431]) and joining the DNVP. In the city council, Schwede and Neutsch continued to wage a small war in the following years, which ended in disciplinary proceedings and criminal charges against Neutsch.([432]) In the end, the NSDAP triumphed over the DVSTB, which still had over 500 members in 1927, and over the Wiking-Bund, which had only 40 members left.[433] Even though the NSDAP had not taken on a leading role in local politics or society as a whole, it had asserted itself within the völkisch camp with its claim to sole representation since its re-establishment in the spring of 1925. In particular, its participation in the city council provided the NSDAP in Coburg with a favorable starting position to remain visible even in years of political and economic stability and to expand the party's base in the city.

The members of the three-man faction of the NSDAP—Franz Schwede, Ernst Bernhard and Georg Linke—shared similar backgrounds and, after serving in the war and searching for political orientation and opportunities for action in their homeland, had found their way to the radical ideas of the NSDAP. Their initial willingness to cooperate in the city council soon evaporated after the NSDAP faction realized its true

431 See NS-Ortsgruppe Coburg to the NSDAP headquarters, January 11, 1926. BA NS 26 2366.

432 See Franz Schwede to the Coburg City Council, March 3 and May 31, 1926. StadtACo A 6424.

433 See 1927 Coburg City Register, pp. 344, 348.

434 Albrecht provides a comprehensive account of Nazi local politics up to 1929 and the seizure of power in Coburg: Avantgarde.

435 Ernst Bernhard, born on March 26, 1889, in Coburg, came from a family of civil servants and completed an apprenticeship as a baker after finishing school. After making several trips to New York and the West Indies with the Hamburg-America Line, he did his military service with the German Navy on the *SMS Posten*. After passing his master's examination in 1914, he served on board the *SMS Karl der Große,* in the naval defense department and on the *auxiliary cruiser Wolf.* Back in Coburg, he founded a bakery and pastry shop on April 1, 1919. After the NSDAP was re-established, he joined the party. See Ernst Bernhard's curriculum vitae. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg City B 153.

436 Georg Linke, born on August 21, 1890, in Zittau, was the son of a merchant. He initially learned carpentry in Görlitz, Silesia, and completed a commercial apprenticeship in Breslau. After a brief period of employment in Czersk, Prussia, he served in the II West Prussian Pioneer Battalion 17 Thorn from 1912 to 1914 and ultimately participated in the campaigns against Russia and France as a sergeant. Discharged from military service in 1919, he volunteered to protect the eastern border and was assigned as a sergeant to the supernumerary Reichswehr regiment in Liebau, but was discharged again in August 1919 during demobilization. After returning home and joining his father's timber business, he found that none of the existing parties offered a politically satisfactory answer for the future. He joined the DVSTB in 1921 and was corporately affiliated with *the Bavarian and Reich Federation* from 1923 onwards. In 1922, he had followed Hitler's appearance in Coburg and had come into contact with Franz Schwede in the DVSTB in 1924. See Georg Linke's curriculum vitae dated October 12, 1947. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg City L 372.

became aware of their parliamentary weakness in a body dominated by traditional bourgeois local politics. While the National Socialists, who were very inexperienced in local politics, initially often agreed with bourgeois ideas in their contributions to discussions and voting behavior and had joined the *bourgeois working group* as a bulwark against the Social Democrats, they became an obstructionist party as their self-confidence grew.[437] Franz Schwede's men focused specifically on staying in the conversation and used the city council as a public stage. The basis of a less elaborate Nazi local politics was to attract attention through populist motions in order to portray the NSDAP as the true representative of Coburg's citizens. The abolition of all city council meeting allowances in favor of payments to the unemployed on welfare or the withdrawal of the savings bank director's bonus were the subject of pointless window-dressing and offered seemingly simple solutions to the social problems of the time.[438] In particular, the NSDAP was able to style itself as the true representative of social policy, which took into account the unemployed as well as social security and small pensioners in crisis. At the same time, unemployed Coburg residents were courted through targeted appearances by Nazi city councilors at KPD meetings for the unemployed and emergency workers.[439] The difficult municipal financial policy, which became the biggest municipal political problem of the 1920s and which bourgeois municipal politics mostly met with helplessness, also provided opportunities for the Nazi faction to submit urgent motions, the actual urgency of which, however, was usually rejected by the majority of the city parliament. In the course of the financial debates, the NSDAP finally withdrew from participation altogether. In the ongoing conflict between the city of Coburg and the Bavarian state over the practical implementation of Coburg's rights of self-determination, the NSDAP portrayed the Bavarian government as a clear enemy and resorted to defiant and populist motions, such as demanding completely unrealistic cost coverage from the government.[440] In protest against planned tax increases in 1928, the Nazi city council faction issued a protest note branding the additional financial burden a breach of the annexation treaty and demanding that the Bavarian government assume the entire costs of the Coburg State Theater due to the city's enormous debt.[441] Mayor Erich Unverfährwho was thoroughly unpopular in nationalist and populist circles, was particularly criticized for complying with the government's fiscal policy guidelines and accused of being a representative of the state rather than of the people of Coburg.[442] Through votes by the Bavarian City Council at the request of the Nazi faction, Schwede hoped to force the state to change its policy. [443]

437 See *Coburger Zeitung*, June 6, 1929; Albrecht: Avantgarde, pp. 95–107.
438 See, for example, motions by the Nazi faction dated December 14, 1925, and May 26, 1926. StadtACo A 6424.
439 See report by the police department dated December 15, 1928. StadtACo A 8376.
440 See, for example, the minutes of the city council meetings of December 29, 1927, and January 13, 1928. StadtACo A 8071.
441 See protest resolution of the NSDAP against the government's tax increases dated October 11, 1928. StadtACo A 6424.
442 See stenographic report of the town hall meeting in the Hofbräuhaus on October 5, 1927. StadtACo A 7866.
443 See, for example, the NSDAP's urgent motion of June 2, 1926. StadtACo A 6424.

Fight against the political system and anti-Semitic agitation

At the same time, the Nazi faction deliberately attempted to discredit the existing political system and challenge the rules of the city parliament. According to National Socialist interpretation, this would betray the will of the voters. Schwede repeatedly pointed out to the population at meetings or through the press that the political leaders in Coburg were not making decisions in the interests of the population. Above all, the number of confidential city council meetings, at which the most important agreements were allegedly kept secret from the citizens of Coburg, made the NSDAP a political issue. Schwede and his faction repeatedly submitted motions to remove certain matters from the confidential to the public part of the meeting in order to serve the public interest.[445] The local Nazi group thus attacked the foundations of the established policy of dignitaries, which the majority of citizens still adhered to, but which had proven obsolete since the Social Democrats entered the city parliament. While Schwede was the prominent spokesman for the Nazi faction, distinguishing himself in heated verbal exchanges with other city council members, he found a more than active ally in Georg Linke. Linke made several attempts to disrupt the regular course of the meetings, particularly through motions on the rules of procedure, but remained largely unsuccessful until 1929. Ernst Bernhard, who lacked the necessary oratorical skills, remained a rather pale backbencher within the committee at first.

The NSDAP also used its voice in the city council for targeted anti-Semitic actions. Initially, the preacher Hermann Hirsch became the focus of the National Socialists. The founder of the Jewish boarding school at Hohe Straße 30 represented the Jewish community of Coburg on the Youth and Welfare Committee ([447]), which had become one of the most important municipal bodies against the backdrop of the social problems of the time. At the end of March 1926, the Nazi city council faction issued an official statement, which was published in Streicher's Stürmer on April 14, demanding Hermann Hirsch's exclusion from the committee. According to Nazi rhetoric, Jews, as the sole culprits of all the misfortune of the German people, should not be allowed to participate in combating this very social misery. They were corrupting today's youth and "dragging everything that is sacred to the German people, customs, honor, freedom, the nation, the fatherland (...) into the mud."([448]) In addition to spreading anti-Semitic hate speech, Schwede used the controversy surrounding the Jewish preacher to attack those responsible in the city council. He accused legal advisor Arnold Wagemann of withholding the announcement that Hirsch would be on the committee in order to discreetly smuggle in a Jew. He accused the other parties of "Jewish servitude," provoking members of the bourgeois parties to respond to this accusation with

444 See report by the Coburg police department dated October 10, 1927. StadtACo A 8373 and stenographic report of the town hall meeting in the Hofbräuhaus on October 5, 1927. StadtACo A 7866.

445 See, for example, the minutes of the city council meetings of May 20, 1927, January 13, 1928, May 25, 1928, and February 22, 1929. StadtACo A 8071 and 8072.

446 See, for example, the minutes of the city council meetings of December 16, 1927, September 7, 1928, and February 22, 1929. StadtACo A 8071 and 8072.

447 In addition to representatives of various religious communities, the Youth and Welfare Committee included individual city council members, the chief medical officer, representatives of independent social institutions, as well as war invalids and war survivors, social welfare recipients, and small pensioners.

448 *Der Stürmer*, April 14, 1926.

Protest left the chamber. [449] However, Hermann Hirsch had already come under the scrutiny of the NSDAP in October 1926, when, as an anonymous theater critic, he published a critical review of the musical drama *Evangelimann* by the Coburg State Theater in *the Coburger Tageblatt newspaper*, prompting the Nazi faction to call for a counterattack.[450] Once again, it attempted to make itself the mouthpiece of the population, which allegedly felt "deeply hurt and offended in its German sensibilities."[(451)]However, with the argument that Hirsch's criticism was allegedly damaging the financially stricken Landestheater, the NSDAP was now able to make itself heard much more clearly and win a significant victory against the Jewish preacher and freedom of expression. Under the direction of Mayor Unverfähr, the administrative committee of the state theater drafted a request to the *Coburger Tageblatt* to refrain from publishing such theater reviews, ultimately leading Hirsch to revise his review. Ironically, Schwede also wanted to see the Jewish intellectual's forced concession as an attack on the theater staff and accused Hirsch of malicious intent.

As a lightning rod for general frustration over widespread economic and financial hardship and as another vehicle for settling scores with local politics, the Coburg Savings Bank became the focus of Nazi agitation.[453] Initially, Schwede reported at a public meeting of the NSDAP about a securities theft at the Sparkasse committed by the son of an SPD member of parliament from Hof, and accused Unverfähr of delaying the matter.[454] Although Schwede was forced to retract his statements to Unverfähr following a decision by the works committee of the municipal utilities, where he was employed, and to inform himself about the true course of events from police director Janzen, he had nevertheless achieved his goal of spreading rumors, stirring up mistrust, and discrediting the mayor.[455] However, the NSDAP attracted far more attention with its agitation against savings bank director Konrad Soergel and his aforementioned royalties. Soergel, who had been promised a higher salary and a bonus of ten percent of the savings bank's annual net profit in 1923 as part of an attempt to lure him away from Thuringia, was criticized for refusing to give up these privileges in the wake of the general economic crisis. Not only the population, which was plagued by inflation and waiting for their savings to increase in value, but also the Bavarian state and the government of Upper Franconia demanded that the Coburg city administration reduce his salary.

449 A subsequent resolution by the Police and Administration Senate instructed Schwede to make a statement on his accusations in the city council. He then explained that he had not intended to insult the entire city council. See resolution of the Police and Administration Committee of April 12, 1926, and minutes of the city council meeting of April 16, 1926. StadtACo A 6424.

450 See *Coburger Tageblatt* of October 25, 1926.

451 Enquiry by the Nazi city council faction on October 29, 1926.

452 See *Coburger Zeitung* of January 29, 1927.

453 For the history of Coburg Savings Bank, see Finzel, Frank; Reinhart, Michael: Spuren. 175 Jahre Sparkasse Coburg. Hauptwege, Nebenwege, Irrwege (Traces: 175 Years of Coburg Savings Bank. Main paths, side paths, wrong turns). Stuttgart 1996.

454 See stenographic report of the town hall meeting at the Hofbräuhaus on October 5, 1927. StadtACo A 7866.

455 See letter from the chairman of the works committee of the municipal utilities to Franz Schwede, October 12, 1927. StadtACo A 7866.

of the savings bank director. [456]In a legal process that was difficult for outsiders to understand, the issue of royalties remained on the agenda of the Coburg City Council for years, thus becoming a suitable propaganda tool for the Nazi faction. It succeeded in putting noticeable pressure on the city parliament and the municipal savings bank, while at the same time undermining the population's trust in the municipal credit institution.[457] Through public mass rallies, the NSDAP once again attempted to slip into the role of enlightener of the population by providing information about the decision-making process regarding the amount of Soergels' royalties and styling itself as the true and sole defender of the interests of the citizenry.[458] In addition to demanding that the savings bank place greater emphasis on its charitable nature, the National Socialists were also able to trump the savings bank in this dispute with the accusation that it was too hesitant in revaluing paper mark deposits to compensate for inflation. The agitation of the NSDAP ultimately contributed to the failure of a planned new building for the savings bank on the site of the Gräfsblock, which was to be demolished. ([459])The works committee of the municipal utilities threatened Schwede with dismissal. Despite strong statements and corrections by Mayor Unverfähr and Soergel, the propaganda of the National Socialists had struck a chord with the public and was already bearing fruit. In a letter to the editor in the *Coburger Zeitung,* signed "a well-meaning citizen," the following was written about the savings bank issue: "The well-meaning citizens of Coburg are always grateful to their representatives for open, honest words and are fed up with unnecessary secrecy and will deliver their corresponding receipt at the next city council elections with a polite bow."

New forms of propaganda

The publication of the party's own newspaper, Der *Weckruf* [462] , in June 1926, which propagandized the city council work of the three-man faction, was an extremely important tool in the NSDAP's struggle for interpretive authority. Franz Schwede had recognized that within the established system of local politics and its communication to the public through the local press, the NSDAP's activities could not attract the attention necessary to assert itself within the nationalist camp against the Social Democrats and the established bourgeois parties. Once again, he stubbornly imposed his ideas of political work on the Reich leadership of the NSDAP, which was initially less than enthusiastic about Schwede's rush forward, expressly pointing out that the local group's funds could not be used to finance the newspaper and did not recognize the *Weckruf* as an official party organ. The publication of smaller local newspapers was seen as competition for *the Völkische*

456 For details on the amount of Soergels's royalty, see Finzel, Reinhart: Spuren, pp. 297–305.
457 See ibid., p. 300.
458 See stenographic report of the town hall meeting at the Hofbräuhaus on October 5, 1927. StadtACo A 7866.
459 See Finzel, Reinhart: Spuren, p. 300.
460 See *Coburger Zeitung* of October 17, 1927, and *Coburger Tageblatt* of November 26, 1927.
461 *Coburger Zeitung newspaper* dated October 18, 1927.
462 From the second edition of the newsletter in July 1926, it was given the name *Weckruf (Wake-up Call)*.

Observer.[463] Der *Weckruf, the newsletter of the National Socialist Workers' Party for the Franconian-Thuringian border region*, was published as needed, or whenever sufficient funds were available to finance another issue, and was initially under the responsibility of editor Friedrich Schubart, the mayor of Neustadt, and later of editor-in-chief Arthur Backert.[464] In the first issue, Hans Dietrich already explained the basic principles of National Socialist local politics, which were to consist of "deliberate sabotage of the Reich government and its measures aimed at the economic and political disenfranchisement of the German people."[465] Dietrich appealed to the independence and pride of the old local government bodies, which were now being reduced to mere administrative apparatuses by the Reich government.The *wake-up call* accordingly reproduced the motions and speeches of the Nazi city council faction under Franz Schwede aimed at emancipation at the municipal level and clarified the exact goals of the NSDAP. With the intention of attracting attention, disrupting existing political procedures, and discrediting those responsible for local politics, the *wake-up call* became a powerful vehicle.

In addition, the Coburg NSDAP imitated Julius Streicher's strategy of creating artificial scandals in *the Weckruf*, which were primarily directed against Jewish citizens. Schwede noted in *Kampf um Coburg* (Battle for Coburg*):* "Local politics is too serious and sober a matter in the long run – the 'sensations' for which the masses eagerly reach for newspapers lie in a different realm."[467] For example, in a series spanning several issues of *Weckruf*, reports were published about alleged secret love affairs of Jewish Coburg residents who were said to have tried to seduce married German women. By naming the names and biographies of those involved, against whom there was no actual evidence, an attempt was made to link classic anti-Semitic stereotypes of sexual crimes and enrichment with specific local individuals, thereby attesting to their veracity.[468] By deliberately spreading rumors, the NSDAP sought to stir up unrest among the urban public. At the same time, the mood among the population, whether real or imagined, that was stirred up by these scandalous reports could in turn be used as a political tool in the city council. The majority of the motions submitted by the Nazi faction were justified on the grounds that the party, as the actual mouthpiece of the "man on the street," had to address the unrest within the city and raise issues that the other parties would overlook. In addition, the NSDAP focused specifically on holding mass rallies to achieve a mobilizing effect. Protest rallies

463 See Reichsleitung der NSDAP München (Reich Leadership of the NSDAP Munich) to the Ortsgruppe der NSDAP Coburg (Local Group of the NSDAP Coburg), September 27, 1926. BA NS 26 2366.

464 Regarding the actual founding of *the Weckruf*, the NSDAP Coburg later cites both January 20, 1926, and March 21, 1926. See Gauverlag Bayerische Ostmark to the main archive of the NS-DAP, March 3, 1936, and June 16, 1937. BA NS 973. In Kampf um Coburg, Schwede cites June 1926 as the date of the meeting at the Reichsgraf at which the founding of *the Weckruf* was decided. See Schwede: Kampf, p. 75.

465 Newsletter of the National Socialist Workers' Party for the district of Coburg and neighboring areas from June 1926.

466 See ibid.

467 Schwede: Kampf, p. 79. Emphasis in the original.

468 See *Der Weckruf* No. 4–8, 1926.

against the city's tax policy were successful among the population plagued by tax increases, as were unemployment rallies among the large number of unemployed Coburg residents.

Through its work in the city council and its propaganda in *Der Weckruf*, the NSDAP managed to remain in the public eye and continue its agitation. However, in the Reichstag elections on May 20, 1928, and the state elections on May 20, 1928, its results had fallen back to 24.7% and 22.5% compared to 1924. Due to the economic and political consolidation of the Weimar Republic, it had fallen behind the results of the DNVP again after the radical potential among the electorate had declined. Nevertheless, the city district of Reichweite was still one of the ten districts with the highest NSDAP vote share.[471] While the bourgeois parties were now in serious trouble and facing internal conflicts due to the challenge posed by the National Socialists, with whom they had ideological overlaps but whose political style they rejected, the Social Democrats resolutely stood in the way of the emerging National Socialist movement.

2.3.2 Labor movement

The rather socially liberal origins of the labor movement in Coburg had been abandoned in 1867 in favor of socialism in the sense of Bebel and Liebknecht.[473] After the Socialist Laws were repealed, the SPD experienced steady growth in the Coburg area, made it to the runoff elections with its bourgeois opponents in the Reichstag elections from 1898 onwards, and won the seat in the Coburg constituency once in October 1909 with the candidate Fritz Zietsch from Charlottenburg. Although the Social Democratic candidates garnered between 30 and 40% of the vote in the years before the start of World War I and repeatedly won more votes than their opponents, they were always outdone by the bourgeois forces joining forces in the run-off elections. While the

469 See the NSDAP's protest resolution against the government's tax increases of October 11, 1928. StadtACo A 6424.

470 For the election results, see City Council 1: Overview of election results in Coburg.

471 See the overview in Falter: Voters, p. 206.

472 The origins of the labor movement in Coburg are closely linked to the person of Feodor Streit. As managing director of *the German National Association*, founded in 1859, he sought to unite democratic and liberal forces. His plan to bring together the working class and the bourgeoisie ultimately failed, but he made a significant *contribution to* the movement. In line with Streit's thinking, the *Coburg Workers' Educational Association*, founded on November 10, 1862, and the *Allgemeine Deutsche Arbeiterzeitung (General German Workers' Newspaper),* launched in 1863, were initially more socially liberal in their orientation. On Streit, see Schmehle: Arbeiterbewegung, pp. 30–49, and Wolz, Alexander: Feodor Streit – Ein
"aufrechter Demokrat" zwischen Herzog Ernst II. und Karl Marx. In: Coburger Geschichtsblätter 27 (2019), pp. 47–64; Schmehle: Arbeiterbewegung, p. 36.

473 After disputes over direction and a programmatic shift beginning in 1867, the association known as *the Coburg Workers' Association,* under Friedrich Heymann, distanced itself from the Streit line and threw its support behind socialism in the spirit of Bebel and Liebknecht, both of whom appeared in Coburg to campaign. Accordingly, Coburg was also chosen as the venue for the 6th Congress of the Social Democratic Workers' Party in 1874, at which the 1875 party conference in Gotha was decisively prepared. This resulted in a merger of the Social Democratic Workers' Party (SDAP) founded by Bebel and Liebknecht and Lassalle's General German Workers' Association (ADAV).

Social Democrats, insofar as they had not yet reached the runoff election, had called on their supporters, in accordance with their bourgeois-democratic origins, to give their votes to the liberal candidates, a steady differentiation between the liberals and the Social Democrats had been observed over time. It was not until 1906 that the *Social Democratic Party for the Duchy of Coburg,* which had been constituted since 1896, joined the Reich SPD as a local group.

The working class in the Coburg area was characterized by lively assembly activity, but was unable to participate effectively in shaping social processes in the Coburg state parliament. It was only represented in the Coburg state parliament by Representative Walter from 1900 to 1904.Sincework ers were largely denied participation and a say in the traditional bourgeois associations, a consumer cooperative was established in 1903 alongside the workers' singing club, which grew into a district consumer cooperative by 1910, expanding across the entire duchy and t h e Free State of Coburg, as well as t h e workers' sports club *Freie Turnerschaft Coburg.* These associations networked and established the working class in Coburg, but despite their moderate approach, they were constantly subjected to attacks and harassment by the police and the bourgeoisie. Public servants who professed their allegiance to the SPD had to reckon with considerable difficulties.(476) On the eve of the First World War, the SPD in Coburg, as in the entire Reich, was successful in recruiting new members, which resulted in a direct intensification of official surveillance.(477)

After the Social Democrats lost their Coburg seat in the Reichstag following a runoff election in January 1912, active Social Democrats in the duchy decided to found their own newspaper in order to further the Social Democratic cause. 478 On March 24, 1912, the first issue of *the Volksblatt* was finally published. *Independent organ for the working population in the Reichstag constituency of Coburg,* with Franz Klingler as the chairman of a seven-member press commission.

474 See ibid., pp. 64–91, and Grossmann: Milieubedingungen, pp. 459–480. Closely linked to social democracy, individual professional groups, led by printers, had also formed professional associations from the 1860s onwards. They fought for improved working conditions in the duchy. By 1907, there were already 17 trade union organizations, united in the Coburg Trade Union Cartel. See Schmehle: Arbeiterbewegung, pp. 91–116.

475 Decisive attempts to reform the electoral system in the sense of equal and direct elections and to create relief for the poorer sections of the population came primarily from the Gotha SPD, which always won several seats in the Gotha and joint state parliaments. In Neustadt near Coburg, however, the Social Democrats were well organized from an early stage and had been represented on the city council since 1898. Mönchröden and its surroundings, where a local association had existed since 1890, also became an important stronghold for the SPD in the duchy. See ibid., pp. 68–75 and Grossmann: Milieustrukturen, pp. 463 f.

476 See the *Coburger Zeitung's* agitation against a Social Democratic teacher at the Rast'sche Gewerbeschule. *Coburger Zeitung*, April 25, 1911.

477 In one *red week*, the SPD gained 156 new party members throughout the duchy. In total, the party organization in the city of Coburg now had 465 male and 80 female members, and in the entire duchy 904 male and 106 female members. See *Coburger Volksblatt*, March 18 and 19, 1914.

478 Although the *Volksblatt* from Gotha, where the social democratic movement was more firmly established, had a separate section for Coburg affairs, and other Thuringian press publications such as the *Saalfelder Volksblatt* or the *Thüringer Volksfreund* in Sonneberg also served as reading material, this could not compensate for the political impact of having its own daily newspaper.

elected editor-in-chief. With its critical reporting, the paper established itself as a mouthpiece for the Coburg SPD and was thus exposed to numerous legal attacks, with the result that libel suits, prison sentences, and high court costs were part of the paper's daily routine. [479] The *Coburger Volksblatt. Sozialdemokratisches Organ für die werktätige Bevölkerung im Kreis Coburg und Amtsgerichtbezirk Lichtenfels (Social Democratic Organ for the Working Population in the District of Coburg and the Local Court District of Lichtenfels),* as the daily newspaper called itself after Coburg's annexation to Bavaria, reached a circulation of up to 8,500 copies after 1918, with an average of around 6,000 copies. The profits went to the SPD in the Coburg region.[480]

Before World War I, the composition of the workforce and liberal achievements in the Duchy of Coburg prevented the formation of radical potential. Although workers had declared in 1906 that "even though we appear to live in a liberal country in the Duchy of Coburg, we are still far from having what we have the right to demand,"[481] However, social democratic efforts were generally characterized by a "moderate and argumentative approach"[482]. Even the national-liberal and conservative *Coburger Zeitung*, one of the most vocal agitators against the labor movement, emphasized the "bourgeois order and tranquility"[483] at its events. The exceptionally good employment situation during the First World War also reduced the revolutionary potential and the intensification of a conflict between employees and their employers in the Vestestadt. The remarkably mild course of the 1918/19 revolution without violence was a clear expression of this thrust. The constant call for calm and prudence also characterized the actions of the workers' and soldiers' council. With the involvement of Reinhold Artmann, who as chairman of the soldiers' council played a key role in the uprising, the USPD split from the majority Social Democrats in Coburg only in the course of the revolution in May 1919. In April 1922, it had about 400 to 500 members. Prominent representatives of the USPD were Coburg police chief Hermann Worch and union secretary Otto Voye.

The labor movement in the Weimar Republic

With the end of the war and the revolution, the conditions for the labor movement changed dramatically. On the one hand, the Weimar system opened up broader political scope, which no longer allowed the suppression of social democratic voices. The SPD achieved remarkable results in the 1919 elections throughout the Free State of Coburg. The labor movement now had a say in the structure of the Free State of Coburg and its annexation to Bavaria, initially through the Workers' and Soldiers' Council and its absolute majority of seven out of eleven seats in the Coburg State Assembly.

479 In order to retain Klingler in particular for the work of the newspaper, the paper had to resort to the practice of appointing a so-called "seat editor," who had to serve the prison sentences in his place.

480 See Sauerteig: Zeitungsgeschichte, pp. 131–134.

481 Leaflet of the SPD Coburg from 1906. StadtACo A 8368, Volume 1.

482 Schmehle: Arbeiterbewegung, p. 78.

483 *Coburger Zeitung newspaper* dated January 24, 1906.

484 See Coburg Police Department to the Nuremberg-Fürth State Police Department, April 8, 1922. StadtACo A 8376 and Schmehle: Arbeiterbewegung, p. 149. The reunification into a United Social Democratic Party of Germany took place in October 1922.

played a significant role. Franz Xaver Klingler[485]was particularly prominent in this regard, having become one of the most important Social Democrats in the Coburg region, not only through his activities for the *Coburger Volksblatt*. From 1920 to 1933, he was a member of the Bavarian State Parliament for the SPD and was one of the most active SPD speakers in the district.

In addition, the labor movement experienced considerable growth in membership after the revolution and was able to expand its organizational structure. After 1919, a number of new SPD local groups rapidly formed in the Coburg area, giving the SPD considerable political weight in the Free State and the Coburg district office thanks to a denser organizational network.[486]The Coburg local group, which was led by health insurance official Fritz Schneider from July 1919 to January 1931, served as an organizational center that held a series of public lectures, mainly in the Coburg Hofbräusaal, which were usually completely sold out. In July 1923, a separate women's section was also founded within the Coburg SPD local group under the chairmanship of Mrs. Schilling. In 1923, the district consumer cooperative acquired Judengasse No. 5 and created a central coordination and meeting place in the city center with the *Volkshaus* cooperative hall.[487]Together with its own workers' singing, gymnastics, and sports clubs, such as the Arbeiter Wassersport-Verein e. V. (Workers' Water Sports Club), the Arbeiter-Radfahrer-Verein "Frisch Auf" (Workers' Cycling Club), and the Arbeiter-Schachverein (Workers' Chess Club), the expanded workers' organization developed a broad workers' cultural movement. Joint celebrations, such as on May 1, also contributed to this.

In Coburg itself, however, the SPD already lagged behind the bourgeois parties in the elections to the German National Assembly in January 1919 and to the Coburg State Assembly in February 1919. Since May 1919, there had been nine Social Democrats and twelve bourgeois members in the city council. At no point was there any real radical potential among the working class here. The KPD – initially led by Robert Drechsel and Edmund Fischer and later by the tailor Fritz Schamberger – was never able to play a decisive role in Coburg, unlike in Neustadt and the basket-weaving villages in the north of the district. Despite its lively activity, it remained a marginal phenomenon in terms of numbers. From

485 Born in Oettingen, Bavaria, in 1875, Klingler was raised by Jesuits after the early death of his parents. After completing a commercial apprenticeship in Munich, he worked in a wood products factory in Ostheim v. d. Rhön, where he joined the SPD in 1906 and was dismissed for participating in and organizing a strike. After moving to Coburg in 1908, he once again stood up for workers' rights and helped found the *Coburger Volksblatt newspaper*. He actively campaigned for equal suffrage and thus for women's suffrage, and repeatedly warned of the dangers of Prussian militarism. Following his military service from 1915 to 1918, he was elected as one of two Social Democrats to the Coburg State Assembly and eventually became a member and chairman of the three-member government of the Free State of Coburg. In this capacity, he was involved in Coburg's annexation to Bavaria, which he was able to push through among the working class despite many Social Democratic voices in the Coburg State Assembly favoring annexation to Thuringia. See *Coburger Volksblatt*, March 15, 1914; Erdmann: Coburg, p. 34 f.; Hambrecht: Nicht durch Krieg, p. 98 and Schmehle: Arbeiterbewegung, pp. 133–136.

486 See ibid., p. 136 f.

487 See Boseckert, Christian: Eine Straße erzählt Coburgs Geschichte (A Street Tells the Story of Coburg). From the past of Judengasse and its residents (= Schriftenreihe der historischen Gesellschaft Coburg e. V., vol. 22). Coburg 2008, p. 77 f. and Schmehle: Arbeiterbewegung (Labor Movement), p. 148. Schmehle cites 1920 as the founding year of the Volkshaus.

The SPD and USPD leaderships clearly distanced themselves from individual actions by the KPD, such as the food riots that broke out in July 1920.[488]

On the other hand, the collapse of Coburg's economy after the loss of military contracts and the exceptionally high levels of unemployment and food prices after the war had led to a drastic deterioration in the living conditions of the working population. For example, the restructuring of Coburg's basketry industry after the war and the acquisition of new customers were associated with great difficulties.[489]Furthermore, heavy physical and sometimes hazardous work characterized the everyday life of workers. Low incomes were accompanied by dependence on employers. In addition, the risk of unemployment hung like a sword of Damocles over many working-class families, which was associated with an increased risk of poverty. [490]In Coburg, too, the labor movement responded with strikes and demonstrations. A hunger and wage demonstration by metalworkers on May 11, 1920, a general strike on June 13, 1921, and several wage strikes in 1922 made the voices and demands of the workers clearly heard by the public and caused massive uncertainty among the bourgeoisie.[491] Above all, the general strike in June 1921, which Franz Klingler and Otto Voye had called for after the assassination of state parliament representative Karl Gareis and which interrupted the gas and electricity supply due to the strike at the municipal works, caused noticeable discontent, but also mocking contempt for the working class in bourgeois circles.[492] In addition, workers attracted attention primarily through attempts to obstruct traditional bourgeois-national celebrations. Patriotic celebrations or Bismarck celebrations, as well as events organized by *the Young German Order*, were deliberately disrupted by groups of workers. ([493])As a counter-movement to the multitude of nationalist associations and to protect the republic, socialist self-defense organizations in the form of workers' militias were also formed in Coburg. After a founding meeting with 400 members on March 23, 1923, on the Anger, the Coburg workers' militia consisted of four hundred men and a cycling division with 50 men and was led by leading members of the consumer cooperative, Johann Stegner and Carl Wöhner. Until the Arbeiterwehr was banned throughout Bavaria in October 1923, it conducted regular field exercises under the leadership of plumber Alfred Fischer, similar to many other nationalist associations, and took on a military character and drill. In July 1924, a local group of *the Reichsbanner Schwarz-Rot-Gold* was formed in Coburg. Especially in times of crisis, the influence of radical movements from southern Thuringia

488 See Coburg Police Department to the Nuremberg-Fürth State Police Department, April 8, 1922; Police Department memo dated September 24, 1923. StadtACo A 8376 and Schmehle: Arbeiterbewegung, p. 150 f. Although the number of KPD members rose during the crisis years of 1923 and 1924, there was a steady decline thereafter, including in the number of visitors to KPD events. See the police department's observations on the KPD in: StadtACo A 8376.

489 See the minutes of the 154th public meeting of the Coburg Chamber of Commerce on September 17, 1920. Bavarian Economic Archive K6/1132; Habel: Gewissheiten, pp. 49–52 and Erdmann: Coburg, pp. 64–66.

490 For temporary unemployment benefits in the Weimar Republic, see Chapter IV2.1.

491 See Erdmann: Coburg, pp. 75 f. and Grossmann: Milieubedingungen, pp. 462 f.

492 See "Voices from the audience" in the *Coburger Zeitung newspaper* on June 14, 16, and 20, 1921.

493 See, for example, "Voices from the Audience" in the *Coburger Zeitung newspaper* on April 2 and 6, 1921, and April 12, 1923.

494 See reports from the police department dated March 24, 26, April 24, May 1, and May 12, 1923. StadtACo A 8377 and Erdmann: Coburg, p. 74.

in the Coburg district, for example when false reports were spread or acts of sabotage were planned for a longed-for civil war. In the fall of 1923 and during the
"Northern Border Guard" period, there was lively contact between KPD members in southern Thuringia and the Coburg area. Especially after the change at the top of the Bavarian government, great disappointment had spread among workers' circles under Gustav Ritter von Kahr. For a short time, there was even talk in workers' circles of a
"away from Bavaria" movement emerged in workers' circles, which aimed to revise the annexation. As a result, the city commissariat continued to closely monitor the labor movement. The *Coburger Volksblatt newspaper* was also constantly monitored for radical tendencies by the Nuremberg-Fürth state police office.

The "Coburg Bloody Saturday"

In this tense situation, the power and growing self-confidence of the workers, which could no longer be ignored, became apparent, as did a certain helplessness and helplessness on the part of the bourgeois urban society and the authorities in the face of these developments. A key moment was the event that would come to be known as "Coburg's Bloody Saturday."[496] After the assassination of Matthias Erzberger, a member of the Centre Party, at the end of August 1921, the SPD, the USPD, and the trade unions in Coburg called[for]a demonstration "for the republic and against political assassination."[(497)]While the district office approved the holding of a protest rally on Schlossplatz, it simultaneously banned an expected protest march by workers through the city. Even after Klingler's clear protest and a request to the government in Bayreuth, the ban remained in place.[498]Although the demonstrations and protest rallies held by Coburg workers to date had always proceeded in an orderly manner, those responsible were primarily driven by fear of the influx of radical elements from Rodach, Neustadt, or the Thuringia region, which could have led to a numerical superiority of workers in the city and outbreaks of violence. In various consultations between the district office, the mayor, the municipal police, and the state police, ways of preventing the demonstration march were discussed, amid protests from Police Commissioner Worch, who rejected an overly restrictive approach. Even before the protest action actually took place, the confrontation with the workers' leaders had become a matter of political prestige, in which those responsible were less interested in finding an acceptable solution than in asserting their claims. When, on

495 See Mayor Hirschfeld to the State Police Office in Nuremberg, December 29, 1922. StadtACo A 8376. For observations on the workers' associations, see police reports and reports to the State Police Office in Nuremberg-Fürth in StadtACo A 8376 and Erdmann: Coburg, pp. 72–86.

496 For information on the so-called "Coburg Bloody Saturday," see *Coburger Volksblatt*, September 5, 1921; *Coburger Zeitung*, September 5, 1921; Erdmann: Coburg, 80–86; and Nöth, Stefan: Coburger "Blutsonntag," September 3, 1921. In: Historisches Lexikon Bayerns. URL: https://www.historisches-lexikon-bayerns.de/Lexikon/Coburger_"Blutsonnabend,"_September_3,_1921 (last accessed September 15, 2021). However, this source incorrectly claims that Gustav Hirschfeld was a Social Democratic politician and that the event was based on the conflict between the Social Democratic mayor and the district office or the government of Upper Franconia.

497 Franz Klingler and Otto Voye to the board of the district office, September 2, 1921. StadtACo A 5992.

498 The Bavarian state government in Munich also spoke out in favor of banning the parade. In the district office, Dr. Fritsch was initially represented by government councilor Dr. Doebel.

On September 3, the protest rally with speeches by Voye and Klingler in front of approximately 2,500 to 3,000 people on Schlossplatz, the Coburg hundred-strong unit of the state police, reinforced by a hundred-strong unit and a bicycle division from the Bayreuth state police, arrived wearing steel helmets and carrying machine guns to provoke the workers and began to cordon off parts of the square with barbed wire to prevent the workers from leaving together. The show of force by the national-conservative state police immediately caused unrest among the crowd on the Schlossplatz. The state police acted as an enforcement agency of state authority against a social democracy that was perceived as separatist. Despite all attempts by Klingler to calm the situation, verbal altercations and scuffles ensued, and in various places the state police barriers were overcome and the police officers were harassed. In the midst of the turmoil, warning shots were fired, two hand grenades were thrown into the crowd, and in the end, about 20 people were injured and one demonstrator died from his injuries. As Mayor Hirschfeld, who had tried to get the state police units to withdraw, summed up in the aftermath of the events, it was the excessive use of force by the state authorities that had provoked the chaos that the state police had been deployed to prevent. Ultimately, state authorities had contributed to the escalation of a demonstration that had focused on the commitment to the republic and thereby criminalized social democratic aspirations in order to assert their claim to power.

Not only the outcome of the "Coburg Bloody Saturday," but also the growing and organizing völkisch movement and the SPD's lost lead in the elections in the Coburg district severely dampened the initial upward trend of the labor movement. In the Reichstag elections in June 1920, the SPD and USPD had already lost 13 percentage points compared to the previous year, falling from 56.6% to 43.6%. Until 1933, no Social Democrat from Coburg succeeded in entering the German Reichstag. In the Reichstag and state elections until 1930, the SPD consistently achieved around 30% of the vote in the city of Coburg and between 40 and 45% in the Coburg district. The social democratic milieu thus remained consistent in its voting behavior and was only very slightly affected by voter migration compared to the bourgeois camp. ([499])Among other things, this development was facilitated by the fact that the working-class milieu was bound by the organizations of the labor movement itself, while the urban bourgeois milieu was more person-centered.

The role of the SPD in Coburg local politics

This trend was similar in Coburg's local politics. While the city council in 1919 consisted of nine Social Democrats and twelve bourgeois members, and the magistrate consisted of four Social Democrats and four bourgeois members, after the introduction of the Bavarian unicameral system, the workers' representatives were only able to win eight of the 25 seats on the Coburg city council in the elections of November 1921 and December 1924. Nevertheless, the entry of the Social Democrats into the city council brought a completely new element to bourgeois local politics. On the one hand, the council became more diverse, as it was now composed of a broader spectrum of professional groups. Since 1919,

499 See City Council 1: Overview of election results in Coburg.

In addition, women were also represented as SPD members on the city council, thereby breaking down the bourgeois local politics as a purely male domain. With the introduction of active and passive voting rights for women in 1919, teacher Elisabeth Schulze became the first woman to enter the Coburg city parliament.[500]On the other hand, the commitment to the particular interests of the working class, which was intended to compensate for decades of bourgeois interest politics, and party political disputes brought visible movement to the debates in the city council meetings, which was often perceived as unrest. This was reflected, among other things, in the fact that members of the SPD faction were repeatedly called to order when they became too passionate, attacked the behavior of the bourgeois parties, or openly denounced the excessive influence of employers on the city council. In addition, the Social Democrats repeatedly left the city council meeting en masse and withdrew from certain votes in a demonstrative protest. On many issues, the Social Democratic faction took a position diametrically opposed to the bourgeois consensus. This was the case, for example, with the question of approving funds for repairs to St. Maurice's Church on the occasion of the 400th anniversary of Luther's birth, which the SPD rejected on the grounds of strict separation of church and state,[501] or when the level of officers' pensions was critically questioned.[502] The Social Democrats gained a reputation for acting anti-national and against nationalist unanimity when, for example, they refused to approve a contribution from the city to *the Association for German Culture Abroad*.[503]

Trade union leader Otto Voye had been a member of the city parliament since 1919. He ran for the USPD in 1921 and, alongside Franz Klingler, became one of the leading figures of the labor movement in Coburg in the early 1920s. Born in 1887, Voye initially worked as a mechanic and then devoted his professional energy entirely to the workers' cause as a trade union official. After the war, he served as chairman of the Coburg Metalworkers' Association and the Coburg Trade Union Cartel. He was also editor of *the Coburger Volksblatt newspaper*. Together with Christian Reichenbecher, who was elected to the city council for the SPD in 1924, he became the spokesman for the workers in the city council. Christian Reichenbecher, who was born in 1894 into a working-class family in Unterlauter, found his intellectual home in social democracy, according to his own statements, through reading social democratic writings, and he had been involved in the party since 1913. In 1919, he joined the German Metalworkers' Union and headed the *Reichsbanner Schwarz-Rot-Gold,* which was founded in 1924. His professional career exemplifies the harassment to which organized workers in middle-class employee circles were subjected. Looking back, Reichenbecher reports that, after several dismissals due to his political orientation, he was forced out of the municipal works and subsequently placed under close observation at the Arnold company in Neustadt, which led to his dismissal. At his new workplace, the Globus Works of the Waldrich company, however, under pressure from the legal advisor of his former employer, the workers at the plant were forbidden to speak to him. After becoming unemployed again, he returned to the Arnold company, but was soon

500 See Schmehle: Arbeiterbewegung, p. 167.
501 See minutes of the city council meeting of February 1, 1929. StadtACo A 8072.
502 See minutes of the city council meeting of December 16, 1927. StadtACo A 8071.
503 See minutes of the city council meeting of May 20, 1927. StadtACo A 8071. Among other things, the association sought to revise the Treaty of Versailles through its work promoting local customs and traditions.

dismissed for holding a works meeting. Elected to the Coburg city council, he was eventually able to obtain a position at the municipal electricity works and later at the interurban works, where he worked until 1928 and took on the role of union representative in the German Metalworkers' Union.[504] As the example of Reichenbecher shows, despite political participation, workers were still denied social advancement and the difference in real wages compared to employees and civil servants remained striking. At the same time, high unemployment remained a persistent problem. The everyday lives of workers continued to differ from those of the middle class in terms of housing, clothing, and lifestyle, and their standard of living remained low despite economic consolidation. The struggle for social equality and against unemployment, which had hit the working class hard and impoverished it in the wake of the 1929 global economic crisis, was therefore a central concern of social democratic local politics. In this regard, the SPD and the NSDAP had points of contact in terms of content, which further intensified the competition between them.

Under the leadership of Voyes and Reichenbecher, the SPD ultimately became the most powerful opposition to the growing National Socialists in the city council. Most of the city council meetings were marked by heated debates with Schwede and Linke, which were usually stopped by the bourgeoisie, who pointed out that the city council had neither the time nor the space for party politics.[505]Together with the *Coburger Volksblatt newspaper*, the SPD faction established itself as a loud voice that held up a mirror to the Völkisch movement and the NSDAP and exposed the contradictions in the NSDAP's political objectives. Overall, however, the SPD, as the most effective opposition to the NSDAP, proved to be too weak a counterweight after considerable sections of the bourgeois camp and the ducal house increasingly moved closer to National Socialism.

2.4 Ducal House

2.4.1 Carl Eduard – the driven one

Carl Eduard was born in 1884 in the English county of Surrey, the son of Leopold, 1st Duke of Albany and fourth son of Queen Victoria, and Princess Helene of Waldeck-Pyrmont. As his father had already died by the time Carl Eduard was born, his mother raised him and his sister Alice in the British royal family to be a good English prince who had internalized courtly ceremony and was prepared with discipline at Eton College, among other places, for a future minor aristocratic role. After the death of the only son of the ruling Duke Alfred of Coburg, Queen Victoria designated the then 14-year-old prince as his successor in the duchies of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, which required him to move to Germany with his mother and sister. After the death of his uncle in August 1900, he was first mentioned in a visit at the age of 16.

504 Supplement to the questionnaire by Christian Reichenbecher; Christian Reichenbecher to the Coburg City Denazification Tribunal, October 17, 1946. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg City R56.

505 See, for example, *Coburger Zeitung*, January 8, 1927.

in Coburg and received by Coburg's dignitaries. Until his 21st birthday and thus until he came of age, Alfred's son-in-law Ernst II of Hohenlohe-Langenburg assumed the regency for Carl Eduard and continued it in the liberal tradition of the Coburg ducal house. When he actually took office in 1905, Carl Eduard very quickly implemented a change in policy, appointing only right-wing liberal or conservative ministers and thus bringing about a nationalist, conservative turnaround in the duchy. After the revolution of 1918/19 and his involuntary abdication, his turn towards national-conservative and völkisch circles soon became evident. Various reasons contributed to the English prince, in his role as German duke, becoming an ardent nationalist who radically broke with his British origins.

The goal of all efforts surrounding Carl Eduard's education and preparation for his assigned task was clearly defined. He was to become a "good German" in order to compensate for the "stigma" of his English origins and upbringing, which had been a topic of discussion within the German Empire against the backdrop of growing nationalism and the naval arms race with England.[507] The fact that Queen Victoria in England was able to determine the succession in a German duchy had caused great discontent in nationalist circles in the German Empire. In addition to his lessons with a private tutor at Villa Ingenheim in Potsdam and his transfer to a cadet academy, his cousin Wilhelm II. took particular interest in Carl Eduard's education. His influence on the Englishman was marked by humiliation, physical violence, and the imparting of an image of masculinity based on ideals such as toughness, discipline, and duty. A supposedly liberal attitude, which was attributed to the scion of the British royal family, was to be replaced by drill and an oath of allegiance to the obligations of a "true" German against the backdrop of nationalist sentiment in the German Empire. Both at the University of Bonn and in the influential Borussia fraternity, to which Wilhelm II himself belonged, the appeals that a German prince must be German to the core did not let up. Until he assumed the throne in Coburg, Carl Eduard thus underwent a character-building education that confronted the prince, described as small and frail, with concrete ideas about his role as a man and a German prince and built up enormous public pressure.

When he took office in Coburg in 1905, it was repeatedly asserted publicly that Carl Eduard had now become a "good German prince," and he and his wife Viktoria Adelheid relied on a distinctive public performance to emphasize this fact. For example, at his inauguration celebration on July 23, 1905, in Coburg, he ate a Coburg bratwurst and drank a glass of Coburg beer at a folk festival held in his honor on the village green, as was customary in the area.

506 See Büschel: Herzog, pp. 42–51.

507 Carl Eduard's predecessor, Duke Alfred of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, had not had to deal with comparable hostility due to his origins during his reign from 1893 to 1900. See also: Arndt, Steffen: "Try to be a good German." Duke Carl Eduard of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha and his role as Hitler's aristocratic helper from 1905 to 1945. In: Braun, Bernd (ed.): Long live the republic? The First World War and the end of the monarchies in Germany and Europe (= Publications of the Reich President Friedrich Ebert Memorial Foundation, Volume 19). Göttingen 2021, pp. 106–128, here pp. 111–113.

508 Cf. Büschel: Herzog, pp. 51–58.

observed the population with satisfaction. His early membership in the Coburg shooting club also served as proof of his attachment to Coburg and his popularity with the people. (509) The same became the hallmark of Duchess Viktoria Adelheid, who announced during her first official visit to Coburg: "I already feel like a good Coburg citizen and ask you to count me among your own."[510] The marriage arranged by Wilhelm II to the daughter of Duke Friedrich Ferdinand of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Glücksburg and Duchess Caroline Mathilde, a sister of the German Empress, born in 1885, proved to be a real blessing for the Duke in this respect.[511] Compared to Gotha, where Carl Eduard's right-wing liberal to conservative style of government met with considerably more mistrust, the people of Coburg seemed to have taken a liking to the new duke more quickly, even though, unlike his wife, he actually sought little connection with his subjects beyond symbolic acts and preferred to reside in representative Gotha. Public parades, marches, and receptions were the most frequent points of contact between the Coburg population and the duke, who showed a penchant for grand courtly life and spent a considerable part of his time hunting and traveling. However, the widespread nationalism did not completely dispel the mistrust caused by his English origins. The competition with Gotha, which was more popular with the duke, and his reserved behavior repeatedly gave rise to criticism. (512) At the outbreak of World War I, public pressure increased once again. The Duke, who had maintained his connections to England throughout, traveled there regularly, and had not relinquished his British titles and military ranks, now demonstrated his loyalty to the German Empire in a radical break with England. On the one hand, he broke off contact with his English relatives and, on the other, he renounced all titles, orders, and functions that tied him to his country of birth. He did not send his orders back to England, but had them publicly auctioned and donated the proceeds to the German Red Cross. The amendment to the Duchy's constitution passed in 1917, which now excluded foreign agnates from the line of succession, finally severed the old dynastic ties of the House of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha in favor of German nationalism. Regardless of the extent to which his training as a presentable German prince had been successful, the reality of foreign policy forced Carl Eduard to take a clear and publicly effective position in 1914.

The war itself was another formative and not to be underestimated element that taught the Duke of Coburg "to tolerate brutal nationalism, racism, and anti-Semitism, to accept unbridled violence, to retreat into the beautiful illusion of aristocratic comforts and self-deception."Here, Carl Eduard served in the XI Army Corps together with the Coburg 95th Regiment. On the Western Front, he and his adjutant Marcel von Schack witnessed the massacre of Dinant, a violent

509 See *Coburger Zeitung* of July 25, 1905, and Sandner: Herzog, p. 50.
510 *Coburger Zeitung*, November 7, 1905.
511 See *Coburger Zeitung*, February 17, 1905.
512 See Quarck: Letzten Zeiten, p. 20.
513 Only the Order of the Garter, which Carl Eduard wanted to keep, was not relinquished by him, but was revoked in May 1915.
514 See Büschel: Herzog, p. 59.
515 Ibid., p. 61.



Fig. 5: Carl Eduard in uniform with steel helmet, 1918, with signature, photographer: B. Münchs, Gotha

excesses committed by German soldiers against the Belgian civilian population, in which almost 700 people were killed. In addition, his experiences on the Eastern Front, as can be seen from Schack's notes, crystallized into a racist and anti-Semitic attitude towards the local population. Furthermore, this presented an opportunity for the Duke of Coburg to showcase himself, for example by holding a "German Christmas" for his soldiers, which was also interpreted in his home town of Coburg as exemplary and proof of his loyalty to the German Empire. to showcase himself, for example by holding a "German Christmas" for his soldiers, which was also interpreted in his home town of Coburg as exemplary and proof of his loyalty to the German Empire. Although the young duke had to return to Germany repeatedly for medical treatment and spa stays due to a severe rheumatic disease, he continued to indulge in his passion for hunting and rarely remained on the front line himself, he was honored by Emperor Wilhelm II with a number of military decorations, such as the Iron Cross First and Second Class, as the crowning glory of his educational mission for Carl Eduard. The Coburg Chronicle on the First World War, published after the end of the war, also opened with a picture of the Duke in a steel helmet, stylizing him as a war hero and front-line soldier, which he never was.[516] To further confirm his loyalty to the German Empire, he used his family contacts in Bulgaria, where Ferdinand of Bulgaria, a tsar from the House of Coburg, sat on the throne, to persuade the country to enter the war on the German side. [517]

516 See Ungelenk, Ludwig (ed.): Coburg im Weltkrieg 1914–18. Ein Denk- und Dankstein. Coburg 1922.

517 See Büschel: Herzog, pp. 59–69. Marcel von Schack kept a diary of Carl Eduard's military campaigns, excerpts of which are published in: Prince Andreas of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha: The Duke,

Duke Carl Eduard after his abdication

The revolution brought Carl Eduard's life as he knew it to an abrupt end. The relatively young duke and father of five children had been raised as a prince, and a bourgeois existence without the ceremonial trappings, courtly life, and aristocratic privileges he had grown to love and cherish was almost inconceivable. His very late and reluctant abdication, which circumvented an official renunciation of the throne, was a clear expression of this discord. Unlike many other federal princes, the Duke of Coburg tried to hold on to his status for as long as possible and remained in anticipation of his imminent reinstatement. The fall from grace brought about by the revolution was very steep for the Duke of Coburg, as it was for the entire German nobility. ([518])However, his confidants in Coburg, such as State Councilor Dr. Quarck, had left him in little doubt that large sections of the citizenry were willing to find amicable solutions even during the period of political upheaval. ([519])And indeed, even after the revolution and Coburg's incorporation into the Bavarian state, Carl Eduard and his family were able to continue living a life befitting their status in Coburg. Thanks to his right of residence at the Veste, which was also extensively restored at the state's expense and equipped with the latest technology, the abdicated prince continued to reign over his former subjects, who remained loyal to him. In addition, he was still able to call the Rosenau and Callenberg castles his own as aristocratic bastions in the Coburg region, which allowed him to live a secluded life surrounded by aristocratic insignia and, as representative buildings, awaited the resurgence of their inhabitants. In Coburg, Carl Eduard and Viktoria Adelheid were therefore not treated like ordinary citizens, but enjoyed a representative position and standard of living in many areas that differed little from the pre-revolutionary conditions. The fact [that] Carl Eduard continued to sign his letters "Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha" clearly indicates the former duke's unbroken self-image.

In contrast, Carl Eduard's relationship with Gotha had changed fundamentally. Above all, the USPD-dominated Gotha state parliament's plans for expropriation without compensation fueled his anti-socialist convictions and radicalized them. The fate of his cousin, Tsarina Alexandra Feodorovna, who was murdered by the Bolsheviks in 1918 together with her husband, Tsar Nicholas II, and their five children after several months of imprisonment, had also strongly reinforced Carl Eduard's fear of the Bolsheviks. The revolution, supported by Social Democrats and Communists, had formally destroyed his aristocratic existence and led to a clear enemy image. ([521])As early as 1910, Carl Eduard had joined the *Reich Association against Social Democracy* after the Social Democrats had become increasingly influential in Gotha. In addition, in 1917, contrary to the tradition of non-partisanship

pp. 110–116. It was advantageous for diplomatic success that Ferdinand of Bulgaria had incurred massive debts to Carl Eduard when he came to power.

518 See Malinowski, Stephan: Vom König zum Führer. Sozialer Niedergang und politische Radikalisierung im deutschen Adel zwischen Kaiserreich und NS-Staat (= Elitenwandel in der Moderne, vol. 4). Berlin 2003, pp. 200–202.

519 See Quarck: letzten Zeiten, pp. 22–31, 37.

520 See Sandner: Herzog, p. 187.

521 See the excerpts from Carl Eduard's letters to his sister Alice in: Urbach: Go-Betweens, p. 146 f.

The dukes had already publicly positioned themselves politically by joining the conservative *alliance of those loyal to the emperor*. [522]In the course of the political upheaval, his nationalistic character, his worldviews shaped by the war, his anti-socialism, and his newly experienced disorientation ultimately coalesced into a self-image and worldview that found answers in radical solutions.

In search of a new leadership role, Hermann Ehrhard, whom he had met personally during the establishment of the Coburg Civil Guard and whom he had hidden in Coburg following the failed Kapp Putsch and later in Carl Eduard's Tyrolean estate in Hinterriß, was probably the first to make concrete advances toward his return to power and to convince him of his radicalism. Through his support and membership of *the Ehrhard Brigade,* the *Consul organization*, and the *Wiking League*, Carl Eduard actively advocated the ruthless suppression of the republic, which did not shy away from political assassinations and violent attempts at overthrow.[523] When the danger of a communist coup at the borders of Coburg became evident at the time of the establishment of the "Grenzschutz Nord" (Northern Border Guard), Carl Eduard provided material support to the various defense associations and actively participated in the planning. ([524])He provided the *Consul organization* with a suitcase full of house orders to sell in Sweden and turn into cash.[525] The same applied to the contact that Carl Eduard established with DVSTB leader Alfred Roth in April 1919 at the latest.[526] The former prince saw the radicalism of the völkisch associations as the most effective protection against communist activities, the fastest way to restore the monarchy and thus to his own resurgence. Hermann Ehrhardt, with his multifaceted contacts to *the Young German Order* and the SA, initially seemed to be the most promising candidate for the former duke with his coup plans, with whom he therefore negotiated intensively.[527]Although Carl Eduard had radically broken with the liberal course of his predecessor Ernst II, he also followed in his protective tradition, granting protection to persecuted activists, offering his estates as venues for events, and thus placing himself at the head of an emerging movement in which he saw the most promising political option for the future. Carl Eduard's behavior therefore reveals not only a pure backward-looking attitude and revisionist intentions, but also a genuine vision for the future. The symbolic capital that the duke thus brought to bear for the völkisch movement in the political power struggle cannot be underestimated. In particular, by attending patriotic evenings, lectures, and celebrations of the völkisch movement, Carl helped

522 See *Coburger Zeitung*, December 11, 1917; Facius, Friedrich: Political History of Thuringia from 1828 to 1945. In: Patze, Hans; Schlesinger, Walter (eds.): History of Thuringia. Political History in Modern Times, Volume 5 , Part 2 . Cologne/Vienna 1978, p. 293 f. and Sandner: Herzog, p . 111, 161.

523 See Büschel: Herzog, pp. 82–86.

524 See Erdmann: Coburg, p. 139.

525 See Krüger, Gabriele: Die Brigade Ehrhardt (= Hamburger Beiträge zur Zeitgeschichte, Volume VII). Hamburg 1971, p. 161. While Krüger claims that the seller of the house orders was Franz Maria Liedig, Harald Sandner names Ernst von Salomon, which is also adopted by Karina Urbach. See Sandner: Herzog, p . 183 and Urbach: Go-Betweens, p . 151.

526 See Lohalm: Radikalismus, p. 103.

527 In a letter to his sister Alice dated November 1923, Carl Eduard complains that the "Hitler Putsch" was carried out at the wrong time, as the mobilization by Ehrhardt, which he had helped plan and finance, was nearing completion. See Urbach: Go-Betweens, p. 156.

Eduard this considerable legitimacy in the eyes of the outside world. Carl Eduard, whose role model status and charisma among the population had not diminished despite his political disempowerment, thus made possible the decisive bridge between bourgeois nationalism and the völkisch, radical nationalist, and ultimately National Socialist movement.

Carl Eduard's increasing closeness to the NSDAP

The "German Day" in October 1922 marked the first documented meeting between Hitler and Carl Eduard, which was followed by many more. [528] The sources do not confirm Rudolf Priesner's claim that the two men took a walk together on the Veste and discussed the future of Germany.[529] Carl Eduard's gradual rapprochement with the NSDAP took place in parallel with the party's gradual rise to power. It can be assumed that Carl Eduard provided financial support to the party from 1929 onwards, when Hitler was also a personal guest in Callenberg. ([530]Hitler's rejection of the expropriation of princes, which he pushed through after considerable internal party disputes against resistance from Gregor Strasser and Joseph Goebbels, among others, was gratefully acknowledged by the Duke of Coburg. Until 1925, Carl Eduard was still involved in a legal dispute over his considerable Gotha fortune, which consisted of both real estate and several million gold marks and had been expropriated without compensation. He had carefully researched the positions of the various right-wing parties on the issue of the expropriation of princes.[532]Despite Hitler's derogatory remarks about the German nobility in *Mein Kampf*, the restoration of the monarchy in a National Socialist state seemed entirely conceivable in the 1920s, even with the NSDAP and Adolf Hitler. This was despite the fact that Hitler himself did not seriously consider this option, as it was contrary to the idea of the propagated "people's community," in which there was no longer any place for elitist sections of the population.

For a long time, however, Carl Eduard was by no means committed to the NSDAP and Adolf Hitler, as long as they were still one of many groups in the nationalist camp, but supported many nationalist and ethnic organizations simultaneously, both financially and in the form of memberships.([533]) This also applied to Erich Ludendorff, with whom he participated in the "German Day" in Nuremberg in 1923 and whom he

528 See Büschel: Herzog, p. 39. A list of meetings with Hitler can be found in Sandner: Herzog, p. 496 f.

529 See Priesner: Herzog, pp. 84–87. Unlike the meeting in the Hofbräusaal, neither Hitler nor Carl Eduard himself mentioned a personal meeting at the Veste. Nor do the various contemporary reports on the "German Day" or the police witness statements mention such a meeting. In his biography of Carl Eduard, Harald Sandner merely speculates that the location of the confidential conversation was not at the Burgwall, but in the inner courtyard of the Veste. See Sandner: Herzog, p. 190. Since Priesner's biography makes incorrect assertions in many other places (see Sandner: Herzog, p. 22), its enthusiastic tone makes it difficult to consider it a reliable source.

530 See Büschel: Herzog, p. 39.

531 The expropriation without compensation, which had been carried out after Carl Eduard rejected the offers of negotiation from Gotha, was declared invalid by the Leipzig Reich Court in June 1925, and the duke was awarded his land and forest holdings worth RM 37 million. See *Coburger Zeitung* of June 23, 1925, and Büschel: Herzog, p. 90 f.

532 See ibid., p. 92.

533 See Chapter III1.1.3.1.

Carl Eduard maintained contacts during the "German Day" celebrations organized by *the Bavarian and Reich Association* and the German Officers' Association in Coburg and at Callenberg Castle. [534] Through his connections to Ludendorff, Alfred Roth, and Hermann Ehrhard, the former duke was firmly integrated into the nationalist network. The representative honorary presidencies and leadership positions he held in various associations, such as senior district leader of *the Wiking League* in Thuringia, member of the *Stahlhelm's* federal executive committee, and Reich squadron leader of the *Stahlhelm's* Reich motorized squadron, on the one hand, exploited the duke's symbolic potential for the völkisch cause and, on the other hand, served as compensation for the duke's lost aristocratic prestige.

Establishing a connection between influential conservatives and the more radical Völkisch and National Socialist movements became a central concern for Carl Eduard. Italy, where monarchist elements and the fascist movement had been reconciled, served as a model for him. In October 1931, Carl Eduard took part in the *Harzburg Front* meeting to advance his plan to unite the *Stahlhelm* and the SA, and in December he founded the *Society for the Study of Fascism* together with Waldemar Pabst. Pabst, who was responsible for the murders of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, as well as numerous massacres of revolutionaries committed by Freikorps troops, and co-organizer of the Kapp Putsch, saw, like the former duke, the transfer of Italian fascism to Germany as a promising option for eliminating the Weimar Republic. The society brought together influential National Socialists, industrialists, military personnel, publicists, and aristocrats. ([535])Through his involvement in *the National Automobile Club* and his efforts to integrate the NS Automobile Corps (NSKK) into it, he continued his efforts to unite the *Stahlhelm* and the NSDAP.[536] By the time of Houston Stewart Chamberlain's cremation in Coburg in 1927, at the latest, the connections between the Duke and the Völkisch movement in the Bayreuth circle around Cosima Wagner had become apparent. From then on, the Bayreuth clique strengthened the network of emerging Völkisch nationalism.[537]

Through his various club memberships and visits to Völkisch events, Carl Eduard displayed a new form of populism, which made it easier for him to connect with his former subjects and further expand his role model function. Carl Eduard attended regular marches, but also comradeship evenings, primarily among the circle of former members of the 95ers, thus maintaining a space in which he could continue to celebrate his highly stylized front-line soldiering and military ideals. In addition, the ducal family invited

534 See *Coburger Zeitung* of September 8 and 11, 1923.

535 See Wichmann, Manfred: Waldemar Pabst and the Society for the Study of Fascism 1931–1934. Berlin 2013; Büschel: Herzog, p. 135 f.; Sandner: Herzog, p. 224, 227 and Urbach: Go-Betweens, p. 149.

536 See Hochstetter, Dorothée: Motorization and the "People's Community." The National Socialist Motor Corps (NSKK) 1931–1945 (= Studies in Contemporary History, Volume 68). Munich 2005, p. 64 f.

537 See *Coburger Zeitung*, January 13, 1927. On the Bayreuth Circle and Chamberlain, see, among others, Altgeld, Wolfgang: Wagner, der 'Bayreuther Kreis' und die Entwicklung des völkischen Denkens. In: Müller, Ulrich; Hundschnurer, Franz; Sommer, Cornelius (eds.): Richard Wagner 1883–1983. Die Rezeption im
19th and 20th Centuries. Collected Contributions from the Salzburg Symposium Stuttgart 1984, pp. 35–64. Fritz, Sven: Houston Stewart Chamberlain. Racial Fanaticism and World Salvation. Biography. Paderborn 2022. See also Chapter IV1.2.1.2.

He invited important Coburg dignitaries to tea at the Veste, thus upholding the tradition of special privileges through receptions at court. An important contribution to the unbroken veneration of Carl Eduard was also made here by the open-minded and sociable Viktoria Adelheid. Walter Gyßling, who visited Coburg as an outsider in 1928 and analyzed its social and political situation, wrote: "Whoever had the court had the city, whose upper class was connected to the court either through shared interests or thanks to their need for social recognition. No longer being received at court was tantamount to social death in Coburg."([539]By awarding orders of merit to selected citizens, Carl Eduard was able to further increase the former duke's popularity. In an interview in 1964, Hermann Esser responded to a question about the motives of the Nazi leadership for holding the first SA march outside Munich in Coburg: "The fact is that in Coburg, the duke was still practically the sovereign, and he was very taken with Hitler's cause. And like the lord, so the serfs, so too the officials and people who served under him and who still valued their social ties to the ducal house. They were immediately won over by Hitler."([540] Contemporaries also repeatedly point to the decisive role played by the duke and duchess in the later success of the National Socialists.([541]

Carl Eduard's concrete anti-Semitism is difficult to grasp insofar as, despite his staunch support for several völkisch anti-Semitic organizations, hardly any anti-Semitic statements by him himself have been handed down. However, his views were largely shaped by his interpretation of his own experiences during the war and his nationalist-ethnic environment, as well as by a fear-driven anti-Bolshevism. His close relatives, including Viktoria Melitta of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha and her husband Kyrill Romanov, who established a secondary center for the Russian émigré scene in Coburg, also had a decisive influence on this mindset.

2.4.2 Kyrill Romanov and Viktoria Melitta – the networkers

The Russian émigré couple stands out in particular for their significance in the developments in Coburg in the 1920s, as they connected the ducal court to a network associated with the early Nazi movement in Munich. Grand Duke Cyril of Russia, the grandson of Tsar Alexander II, and his wife Viktoria Melitta of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha fled into exile in Coburg after the upheavals in Russia. The two had already caused a stir with their marriage in 1905, when Viktoria Melitta of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, the daughter of Duke Alfred of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, born in 1876, had recently divorced Grand Duke Ernst Ludwig of Hesse and by Rhine. Kyrill, born in Tsarskoye Selo in Russia in 1876, was initially stripped of all honors and sent into exile in his wife's homeland, but was rehabilitated by the Tsar in 1909 due to succession arrangements and reinstated into the Imperial

538 See *Coburger Volksblatt*, January 18, 1926.
539 See Hill: Gyßling, p. 92.
540 Interview with Hermann Esser on February 28, 1964. IfZ Munich ED 561/2.
541 See report in the *Berliner Morgenpost* newspaper dated September 17, 1929. Reprinted in *the Coburger Volksblatt newspaper* dated September 28, 1929.



Fig. 6: Kirill Romanov and Grand Duchess Viktoria Melita, postcard from 1906, photographer: Prof. Eduard Uhlenhuth

Navy, where he served during World War I. After the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II in the Russian February Revolution, he initially submitted to the provisional government and, after the October Revolution, finally fled with his family via Finland, Switzerland, and France to Coburg in 1920, where the couple resided at the Edinburgh Palace during their stays.[542] It was primarily on Viktoria Melitta's initiative that the couple became active in emigration politics and soon gathered a considerable team of advisors around them in Coburg.[543] As a legitimist movement their goal was the installation of Kirill as Russian tsar and the suppression of the Bolsheviks.[544]

542 See Baur, Johannes: Die russische Kolonie in München 1900–1945. Deutsch-Russische Beziehungen im 20th Century (= Publications of the Institute for Eastern European Studies Munich, Reiche: Geschichte, Volume 65). Wiesbaden 1998, pp. 80, 128–131. In March 1920, Kyrill and Viktoria Melitta submitted an application to the State Ministry in Coburg to move there, after the Foreign Office had not expressed any objections. See request to the State Ministry in Coburg dated March 11, 1920. BayHStA MA 104351.

543 See The Grand Duke Cyrill: My life in Russia's service. Then and now. London 1939, p. 229.

544 For the counter-movement led by Grand Duke Nikolai Romanov, see Baur: Kolonie, pp. 128–156.

One of the couple's most important advisors and confidants was Max Erwin von Scheubner-Richter, a Baltic German who was a frequent guest in Coburg and whose wife Mathilde von Scheubner-Richter was a close friend of Viktoria Melitta.[545]Born in 1884 in Riga, then part of Tsarist Russia, Scheubner-Richter grew up among high-ranking Baltic Germans, emigrated to Germany after the revolution, and settled in Berlin after serving in the Ottoman Empire during the war. Having already established close contacts with Erich Ludendorff, he joined a network of völkisch, Baltic German, and "white" ([546])Russian émigré circles, participated in the "Kapp Putsch," among other things, and, after its failure, moved to Munich with those same circles. Through Alfred Rosenberg, he came into contact with Adolf Hitler, joined the NSDAP in November 1920, became Hitler's personal advisor, and acquired the *Völkischer Beobachter* for the party. In the German-Russian society *Erneuerung (Renewal),* of which Viktoria Melitta became honorary chairwoman, and even more so in the German-Russian secret society *Aufbau (Construction)*, which he also founded, he was actively involved in restoring a pre-revolutionary order, primarily the Tsarist Empire in Russia, where Grand Duke Kyrill was to be installed as a pro-German Tsar.[548] In addition to President Baron Theodor von Cramer-Klett Junior as vice president, the Russian monarchist Vasily von Biskupsky, who also served as a member of Kyrill's advisory staff as "general for special assignments" and became Victoria's lover, was also involved in *the Aufbau*. Born in St. Petersburg in 1879, the aristocrat Biskupskij took part in both the Russo-Japanese War and World War I, commanded various "White" units in Ukraine in 1918, and then moved via France to the German Empire, where he rose to become one of the most important representatives of the Russian community, first in Berlin and then in Munich.[549] Through Biskupsky and Scheubner-Richter, decisive connections were established in the early 1920s between the Russian community in Munich and the völkisch scene, especially the National Socialists. [550] Large parts of the "White" movement were characterized by a conspiracy-theoretical, anti-Semitic, and anti-Bolshevik worldview. They

545 See Weber, Thomas: How Adolf Hitler became a Nazi. From apolitical soldier to author of Mein Kampf. Berlin 2016, p. 325 f. Together, Viktoria Melitta and Mathilde von Scheubner-Richter attended SA exercises in Munich, among other things. See Zdral, Wolfgang: The financed rise of Adolf H. Vienna 2002, p. 59.

546 The *white* movement refers to those groups that formed in opposition to the *red* Bolsheviks.

547 Both Alfred Rosenberg and Scheubner-Richter belonged to a network that originated in the Riga student fraternity Rubonia. Otto von Kursell and Arno Schickedanz were also part of this network. See Brüggemann, Karsten: Max Erwin von Scheubner-Richter (1884–1923) – der Führer des Führers? In: Garleff, Michael (ed.): Deutschbalten und das Dritte Reich, vol. 1. Cologne 2001, pp. 119–145, here p. 124.

548 See Baur, Johannes: The Revolution and the "Wise Men of Zion." On the Development of the Image of Russia in the Early NSDAP. In: Koenen, Gerd; Kopelew, Lew (eds.): Germany and the Russian Revolution 1917–1924. Munich 1998, p p . 165–190, here p p . 167–173 and Brüggemann: Scheubner-Richter, pp. 119–145. On the Economic Reconstruction Association, cf. Baur, Johannes: Economic Reconstruction Association, 1920/21–1924. In: Historical Dictionary of Bavaria. URL: https://www.historisches-lexikon-bayerns.de/ Lexikon/Wirtschaftliche_Aufbau-Vereinigung,_1920/21–1924 (last accessed 19 November 2021).

549 See Dodenhoeft, Bettina: Vasilij von Biskupskij: Eine Emigrantenkarriere in Deutschland. In: Schölgel, Karl (ed.): Russische Emigration in Deutschland 1918 bis 1941. Berlin 1995, pp. 219–228 and Baur: Kolonien, pp. 214–239.

550 There were also contacts between Scheubner-Richter and Hermann Ehrhardt, both of whom maintained close ties to Coburg. See Krüger: Ehrhardt, pp. 116 f.

was characterized by the idea of "Jewish Bolshevism," which equated Jews with communists and found successful expression in, for example, the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion," which reached Germany via Russian emigrants.[551]These connections were particularly significant because of the numerous financial contributions that the two emigrants made to the NSDAP, with which they hoped to buy pro-tsarist German politics.Viktoria Melitta also raised considerable funds for her husband's plans to restore the monarchy, and thus for the NSDAP and the Aufbau-Vereinigung, by selling her collection of jewelry and precious stones that she had rescued from Russia. ([553]) In addition, the Grand Duchess traveled to the United States to find financiers for her husband's plans.[554]

The close ties between the two groups were already apparent in Coburg when, on On "German Day" in October 1922, copies of Eckart's and Rosenberg's *Auf gut Deutsch (In Good German),* containing anti-Semitic and anti-Bolshevik caricatures by Aufbau member Otto von Kursell, were distributed by Munich National Socialists.[555] It cannot be ruled out that Hitler's decision to travel to Coburg in 1922 was influenced by his connections to Russian emigrants. [556] The "Munich-Coburg axis" ([557]) gained decisive political relevance in the early 1920s. Viktoria Melitta met Hitler herself in October 1923.([558]) As the second center of the émigré scene and due to the close ties between Carl Eduard and the Grand Duchess's family,([559]) the Ducal House in Coburg was ultimately heavily influenced by the anti-Bolshevik and anti-Semitic Russian émigrés. Walter Gyßling, who traveled on behalf of C. V. Coburg in 1928 to investigate the reasons for the success of the NSDAP, wrote: "From circles around the ex-tsar [Ferdinand of Bulgaria, author's note], I also learned how the NSDAP had been able to gain a foothold in court circles and among the ducal family with the help of the numerous monarchist Russian émigrés in Coburg, often of Baltic origin, who had

551 See Baur: Revolution, p. 172 and Kellogg, Michael: The Russian Roots of Nazism. White Émigrés and the Making of National Socialism. Cambridge 2005, p. 16.

552 See interview with Hermann Esser on February 27, 1964. IfZ Munich ED 561/2.

553 See ibid. and Biskupskij's memorandum of October 18, 1935, IfZ Munich MA 297/1. In his memoirs, Prince Friedrich Josias of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha interprets the sale of the jewelry and jewels more as a sign of the financial distress of his Russian relatives, but does not mention the intended use of the proceeds from the sale. See Prince Andreas of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha: The Duke, p. 187. In 1922, Viktoria Melitta raised 1 million marks for Biskupskji to found a German-Russian trading company, which was lost entirely through speculation. See Baur: Kolonie, p. 227.

554 See Dr. Fritsch to the Regional Council of Upper Franconia, December 10, 1924; German Consulate General in New York, December 15 and 19, 1924; German Embassy in Washington, D.C., December 24, 1924, and Foreign Office in Berlin, January 8, 1925. BayHStA MA 104351. In doing so, she made use of contacts that her mother, Duchess Marie of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, had established during stays in Nice.

555 See Kellogg: Russian Roots, p. 159.

556 Neither Hitler nor Schwede mention the influence of Russian emigrants in their accounts of "German Day." This could, however, be explained by the changed image of Russia within the NSDAP after 1923. Jürgen Erdmann's assumption that Hitler was in no way familiar with the situation in Coburg seems unlikely given the connections through Scheubner-Richter and Klintzsch. See Erdmann: Coburg, p. 94.

557 Baur: Kolonie, p. 129.

558 See Urbach: Go-Betweens, p. 136.

559 See Prince Andreas of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha: The Duke, p. 187.

the National Socialist agitators of that time in bitter hostility toward Bolshevism."[560] Gyßling also reports that, particularly in 1926 and 1927, influential Russian emigrants helped the Nazi movement in Coburg to gain stability and momentum by establishing contacts with the Bavarian Reichswehr in the person of its commander, General Friedrich Freiherr von Kreß zu Kressensteinand thus finally helped the National Socialists gain influence over the Coburg court. [561]

After Scheubner-Richter's death in the "Hitler Putsch" of 1923, the close ties between the NSDAP and Russian monarchist circles in Munich dissolved, and both Hitler and Rosenberg fundamentally changed their attitude toward Russia and its emigrants. [562]However, the influence of Russian emigrants in Coburg remained unbroken. Kyrill also attended several nationalist events in Coburg in the wake of Carl Eduard, thereby giving the movement additional legitimacy.Biskupskji continued to pursue the goal of cooperation with the NSDAP, and even after 1923 he devoted himself to the monarchist movement and supported Kyrill, who had declared himself heir to the throne in 1922, in his claim to the tsarist throne. A new source of funding was found in *the Stahlhelm*.The so-called Mladorossy, a group of young Russians influenced by the fascist movement in Italy, were also among Kyrill's followers. Their leader, Alexander Kazem-Bek, was one of Cyril's closest confidants until the 1930s and was also in constant contact with Victoria Melitta and Vasily Biskupsky.([566]) In August 1924, Cyril finally proclaimed himself Tsar in exile in Paris.([567])

The German authorities, on the other hand, viewed Kyrill's political activities as a thorn in their side. Following the proclamation of the tsar in August 1924, the Foreign Office instructed District President Strössenreuther to deliver a letter to Kyrill urging him to refrain from issuing political manifestos in Germany. The Coburg authorities, such as district administrator Dr. Fritsch, wanted to stay out of the matter so as not to damage the existing good and valuable local contacts.

560 Hill: Gyßling: p. 92.

561 See ibid., p. 93.

562 Cf. Weber: Hitler, p. 326; Baur, Johannes: Russian emigrants and the Bavarian public. In: Hermann Beyer-Thoma (ed.): Bavaria and Eastern Europe: from the history of Bavaria, Franconia, and Swabia's relations with Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus (= Publications of the Eastern Europe Institute Munich, Volume 66). Wiesbaden 2000, pp. 461–478, here p . 472 and Baur: Revolution, pp. 187–190.

563 Cf. Büschel: Herzog, p. 37.

564 However, Biskupskji's efforts to establish cooperation were no longer successful. On the contrary, he was even arrested by the Gestapo in the summer of 1933 and temporarily sent to the Dachau concentration camp. See Biskupskji to Arno Schickedanz, October 11, 1933. IfZ Munich, MA 128/5. In May 1936, however, following a change in Nazi policy toward emigrants, Biskupskji was appointed head of the Russian Trust Office in Berlin on the basis of his years of efforts to establish cooperation and his good connections to the Munich SS. See Baur: Kolonie, p. 232 f.

565 See Biskupskji to Arno Schickedanz, May 31, 1933. IfZ Munich, MA 128/5.

566 See IfZ Munich MA 128/5 and Baur: Kolonie, pp. 148–152, 156–171. The reason for the estrangement was, on the one hand, the Mladorossy's proximity to Stalinist ideology and their subsequent rejection of close cooperation with the Nazi regime, which was still in line with Biskupskji's thinking.

567 See Manifesto of Grand Duke Kirill Vladimirovich of August 31, 1924. BayHStA MA 104351 and Baur: Emigranten, p. 463.

gen.[568] Public pressure was also generated by the fact that in September 1924, the KPD had submitted a motion in the Bavarian state parliament to dissolve Kyrill's court chancellery in Coburg and expel the Grand Duke.[569]However, after the Russian émigré couple had once again published political statements in October 1924, despite promising Strössenreuther that they would not engage in politics in Germany, Strössenreuther was able to get them to sign a corresponding declaration of commitment in November 1924, which had also been demanded by the House of Habsburg in Bavaria. In it, they renounced any further political activity and demonstrations in Bavaria. ([570] However, due to high tax debts, Kyrill and Viktoria had to give up their villa in Coburg at the end of the 1920s, whereupon they moved their law firm to Brittany. ([571]

Although the Russian émigré scene lost influence in the NSDAP after 1923 and Kyrill also lost political power until his death in 1938, their work in Coburg, the contacts they established, and their mindset were a factor that should not be underestimated in Coburg's development into a stronghold of völkisch and National Socialist ideology.[572]Kyrill, Viktoria, and Carl Eduard had sought to identify a promising option in the radical political agenda of the NSDAP in their struggle to regain lost privileges and leadership. This was countered by the largely apolitical actions of the ex-Tsar Ferdinand of Bulgaria in the Weimar Republic, who had also found a new home in exile in Coburg.

2.4.3 Ferdinand of Bulgaria – the outsider

Born in Vienna in 1861, Ferdinand of Bulgaria came from the Catholic Austrian branch of the House of Coburg, which had founded the secundogeniture of Saxe-Coburg-Koháry with his grandfather. He was the son of August of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha and Clémentine of Orléans, the daughter of French King Louis Philippe I. Appointed prince of Bulgaria in 1887 and confirmed by parliament, he played a decisive role in the economic and cultural development of the country. In 1908, he was able to declare it independent and assume the title of tsar. After Bulgaria, as the first ally of the Central Powers in World War I, was forced to surrender in September 1918, Ferdinand abdicated in favor of his son on October 3, 1918, in order to save his dynasty. When Austria refused to grant him asylum, he went into exile in Coburg, where his parents were buried and where he took up residence in the Bürglassschlösschen and the "Tsar's Villa," the Hofgartenpalais.

568 See Foreign Office to the President of the Government of Upper Franconia, September 30, 1924, and Strössenreuther to the Bavarian State Ministry of Foreign Affairs, October 3, 1924. BayHStA MA 104351.

569 See motion by Josef Schlaffer and the KPD parliamentary group, September 25, 1924. BayHStA MA 104351.

570 See Strössenreuther to the Bavarian State Ministry of Foreign Affairs, November 20, 1924. BayHStA MA 104351.

571 See Baur: Kolonie, p. 149.

572 This is also pointed out by Curt Blüth, who was born in Coburg and whose father, Julius Blüth, was a co-owner of the Jewish department store K. M. Fechheimer & Co. at Spitalgasse 12. See Testimony of Curt Blueth, born in Coburg, Germany, regarding his experiences in Coburg and the Netherlands. Yad Vashem A 0.3/941.

573 Ferdinand's brother, Duke Philipp of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha-Koháry, also stayed with him until his death in July 1921.



Fig. 7: Tsar Ferdinand of Bulgaria, postcard from 1926, with signature

Here Ferdinand pursued a decidedly apolitical lifestyle, devoting himself to his passion for collecting botanical specimens, insects, and birds, his interest in locomotives and automobiles, and his love of theater and opera. He was an ardent admirer of Wagner and the Bayreuth Festival, traveled regularly from Bulgaria and Coburg to attend operas, and was very close to the Bayreuth Circle and the House of Wahnfried. He never missed a Wagner performance in Coburg either. In 1928, the city of Bayreuth awarded him honorary citizenship. From Coburg, he was in contact with many artists such as Henri Marteau and Max Grube, but above all with scientists of his

574 See *Coburger Tageblatt*, February 25, 1936; Schaller, Helmut: Ferdinand I of Bulgaria in Exile in Coburg, 1918–1948. In: Historical Association for Upper Franconia (ed.): Archive for the History of Upper Franconia, vol. 79. Bayreuth 1999, pp. 333–367 and Nicklas: Sachsen-Coburg, pp. 130–143. On Ferdinand of Bulgaria, see also: Constant, Stephen: Foxy Ferdinand 1861–1948. Tsar of Bulgaria. London 1979.

Areas of interest. He also used his apolitical life in exile to undertake numerous research trips, for example to South America and Africa, which made him an advocate for nature conservation. For his services to natural history, he was made an honorary member of the German Ornithological Society and was awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Erlangen.

He was financially secure thanks to considerable reserves and compensation payments for land, castles, and financial assets belonging to the Saxe-Coburg-Kohárý family, which he won in court after his abdication. As this fortune had also lost considerable value due to inflation, the Reich Cabinet paid him an annual pension of 120,000 marks from the secret fund of the Foreign Office from 1927 onwards.[576] Ferdinand therefore actively supported the theaters in Coburg and Bayreuth financially.[577] He also made substantial financial contributions to charitable causes in his new place of residence. From around 1924, he donated 500 RM annually at Christmas to the city's poor, supported the construction of the new trade and commercial school, donated exhibits to the Natural History Museum in Coburg, and, according to widespread opinion in Coburg, proved to be a stroke of luck for the city.[578]

Compared to Carl Eduard or Kyrill, Ferdinand, whose zenith of power was already in the past and who was not seeking reinstatement to the throne or a key position in a reorganized German Empire, did not initially allow himself to be used as a vehicle for right-wing circles. A devout Catholic who regularly attended services at St. Augustine's, he could not be associated with the same national Protestant ideology as Carl Eduard, for example.[580] Although the theater lover in the Bayreuth circle associated and corresponded with the anti-Semite Houston Stewart Chamberlain and Ernst II of Hohenlohe-Langenburg, his contemporaries attested to his "extensive tolerance and subtle empathy for the feelings and thoughts of different nationalities."[581] In fact, the ex-tsar maintained lively contact with members of the Jewish community in Coburg. Kuno Hirsch, for example, served as Ferdinand's legal representative and friend, with whom he shared a love of theater and art.[582] Already in Bulgaria, the Jewish physician and later director of the Coburg County Hospital, Dr. Franz Colmers, had served as medical advisor to Ferdinand's second wife, Eleonora, in Sofia. Ferdinand also shared with him

575 See Böttcher, Hans-Joachim: Ferdinand von Sachsen-Coburg und Gotha 1861–1948. Ein Kosmopolit auf dem bulgarischen Thron. Berlin 2019, pp. 360–372. On Ferdinand, see also the anthology: Anonymous: König Ferdinand von Bulgarien. On his 75th birthday. Berlin 1936 and Beéche, Arturo E. The Coburgs of Europe. Rise and fall of the European families of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. Coburg 2017, pp. 141–158. Beéche's work can be classified as popular science due to the lack of evidence or a list of sources.

576 See Böttcher: Ferdinand, pp. 351 f.

577 See Donations, Gifts, and Endowments of King Ferdinand of Bulgaria, June 18, 1941. StadtACo A 5764.

578 See Schaller: Ferdinand I, p. 346, and Böttcher: Ferdinand, p. 351.

579 See ibid.

580 Ferdinand had already distanced himself from Wilhelm II and his administration. See Roselius, Ludwig; Roselius, Ernst: The King's Position on Culture and Life. In: King Ferdinand of Bulgaria. On his 75th birthday. Berlin 1936, pp. 39–43, here p. 39.

581 Boetticher, Hans von: The King as a Man and Friend of Science. In: King Ferdinand of Bulgaria. On his 75th Birthday. Berlin 1936, pp. 44–54, here p. 52.

582 Cf. Fromm: Jews, p. 217.

A friendship that arose from their shared love of literature. [583]Ferdinand also maintained friendly relations with Abraham Friedmann and was his personal guest for a long time after Friedmann was commissioned to conduct negotiations for the king's admission to Coburg.[584]Walter Gyßling, who knew Ferdinand personally, described him as an enemy of Hitler, around whom the non-ethnic outsiders of Coburg society initially rallied.[585] It was particularly remarkable that Ferdinand Friedmann maintained his friendship, as he became the focus of a local propaganda campaign initiated by the NSDAP, which ultimately proved to be the spark that helped the National Socialists in Coburg achieve their decisive breakthrough.

3 Penetration of power

3.1 Seizure of power

The structures and habits of traditional bourgeois local politics had been challenged at the latest with the entry of the Social Democrats into the city parliament and soon proved to be outdated in view of the changed political reality of the postwar period. By initiating a change in the culture of debate, in which the Social Democrats often saw themselves as in total opposition to the bourgeois majority, the SPD had unwittingly paved the way for a development that would ultimately benefit the National Socialists. The method of leaving a city council meeting in protest as a parliamentary group, thereby counteracting any cooperation or compromise, paralysed the efficiency of a formerly unanimous bourgeois local politics. It made the conflict-ridden transition from a politics of dignitaries to a politicised party democracy apparent. The entry of the NSDAP into the city council exacerbated this trend once again and was intensified by the party's increasingly self-confident attempts at disruption, which were aimed not so much at achieving its own political goals as at exposing and discrediting the existing political system. This led to a noticeable deterioration in the atmosphere within the council, which became increasingly characterized by resentment and mistrust. The question of how city council members could access city council files and whether they were allowed to take them home for personal study, for example, clearly revealed the discord that had already arisen among the city councilors.

583 See ibid., p. 244 and Bartl, Franziska: Eine wechselvolle Beziehungsgeschichte. Das Haus Sachsen-Coburg und Gotha und die Juden. In: Amend, Gerhard; Boseckert, Christian; Melville, Gert (eds.): Im Fokus: Juden und Coburg. Rückkehr, Ausgrenzung und Integration im 19. Jahrhundert. Coburg 2021, pp. 139–149, here pp. 146–148.

584 Cf. ibid., p. 148; Restitution claim by Senta Friedenreich to the Central Registration Office in Bad Neuheim, December 14, 1948. StANü Reparations Authority III a 3082 and Fromm: Jews, p. 228. Abraham Friedman's daughter, Berta Landauer, also reported in retrospect that Ferdinand always claimed to have Jewish blood himself and that he was in possession of a small golden Torah scroll.

585 See Hill: Gyßling, p. 93 f. No evidence could be found for Hübertus Büschel's statement that Ferdinand had acted as a recruiter for the NSDAP in Coburg. See Büschel: Herzog, p. 36.

586 See transcript of the city council meeting of October 28, 1927. StadtACo A 8071 and stenographic report of the town hall meeting in the Hofbräuhaus on October 5, 1927. StadtACo A 7866.

The attempts by the bourgeois parties to mitigate the impact of the scandals sparked by the NSDAP or to combat them with the tools of local politics repeatedly forced the National Socialists to issue corrections. However, the impact of the NSDAP's obstructionist policy on the public remained largely unaffected. The damage caused by widespread rumors, false claims, or public discrediting of individuals or institutions could not be completely corrected by subsequent statements and often fell on receptive ears. The weak position of the independent mayor, Erich Unverfährt, did the rest. The mayor's proposals, for example on methods of covering the budget deficit, were often rejected, and the idea of his early retirement was publicly discussed. In his administration, he adhered to the principle of non-partisanship, which weakened his position under the changed political circumstances. As a controversial figure from the day he was elected, Unverfährt's term in office and the challenges of municipal financial policy he had to overcome contributed to widespread dissatisfaction with the city's leadership. The NSDAP's narrative that the policies of local dignitaries disregarded the needs of the citizenry, but that they themselves were the true representatives of the citizenry, served in many ways to channel this bitterness and frustration within the population. Mayor Unverfährt in particular saw himself defamed as a henchman of the government, which had been stylized as the enemy. Although there were repeated complaints that serious and sedate city council work was no longer being carried out, the number of visitors who attended the NSDAP protest rallies, the statements made there, and numerous letters to the editor in the *Coburger Zeitung newspaper* demonstrated the resonance that the NSDAP's propaganda had already achieved.[588]At the same time, the party sought to present itself as a legitimate political force that differed from the feared radicalism of the communists by addressing local politics in *the Weckruf* and its alleged educational campaigns.[589] Overall, the climate in Coburg at the end of the 1920s was such that a spark in the form of a political scandal could have far-reaching consequences.

The Schwede case *and its consequences*

A similar scandal unfolded when Abraham Friedmann, the Jewish CEO of the large slaughterhouse C. Großmann AG, who had already been the target of radical anti-Semitic propaganda by the NSDAP on several occasions, fought back after another smear campaign. Born in Autenhausen in 1873, Abraham Friedmann moved to Coburg in 1903 and worked there as a cattle dealer. After being wounded in World War I and returning to Coburg, he was appointed head of the district slaughterhouse, where he was able to secure the meat supply throughout the war. This earned him a reputation that justified the award of the title of ducal commission councilor and his later career at the

587 See *Coburger Zeitung newspaper* dated October 26, 1928.

588 See *Coburger Zeitung* of October 18 and 22, 1927, and March 7, 1929; *Coburger Tageblatt* of March 7 1929.

589 See stenographic report of the town hall meeting in the Hofbräuhaus on October 5, 1927. StadtACo A 7866.

This was beneficial for the Großmann company, but at the same time made him a prime example of a Jewish "war profiteer" in the eyes of nationalist circles.[590]Friedmann initially acted as a lender to the Großmann company, which had run into financial difficulties due to the loss of its export business, and in March 1921 he became a partner in the company, which, thanks to his shareholding, now gave him an overwhelming majority of the voting rights. After the NSDAP had agitated in the city council and in several articles in *the Weckruf* against Friedmann being awarded the title of Kommerzienrat (commercial councilor), he stopped purchasing coke from the municipal works, one of its largest customers, because Franz Schwede was employed there. He threatened to make himself independent of municipal electricity by installing a diesel engine.Another Jewish-owned company, the Conitzer & Söhne department store, also considered joining this action. A peaceful resolution to the matter seemed increasingly unlikely when the *Weck-ruf newspaper*, despite knowing better, tirelessly spread the false report that Friedmann had actively demanded Schwede's dismissal. The resulting accusation that the Co-burg city administration was in Jewish hands, on the other hand, fell on fertile ground and did not seem to fade away in the public eye.[592] In fact, the works council and the city council had asked Schwede to sign a declaration of commitment to refrain from attacks against customers of the municipal utilities, but the NSDAP and Schwede were not prepared to do so in the form presented. [593] Ultimately, the municipal works committee decided to dismiss him in order to ward off the agitator.

Since Schwede had also received people in his office without authorization for party political purposes, thereby mixing professional and political matters, the city administration considered this a clear violation of a red line, especially since Schwede had already caused damage with his agitation not only to the municipal utilities, but also to the municipal savings bank and the interurban utility company. Schwede's [appeals] to the government of Upper Franconia and the State Ministry of the Interior failed.

590 See Fromm: Jews, pp. 226–230, and Boseckert, Christian: The Economic Significance of Jews in the Duchy of Coburg (1800–1914). In: Amend, Gerhard; Boseckert, Christian; Melville, Gert (eds.): In Focus: Jews and Coburg. Return, Exclusion, and Integration in the 19th Century. Coburg 2021, pp. 151–170, here p. 164.

591 Schwede's agitation seriously jeopardized the work and advertising activities of the municipal utilities. See Ernst Köster to the government of Upper and Middle Franconia, July 27, 1933. StadtACo A 7894.

592 See *Der Weckruf* of January 25 and February 8, 1929, and excerpt from the works council meeting of February 6, 1929. StadtACo A 7865.

593 Contrary to the statement submitted by the works committee, which read: "I undertake to bring my activities as a city councilor and politician into line with the obligations I have assumed under Section 5 (3) of my employment contract with the municipal utilities. In particular, I will endeavor to ensure that personal attacks on customers of the municipal utilities in the press close to me will be avoided in the future." Schwede proposed a more moderate statement: "I hereby undertake to exercise the utmost restraint in the future, including in the exercise of my city council mandate, when dealing with personal issues relating to major customers of the municipal utilities." See personnel file Franz Schwede. StadtACo A 7865.

594 See complaint by master mechanic and city councilor Schwede against the decision of the Coburg city council to the government of Upper Franconia, March 1, 1929, and complaint by master mechanic and city councilor Schwede against the decision of the Coburg city council to the State Ministry of the Interior, March 2, 1929. BA NS 25,
185. Schwede was referred by the state authorities to the labor court, where he failed to file an appeal against his dismissal within the deadline. Only on the flimsy grounds that he had been at home sick and unable to work at the time was his appeal later declared lawful by the Coburg Regional Court. See judgment of the Coburg Regional Court of June 27, 1929. StadtACo A 7865.

The *Schwede case* ultimately provided the Coburg Nazi local group with a welcome opportunity for a previously unknown form of demagoguery.

The question of whether Schwede's dismissal as a private individual on the basis of his political activities as a city councilor was lawful sparked a public dispute that had already been on the political agenda in the controversy surrounding Schwede's false statements regarding the savings bank affair. In 1927, Schwede had already been threatened with dismissal by the works committee of the municipal utilities for making unsubstantiated claims. The NSDAP made the matter public and questioned the legality of such action before the city's public. The renewed controversy surrounding Schwede's position as city councilor and the justification for his dismissal provided the NSDAP with an ideal opportunity to present itself as a true champion of freedom and order in *its wake-up call* and at protest rallies. Schwede himself portrayed himself as a martyr who had accepted his own dismissal in the relentless struggle to enlighten the citizenry, invoking his democratic right to freedom of expression. (596)The *Schwede case* thus became a key event in the process of dissolving the traditional legitimacy of political responsibility. The public debate clearly showed that, as in 1927, large sections of the citizenry regarded Schwede's dismissal as a breach of law. The direct political style of the National Socialists, which seemed to place the debates at the center of society, contrary to traditional honorary politics, had a momentous effect. Due to the incompatibility of traditional bourgeois local politics with the changed political reality, the NSDAP was now even more successful in channeling the discontent of those who no longer felt represented and noticed by the dignitaries.

In addition, ethnic nationalism, as a shared value, could now be instrumentalized to unite a national united front, with the *Coburger Zeitung* serving as its mouthpiece. Schwede's achievements as a front-line soldier in the Battle of Ska-gerrak and the sinking of the German fleet at Scapa Flow were exploited by both himself and other national conservative associations for political debate and stylized into a battle between the front-line soldier Schwede and the Jewish "war profiteer" Friedmann.[598] In this simple dichotomy, the NSDAP was finally able to personify its entire propaganda and reduce it to the choice between Schwede and Friedmann. Above all, the Black-White-Red faction, an alliance of the DNVP, *Stahlhelm*, and National Liberals, which had repeatedly acted as a moderating influence on the NSDAP to date, as well as the military associations and veterans' organizations united in the *Patriotic Working Group,* now stood up to protect Schwede and called for all nationally minded citizens of Coburg to stand together.[599] The NSDAP's protest rallies were thus seen as the "mouthpiece of all Germans" [600]

595 See minutes of the works council meetings of December 19, 1928, February 6 and 13, 1929; minutes of the meeting with the members of the municipal works employees' council on February 9, 1929, and municipal works to Franz Schwede, February 13, 1929. StadtACo A 7865.

596 See Franz Schwede to the municipal utilities, February 9, 1929. StadtACo A 7865.

597 See, for example, *Coburger Zeitung*, March 7, 1929.

598 See ibid.; *Coburger Tageblatt*, March 9, 1929, and *Coburger Zeitung*, March 9, 1929.

599 See ibid.

600 Ibid.

declared and declared all conflicts within the nationalist camp to be overcome for the moment of scandal. The front-line soldiers issued a protest note supporting their comrade Schwede and using the anti-Semitic cliché of Jewish enrichment: "We have experienced firsthand what it means to come home from war and captivity empty-handed and to build a new life. We will therefore do everything in our power to prevent elements from depriving an upright front-line soldier of his livelihood, for whom our blood and sweat over four and five long years meant and created the opportunity to attain wealth and economic power."([601])Together, the national forces unanimously passed a resolution calling on the city council to rescind Schwede's dismissal. The support of these respected and established bourgeois forces helped the NSDAP to gain definitive legitimacy in Coburg's public sphere and silenced the public attempts at justification by Unverfährs or the directors of the municipal utilities, Leonhard Meckel and Heinrich Diercks. The Coburg professor and city councilor Karl Güntzel now came to the fore as the representative of the Black-White-Red faction, a member of *the Stahlhelm*, and an established figure within Coburg's bourgeoisie. He emphasized that he wanted to stand not only beside Schwede in his fight for his rights and the national cause, but in front of him, and effectively called for national unity to combat the prevailing "un-German spirit."[602]Although he continued to reject the radical methods of the NSDAP and publicly corrected the disinformation deliberately spread by them, he seemed to hope that cooperation with the NSDAP before the city council elections still pending at the end of 1929 would also win votes for his own faction. Thus, even before the DNVP formed an alliance with the NSDAP at the Reich level, the national conservative forces in Coburg had already formed a momentous alliance with the National Socialists.

Due to the enormous response and solidarity that followed Schwede's dismissal, the time seemed ripe for a political coup to shift the majority in the city council in favor of the nationalist camp. Schwede's comrade-in-arms Linke had already announced at the protest rally on March 8, with the support of NSDAP state parliament representative Hans Schemm, that a referendum and plebiscite would be held on the retention of the Coburg city council, which, according to the NSDAP, no longer had the right to exist due to its misconduct toward Schwede.[603] The National Socialists reduced the decision now to be made by the population to the simple slogan
"German or Jew!"[604] and appealed to the "patriotic sense of honor" of the long-established Coburgers to defend themselves against the "immigrant Jewish war profiteer" by casting their votes. With massive propaganda and the establishment of a shuttle service to bring people to the polls, the NSDAP attempted to win votes

601 Ibid.
602 Ibid.
603 See *Coburger Tageblatt* of March 9, 1929.
604 NSDAP leaflet on the referendum. StadtACo A 6386. It went on to say: "Those who do not vote are supporting Friedmann and his 14 emergency helpers. Therefore, vote against the Jew and for your comrades with
Yes. Because your patriotic feelings cannot allow a German soldier who was doing his duty to be sacrificed to a Jewish war profiteer. Because your sense of honor must protest against 25,000 long-established Coburg residents being forced to obey an immigrant Jew. Therefore: Germany for the Germans! Coburg for the Coburgers! And Palestine to those who belong there!"

to win. Although the national-liberal Professor Gebhardt and even the city councilor Professor Güntzel, as well as a number of Coburg citizens, questioned the wisdom of this step, to the astonishment of the National Socialists, enough eligible voters supported their request so that the Coburg city council was ultimately dissolved and new elections were scheduled for June 1929, even before the regular local elections in December.

To this end, the NSDAP continued its aggressive election campaign, which had already borne fruit in the run-up to the referendum, and also mobilized the entire supraregional party apparatus. High-ranking NSDAP officials such as Hermann Göring, Franz Ritter von Epp, Hermann Esser, and Gregor Strasser regularly appeared in Coburg, celebrating the outcome of the referendum in a publicity-effective manner and holding rallies, lectures, and marches in the city. Immediately after the successful referendum, Karl Fiehler, the party's spokesperson for local politics, drew attention to the events in Coburg and their potential for the Nazi movement.[606]Adolf Hitler, whose focus had returned to the rural town after the successful referendum, also appeared in Coburg again on June 22 and 23, demonstrating that the party leadership also wanted to seize the opportunity in Coburg. The local NSDAP candidates presented their ideas on various urban policy issues, such as the preservation of the state theater and the municipal budget, at their campaign rallies. They made popular demands, such as consistent compliance with the state treaty, the awarding of municipal contracts to Coburg companies, the implementation of emergency work with state funds, and the abolition of unpopular special taxes.[607] They specifically targeted representatives of the petty bourgeoisie, i.e., the local middle class, among whom the slogans of the Völkisch movement and the NSDAP had fallen on fertile ground to date and from whom they hoped to gain the most votes. Although they presented themselves as a serious political force, active disruption of SPD election events continued, ultimately resulting in major clashes between National Socialists and Social Democrats.[608] The rest of the national bourgeois camp, on the other hand, did not initially succeed in presenting a unified bourgeois-national list, as had previously been achieved in the Black-White-Red bourgeois bloc. After the comprehensive expressions of solidarity with Schwede and the NSDAP, the DNVP and the National Liberal Association in particular found it difficult to present their own profile to the outside world during the election campaign. After the German Nationalists had become embroiled in a dispute with the National Liberals and Professor Güntzel, which was only settled shortly before the election and then unanimously

605 See *Coburger Volksblatt* from May 4 and 6, 1929, and *Coburger Tageblatt* from May 4, 1929. With a total of 16,660 eligible voters, 11,188 Coburg residents cast their ballots, with 6,915 voting "yes" and 4,273 voting "no." In April 1929, Schwede wrote that he himself was surprised by the enthusiasm with which the people of Coburg had signed the Nazi petition. He particularly emphasized that many Marxists had signed it. See Franz Schwede to Karl Fiehler, April 20, 1929. BA NS 25, 185.

606 See Franz Schwede to Karl Fiehler, April 20, 1929. BA NS 25, 185. Here, Schwede already announced to Fiehler that the referendum would probably turn out in favor of the NSDAP if "the so-called national bourgeoisie does not lose its nerve and turn back halfway." On Karl Fiehler and the Department of Local Politics, see Matzerath: National Socialism and Local Self-Government, pp. 36–42, 53–58, and 170–176.

607 See *Coburger Zeitung* of June 15, 1929, and NSDAP leaflets. StACo Sauerteig estate no. 15.

608 See *Coburger Volksblatt newspaper* dated June 17, 1929.

swore, the DNVP once again attempted to win voters by aligning itself with the NSDAP. The party made it one of its most prominent campaign arguments that it had been the only one, together with the *Vaterländische Arbeitsgemeinschaft (*Patriotic Working Group), to support the NSDAP's referendum.[609]

The absolute majority for the NSDAP in the Coburg City Council

In the elections on June 23, the NSDAP finally achieved an absolute majority in a German city parliament for the first time, with 43.1% of the votes and 13 of the 25 seats. The SPD came in second with 28.8%, followed by the DNVP with 11.4%, the National Liberal Association with 8.9%, and the DDP with 3.5%.[610] On the basis of a democratic process, the NSDAP had thus succeeded in winning a large proportion of the votes of the urban middle class, while the social democratic milieu remained consistent in its voting behavior. The electoral strategy of the other national bourgeois forces had not worked, as the electoral success of the National Socialists was primarily at their expense. The majority of Coburg's bourgeoisie thus decided to venture into the experiment of a National Socialist city government. A ruling by the Coburg Regional Court in July 1929, which declared Schwede's dismissal to be unlawful and politically motivated, ultimately gave the NSDAP legal legitimacy for its actions.

The urban middle class, which was undergoing structural change, had opted for a radical alternative that seemed to offer a viable, consistently national path out of the crisis that had been conjured up and into the "people's community." It offered a combination of a long-established worldview and forms of politics that had been practiced in the 1920s. The NSDAP's years of defamation of the city administration had been successful. The party had managed to discredit the democratic system and at the same time offer the bourgeoisie more immediacy and opportunities for participation. Many citizens saw the NSDAP as the best chance to continue bourgeois, anti-democratic, and nationalist politics in Coburg while eliminating the labor movement. Plagued by tax increases and disappointed by the Weimar system and local municipal politics, the citizenry had proven susceptible to the slogans of the National Socialists, thus enabling their successful mobilization. The city's political system, which was limited in its ability to act under the Weimar conditions, with many decisions no longer being made directly at the local level, had hurt the strong self-confidence of the people of Coburg and made the political style and propaganda of the NSDAP appear attractive. Demands for the emancipation of the municipal level appealed to the special consciousness of the people of Coburg. By 1929, the NSDAP had already become the party of choice for Coburg's urban middle class.

However, the fact that the election was not a one-off protest was confirmed by the regular local elections in December 1929, in which the NSDAP won 46% of the vote. The acute economic turmoil of the global economic crisis after 1929, which is often blamed for

609 See *Coburger Zeitung* of June 17, 19, and 23, 1929.
610 See *Coburger Tageblatt* of June 24, 1929, and Stadtrat1: Overview of the election results in Coburg.
611 If there was any shift in voter support from the SPD to the NSDAP, it remained minimal until 1929.
612 See judgment of the Coburg Regional Court of June 27, 1929. StadtACo A 7865; Schwede: Kampf, pp. 125–158.

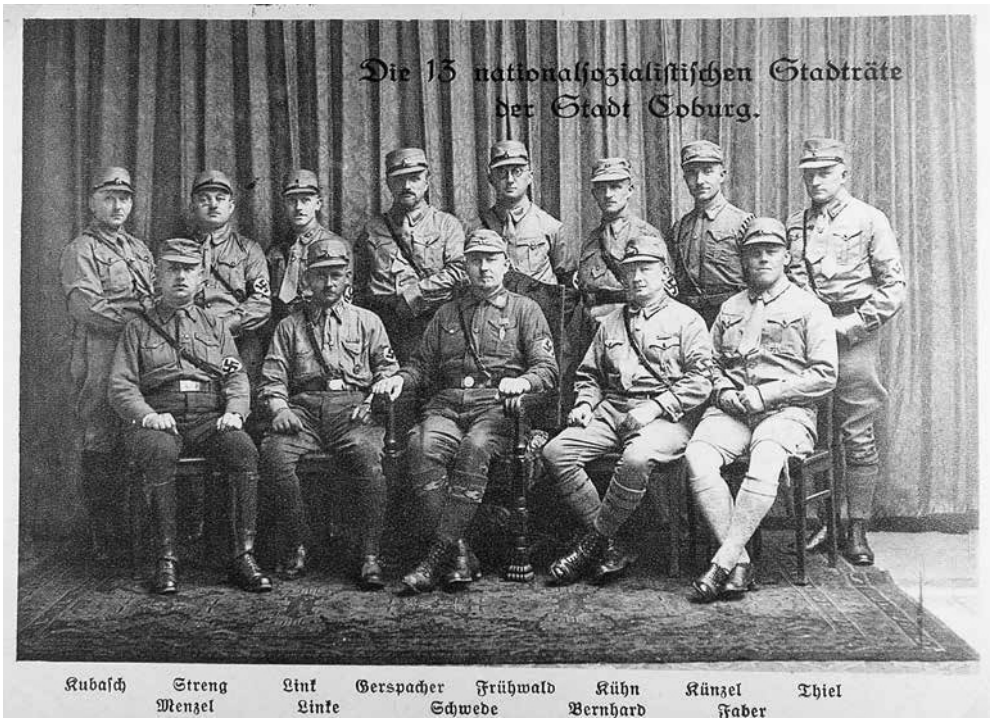


Fig. 8: Group photo of the 13 National Socialist city councilors in Coburg in 1929, postcard

were blamed for the success of the NSDAP as a protest vote,[613] were therefore not a decisive criterion for voting for the NSDAP in the Vestestadt. However, they did contribute to reinforcing the decision of Coburg's NSDAP voters, as the stock market crash in October 1929 destroyed the liberal economic system, unemployment catapulted to unprecedented levels, and wages, salaries, gross national product, and private consumption fell by more than a third. After the experiences of inflation and crises, the failure of the Western system and democracy now seemed to have been confirmed once again.(614)

3.2 Securing power until 1931

At the very first meeting after the new elections, the National Socialists set the record straight from their point of view. Franz Schwede was reinstated by city council resolution and even promoted to civil servant without a permanent position being created for him.

613 See Childers, Thomas: Who, indeed, did vote for Hitler? In: Central European History 17 (1984), pp. 45–53.

614 On the global economic crisis and its effects, see, among others, Herbert: Geschichte, pp. 262–267; James, Harold: Deutschland in der Weltwirtschaftskrise 1924 bis 1936. Stuttgart 1988; Kindleberger, Charles P.: Die Weltwirtschaftskrise. 1929–1939. Munich 1973; Ritschl, Albrecht: Germany's Crisis and Economic Situation 1924–1934. Domestic Economy, Foreign Debt, and the Reparations Problem between the Dawes Plan and the Transfer Block. Berlin 2002.

was available. [615] Shortly thereafter, the two directors of the municipal utilities were forced into retirement. In September 1929, the city council also decided to impose a tax primarily on Jewish department stores and their branches, a measure that was particularly popular with small and medium-sized businesses. In addition, an accounting trick was used to make it considerably more difficult for the SPD to participate by distributing committee seats unequally. ([616])The direction in which the NSDAP's policy in Coburg would move was thus clearly defined and visible to all. While the Nazis' scope for action in the Vestestadt had expanded enormously, they quickly and unhesitatingly set about restricting that of their political opponents and the Jewish community in Coburg. Despite its absolute majority in the city council, however, the NSDAP's power to shape policy was still limited, and decisions in line with the still poorly developed Nazi municipal policy could only be made with the approval of city councilors from other factions, primarily from the völkisch-nationalist camp. The Nazi faction could still be outvoted by the two mayors and in matters relating to their departments of urban development and legal affairs. In order to secure power once and for all, the NSDAP therefore focused on reestablishing a third mayor's office.

With the help of the NSDAP's local political expert, the Munich Nazi group leader, city councilor, and Nazi Reich leader for local politics Karl Fiehler, who was actively involved in supporting Schwede and the local group in Coburg, attempts were initially made to find a legal loophole and, for example, to contest the voting rights of Franz Dehler, who had since been appointed acting legal advisor, or to establish a National Socialist third mayor.[617] To this end, Fiehler first examined in detail various possible applications of the Bavarian municipal and local election regulations and had Schwede provide him with detailed material from Coburg in order to offer assistance in local political matters. On the other hand, the NSDAP attempted to make use of the experience and knowledge of other National Socialists by drawing on the party's existing modest local political networks, for example by discussing the situation in Coburg in the *newsletter for National Socialists in parliaments and local councils*.[618] It also lodged a complaint with the government of Upper Franconia, but the NSDAP merely referred to the existing regulations of the municipal code. Ultimately, it had to face the fact that the motions regularly submitted by the NSDAP to establish an additional mayor's office

615 To highlight the illegality of this measure, the SPD submitted a motion shortly afterwards to grant civil servant status to all other municipal workers and employees who, like Schwede, had been in municipal service for more than seven years. See minutes of the city council meeting of July 5, 1929. StadtACo A 8072.

616 See Schwede: Kampf, p. 160 f.; minutes of the city council meetings of June 28, September 20, and September 17, 1929. StadtACo A 8072 and decision of the Bavarian Administrative Court on the rules of procedure of Coburg: Distribution of committee seats of March 5, 1930. StadtACo 6440.

617 On Karl Fiehler, later mayor of Munich, see Karl Fiehler. In: Critical online edition of the diaries of Cardinal Michael von Faulhaber (1911–1952). URL: https://www.faulhaber-edition.de/kurzbiografie.html?idno=01234 (last accessed February 2, 2022).

618 See Franz Schwede to the letterbox of the newsletter, undated, and Karl Fiehler to Franz Schwede, May 22, 1930. BA NS 25, 185.

were always rejected, and no legal trick seemed expedient. [619]The two incumbent mayors, Unverfähr and Altenstädter, as well as their representative, legal advisor Dehler, consistently voted against the NSDAP's plan. The other city council factions also made every effort to ensure that the absence of their members due to illness or vacation did not create a situation in which the NSDAP always had a majority in the city council. For example, agreements were made within the factions and individual city council members were only brought into the meeting for certain agenda items. Even the city councilors of the Schwarz-Weiß-Rot faction, which was ideologically very close to the NSDAP, still shied away from helping the National Socialists gain unrestricted power.

Now, under Schwede, the NSDAP once again resorted to a deliberate obstruction tactic. By leaving the meeting room en masse whenever the city council rejected any of its proposals, it was able to use its majority to block any further decisions by the council. Within the democratic process and in Bavarian municipal law, there was initially no adequate means of countering such a refusal by the strongest faction. The camp of the remaining nationalist forces in the city council was ultimately completely worn down by these maneuvers of the National Socialists. The bourgeois forces that had paved the way for the NSDAP were surprised by the speed of the National Socialist rise. Despite the election defeats in 1929, however, they still maintained their strategy of trying to win voters for their own faction by aligning themselves with the NSDAP. They deliberately grouped themselves around Schwede's faction, especially at events and occasions with a high public profile. Resolutions against social democracy or with an anti-Semitic background continued to be supported. Although völkisch nationalism was still a binding element in this respect, questions of gaining and securing power increasingly overshadowed national unity. The DNVP publicly criticized the NSDAP's methods and plans with regard to its financial policy. In 1929, the DNVP founded the weekly newspaper *Der Kompass. Coburgische Landeszeitung für vaterländische und deutschnationale Belange* (The Compass: Coburg Regional Newspaper for Patriotic and German National Issues), in which it took a critical look at the NSDAP.[620] In particular, the German nationalist Franz Dehler, as legal advisor to the two incumbent mayors, opposed the NSDAP's undisguised power ambitions. Unlike the two incumbent mayors, he took an extremely firm stance as chair of the meetings and found ways to break through the NSDAP's obstructionism. For example, he succeeded in obtaining a resolution from the government of Upper Franconia to reduce the quorum for selected agenda items to 12 votes in order to maintain the quorum of the committee even without the presence of the National Socialists. ([621])

619 See Karl Fiehler to Franz Schwede, March 25, 1930; Karl Fiehler to Franz Schwede, March 30, 1930; Franz Schwede to Karl Fiehler, April 15, 1930; NSDAP City Council faction to the Government of Upper Franconia Bayreuth, April 15, 1930; Karl Fiehler to Franz Schwede, April 24, 1930, and Franz Schwede to Karl Fiehler, April 30, 1930. BA NS 25, 185. The correspondence between Fiehler and the Office for Local Politics with Schwede on local political issues far exceeds that of other Upper Franconian cities.

620 The articles were also printed verbatim in *the Coburger Volksblatt*, among other publications. See *Coburger Volksblatt* of September 10 and 30, 1929.

621 See minutes of the city council meeting of May 9, 1930. StadtACo A 8073.

The role of the German National People's Party and the SPD

Despite the more than turbulent history of their relationship, it was precisely the relationship between the National Conservatives and the National Socialists that was key to the success of the NSDAP. As early as the spring of 1930, the Coburg Stahlhelm leadership had shown itself willing to compromise with the local NSDAP. In a statement in the *Coburger Zeitung newspaper*, they hinted that a joint solution to the question of the third mayor might be possible.[622] A discussion on May 25, 1930, between *Stahlhelm member* Hans Rose, a district court judge, and teachers Dr. Konrad Gerstenmeier and Dr. Eduard Kolb, as well as teacher and Nazi city councilor Wilhelm Frühwald, who was authorized by Schwede, was intended to repair the damaged relationship between the two organizations. The NSDAP had launched targeted attacks on the Stahlhelm, accusing the association of being under the anonymous leadership of the Coburg Lodge due to a number of dual memberships, and had taken the two Stahlhelm city councilors Wilhelm Rehlein and Karl Güntzel to task in meetings and in the city council.[623] On condition that these attacks would be refrained from in future, the *Stahlhelm* and the NSDAP finally agreed on a truce in the interests of the national cause. The Stahlhelm leadership wanted to encourage Güntzel and Rehlein, who had generally voted with the National Socialists but were bound by the instructions of their faction and not those of *the Stahlhelm*, to support the demand for a third mayor from the ranks of the NSDAP. However, it was clearly pointed out that the NSDAP should refrain from nominating Schwede as a candidate, as he had lost authority through his conduct in the city council and thus did not correspond to the common expectations of a worthy candidate in his political style.[624]After the truce had proven itself for a few months, the NSDAP finally resubmitted its motion to establish a third mayor's office on August 22, which was now actually accepted against the opinion of the German Nationalists Wilhelm Feyler and Edmund Hofmann with the votes of Rehlein and Güntzel. Despite the unease of the traditional bourgeois elites with the person and political style of the Nazi faction leader, they elected Franz Schwede as third mayor on August 25, 1930, and another NSDAP member took his place in the faction.

The powerlessness of the Social Democrats in this system became very apparent from 1929 onwards. The SPD in the city council continued to try to hold up a mirror to the NSDAP and the bourgeois parties and to expose the NSDAP's attempts to expand and secure its power as such. When Schwede, for example, was irrevocably appointed as a civil servant with the city in June 1929, the SPD demanded equal rights for all municipal workers and employees who, like Schwede, had been in municipal service for more than seven years. In addition, under the chairmanship of Christian Reichenbecher, the SPD increasingly passed resolutions on matters such as the police and administration senate.

622 See *Coburger Zeitung* of April 26, 1930.

623 See ibid.

624 See minutes of the discussion between Stahlhelm Coburg and the NSDAP district group Coburg, May 25, 1930; Bavarian State Leadership of the Stahlhelm to the NSDAP Munich, June 25, 1930. BA NS 6/873. Similarly, Mr. Güntzel and the Nazi city councilor and lawyer Werner Faber were expelled from office.

625 See minutes of the city council meetings of August 22 and 26, 1930. StadtACo A 8073.

626 See minutes of the city council meeting of July 5, 1929. StadtACo A 8072.

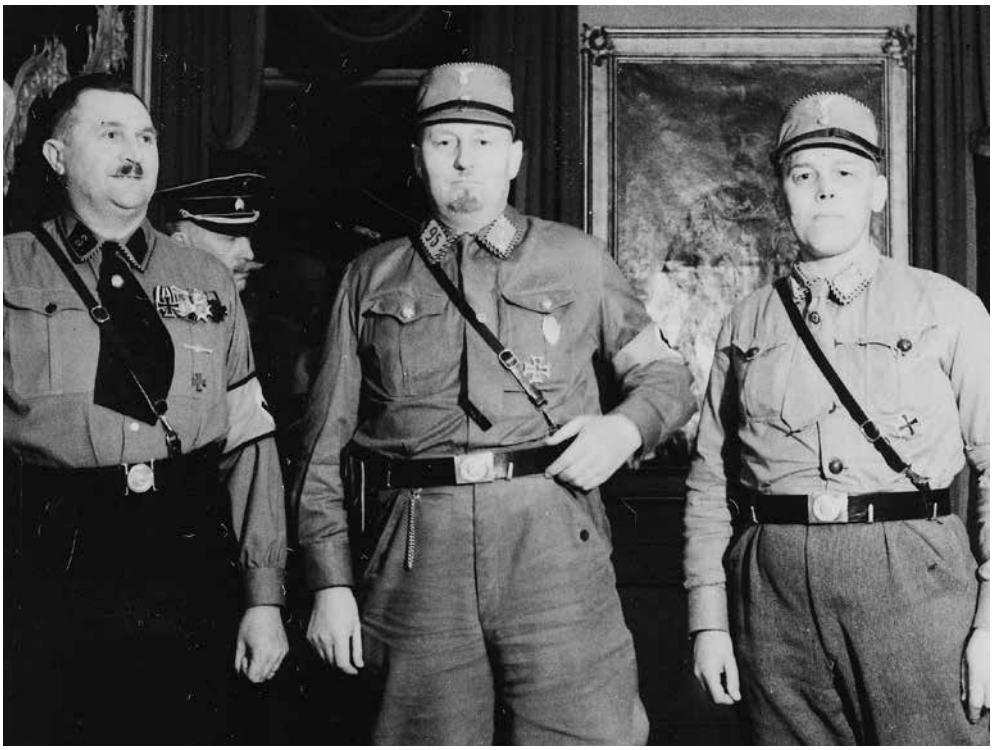


Fig. 9: Wilhelm Rehlein, Franz Schwede, and Werner Faber

instead of signing, with a handwritten protest. Reichenbecher himself became the most eloquent opponent of the NSDAP in the city council and regularly engaged in verbal duels and scuffles with members of the Nazi faction. The *Coburger Volksblatt* also used its energy for targeted information and exposure campaigns, for example with the series "Der Nationalsozialismus" (National Socialism), but this did not meet with much response outside the social democratic milieu.[627] The SPD's attempts to defend itself against unequal treatment in the distribution of committee seats were successful at the higher level after a complaint was lodged with the government of Upper Franconia, but still met with united bourgeois opposition in the city council, thereby reinforcing the weak position of the Social Democrats.[628] Protests such as collective abstention on certain agenda items and walking out of the chamber had no political effect.

With an absolute majority behind them, the National Socialists continued to pressure the two incumbent mayors, Erich Unverfähr and Ernst Altenstädter, out of office through targeted harassment and massive bullying. On the one hand, the complete disempowerment of the two incumbents served to secure power within the local parliament once and for all. On the other hand, they also made targeted

627 See *Coburger Volksblatt* of August 6 and 21, 1929.

628 See decision of the Bavarian Administrative Court on the rules of procedure of Coburg: Distribution of committee seats of March 5, 1930. StadtACo 6440.

Acts of revenge for agreeing to Schwede's dismissal in 1929. The fact that Unverfährt also supported a number of measures taken by the NSDAP, invoked the cities' right to self-determination in the event of corrective interventions by higher administrative authorities, and was sometimes referred to by *the Volksblatt* as a "docile tool" [629]of the National Socialists did him no good. In addition to tirades of abuse and disruptive heckling by SA and SS men at city council meetings to obstruct him in the exercise of his duties, attempts were also made to influence him via his father-in-law, Justice Councilor Jaenicke from Arnstadt, who was himself an active member of the NSDAP. In addition, several motions of no confidence were filed against Unverfährt, blurring the lines between objective and personal criticism, and the city administration was instructed to investigate whether the mayor had committed any wrongdoing in connection with various municipal expenditures. The maneuvers went so far that someone called Unverfährt's private residence at night, shouted "Heil Hitler" into the phone, and hung up. ([630]The NSDAP acted similarly toward the second mayor, Altenstädter, who was already advanced in age. Here, meetings at which he was required to be present as finance officer were postponed so often and his vacation was delayed for so long that he had to leave the meetings due to exhaustion. The NSDAP's strategy of attrition was primarily aimed at physically and psychologically weakening the already beleaguered office holders, who were indeed increasingly absent and had to leave Schwede in charge of the meetings. On April 1, 1931, Deputy Mayor Altenstädter was finally forced into retirement, and Schwede took over his office shortly thereafter with the votes of the NSDAP. Due to the machine master's lack of professional qualifications, the office had been converted into an honorary position.[631]After Mayor Unverfährt had also been unable to attend city council meetings for weeks, the city council decided, against the votes of the SPD and the left-liberal city councilor Marr, to retire the 46-year-old Unverfährt on July 1, 1931. Two medical reports, prepared by Professor Dr. Specht of Erlangen and Dr. Hönisch, the district medical officer of Coburg, had confirmed Unverfährt's incapacity to work. A certificate commissioned by the Bavarian Civil Servants' Pension Association also concluded that although Unverfährt was perfectly capable of performing the duties of a mayor, he was no longer able to fulfill his work obligations in Coburg due to the special working conditions there.[632]Contrary to the motion of the Black-White-Red faction to fill the position of First Mayor on a full-time basis with a legally trained and experienced administrative professional and to advertise the position immediately, Franz Schwede was appointed on October 16, 1931.

629 See *Coburger Volksblatt newspaper* dated June 8, 1931.

630 See Coburg City Council Legal Office, July 15, 1954. Witness statements. StadtACo Tax Office.

631 See *Coburger Zeitung newspaper* dated April 18, 1931. The reason given for this change was the "general political upheavals that were to be expected with certainty in the near future," which meant that a new regulation of the mayor issue did not seem sensible in the long term. Urgent motion by the NSDAP city council faction for the city council meeting of October 16, 1931. StadtACo A 6342. Schwede continued to receive his salary as a city official and was additionally granted a monthly expense allowance of 120 RM.

632 See *Coburger Zeitung* of June 13, 1931; minutes of the city council meetings of June 30, July 10, September 25, and October 16, 1931. StadtACo A 8074. The SPD was particularly concerned about the costs of retirement. Permanent retirement also failed due to an objection from the pension association. Ultimately, Unverfährt was placed on temporary retirement until 1934. See Chapter III3.2.1.

elected First Mayor of Coburg with the votes of the National Socialists. The post of Second Mayor, which the representatives of *the Stahlhelm* had promised themselves for their assistance, went to the National Socialist and trained lawyer Werner Faber, who had been Schwede's right-hand man since 1929.[633] Wilhelm Rehlein was finally elected third mayor and, at the same time, asked to resign from the *Stahlhelm* if he wanted to accept the election, in order to fully underline the NSDAP's claim to power. However, the two Stahlhelm city councilors, Güntzel and Rehlein, along with all the other city councilors except for the two German Nationalists, stayed away from Schwede's election as first mayor.[634] During a trip to Munich a few days before the election, Schwede had personally obtained Hitler's approval for this course of action.[635] Although it was clear to all Coburgers involved that Schwede wanted to claim the post for himself, not least for reasons of power politics, despite his lack of training for the office, he later claimed that Hitler had insisted that he become First Mayor of Coburg.

Franz Schwede as First Mayor

With the election of Schwede, the traditional bourgeois understanding of the office of mayor as a neutral mediator, situated beyond party politics, became a thing of the past. The *legitimacy of impartiality*[636] associated with the post was thus eliminated as a democratic practice in local politics. With the entry of the 13 National Socialists into the city council, the dissolution of the forms and structures of old bourgeois local politics was accelerated and the political space of local politics was occupied. This was not only due to the changed social profile of the new city council, in which the dominance of the petty bourgeoisie was now evident. Through constant transgressions, the power-oriented behavior of the National Socialists had continuously shifted the conventions of what could be said and done. City council meetings degenerated into a farce and a testing ground for the NSDAP. The polemics intensified and conflicts became more radical. Slander, accusations, insults, and even physical altercations were part of the regular tone of the committee, and the climate between the NSDAP and the SPD in particular became so radicalized that seemingly minor issues, such as the installation of a toilet facility in a Coburg school, could degenerate into political power struggles.[637] Disputes often went beyond the political level and turned into personal confrontations. As early as August 1929, the *Coburger Volksblatt* lamented "the ostracism of political opponents, the defamation of their honor, the mistreatment, even the destruction of their persons, they

633 For Werner Faber, see Chapter III2.2.1.1.

634 See minutes of the city council meetings of June 26 and October 16, 1931. StadtACo A 8074. The DNVP city councilors Feyler and Hofmann were present at the mayoral election, but did not vote for any of the three mayors, instead submitting blank ballots or voting for legal advisor Dehler. They also did not elect their fellow party member Rehlein to the office. See *Coburger Tageblatt* of October 17, 1931, and *Coburger Volksblatt* of October 17, 1931.

635 See Schwede: Kampf, p. 202 f. The Volksblatt had already reported in June 1931 that Schwede wanted to succeed Unverfährt in the event of his retirement. See *Coburger Volksblatt* of June 8, 1931.

636 Ronsanvallon, Pierre: Democratic Legitimacy. Impartiality, Reflexivity, Proximity. Hamburg 2010.

637 See minutes of the city council meeting of July 26, 1929. StadtACo A 8072 and *Coburger Tageblatt* of July 27, 1929.

became typical forms of expression of the National Socialist movement."[638] Joint efforts for the good of the city were now less of a focus of local politics than the promotion of propaganda and a targeted public image of the NSDAP. To this end, the National Socialists continued to expand and occupy the political sphere. Under their direction, the meetings became a public stage, which inevitably drew the population's interest to the tense local politics. From 1929 onwards, the spectator stands were often completely filled. In May 1930, around 120 visitors took their seats in the town hall, and a considerable crowd remained outside the doors.[639] In addition to the press, visitors to the city council ultimately became an additional player in the political decision-making process as representatives of the public. On the one hand, party members, some of whom were placed in the spectator stands by the NSDAP, actively intervened in the course of the speeches and debates with heckling or applause. Several times, the gallery had to be cleared due to scuffles.[640] On the other hand, the NSDAP city councilors gave more and more speeches to the spectators, which resulted in the meetings being held in larger rooms. Franz Schwede in particular staged himself as a local politician through numerous propaganda speeches. Almost no item on the agenda, which was largely occupied by the NSDAP, could be concluded without a speech by Schwede. The NSDAP succeeded in staging itself in a way that attracted public attention, while the other parties did nothing to stop the goings-on. As early as 1929, the Central Association of German Citizens of the Jewish Faith criticized the democratic parties for either no longer having the strength to resist or for failing to take the Nazi movement seriously.

The hoisting of the swastika flag at the town hall

The symbolic takeover of the urban space culminated in the ceremonial meeting on January 18, 1931, marking the 60th anniversary of the founding of the German Empire, to which veterans of the wars of 1864, 1866, and 1870/71 were invited to the town hall. With the members of the SPD city council faction absent without excuse, National Socialist Coburg staged a public display here and defined the new boundaries of belonging within it. ([642]Under the motto "National Coburg ahead in Germany!" ([643]the role of "the German city of Coburg," as it was henceforth called, was proclaimed as a pioneer for the future "Third Reich," and a founding myth and identity offer for "all patriotic Coburgers" ([644]was presented. By drawing a line of historical continuity from Luther's stay at Coburg Castle to the empire created by Bismarck to the present day and looking ahead to a future social order, a specific connection was established between nationalism and the

638 *Coburger Volksblatt newspaper* dated August 6, 1929.
639 See *Coburger Tageblatt* of February 28, 1930, and *Coburger Zeitung* of May 10, 1930.
640 See, for example, the minutes of the city council meetings of April 25, 1930, and May 23, 1930. StadtACo A 8073.
641 See *C. V.-Zeitung newspaper* dated January 25, 1929.
642 The mayor still in office, Unverfähr, was on sick leave on the day of the ceremonial meeting. Schwede later wrote that he had informed Unverfähr of his plan, which would bring him into conflict with the Bavarian government, and that Unverfähr had agreed to take sick leave. See Schwede: Kampf, p. 190.
643 *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, January 19, 1931.
644 Ibid.

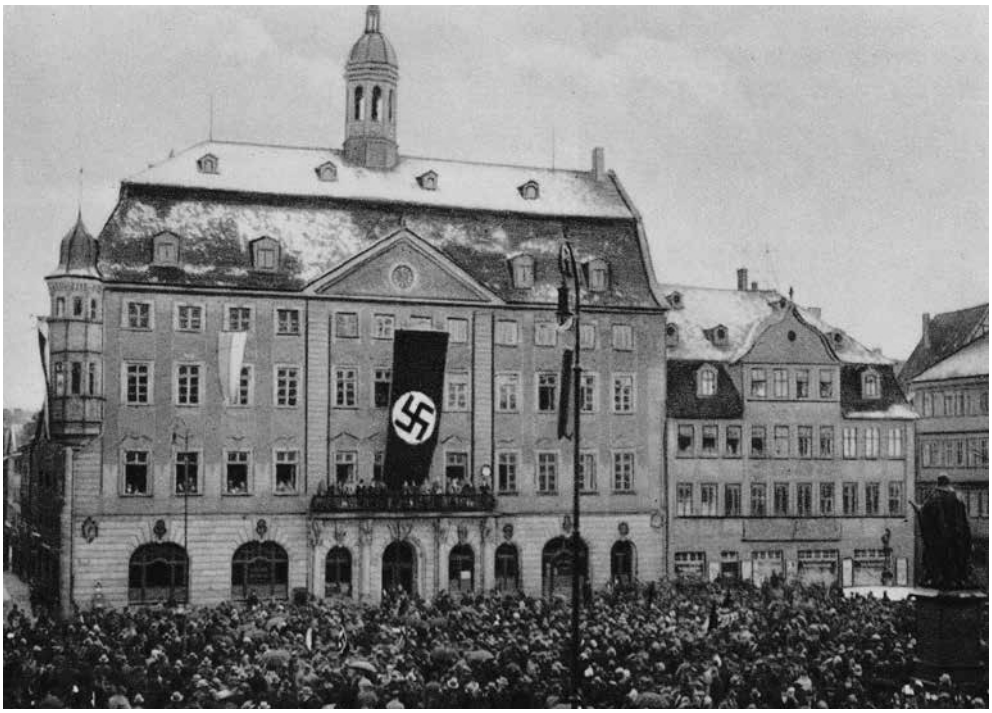


Fig. 10: Raising of the swastika flag at Coburg City Hall on January 18, 1931, postcard

Exaggeration of Coburg's role demonstrated. Those statesmen and parties who "surrender German spirit and German diligence to the bloodsuckers of the nation" [645]were denied the right to participate in such celebrations. However, the Schwarz-Weiß-Rot city council faction and the *Stahlhelm member* Professor Güntzel fitted seamlessly into the image of the new German Coburg and underscored the ceremony and the act of demonstrating power with their own appeal, which invoked energy, willingness to make sacrifices, and the "spirit of frontline comradeship and national community" from which the "true German Reich" ([646]) was to emerge. Following the festive meeting, those gathered stepped onto the town hall balcony, where they were already being welcomed by a large crowd of Coburg residents and rows of local Nazi groups on the market square. Accompanied by the sounds of the town band and the Nazi standard band, as well as renewed speeches by a Stahlhelm member, war veterans, and anti-Semitic remarks by the guest of honor Julius Streicher, a monumental swastika flag was finally hoisted at the town hall.[647] For the first time in the German Reich, the nationalist and anti-Semitic symbol now occupied by the National Socialists flew on a government building. In front of hundreds of Coburg residents, the NSDAP thus completed its final takeover of the urban space and the political sphere and

645 Ibid.
646 Ibid.
647 As early as September 1930, the city council decided to fly the black, white, and red flag alongside the state and city colors at public patriotic events. See *Coburger Tageblatt*, 1. October 1930.

demonstrated the unity of the patriotic national forces under the leadership of the National Socialists. The event ended on the same note, with the joint singing of the NSDAP party anthem, the Horst Wessel song, and finally the German national anthem. At a large afternoon gathering in the ballroom of the Coburg Hofbräu restaurants, Adolf Hitler once again appeared as a guest of honor, giving the events a special partisan consecration that extended beyond Coburg. The presence of Carl Eduard and retired Major General Ewald von Massow[648], retired Lieutenant General Karl Hoefer, retired Major General Otto Schneider, the ducal chief forester Karl August Huschke, various Stahlhelm comrades, the chairman of the Patriotic Associations, senior secretary Karl Schrumpf, and retired Lieutenant Colonel Kurt von Wangenheim, important military figures and Coburg dignitaries also showed their national solidarity with the National Socialists.([649])

The NSDAP in Coburg had thus demonstrated how it was possible to exploit an already largely weakened democratic system in order to gain power through elections, thanks to the support of the ruling elites, the SA's willingness to use force, and the approval of the middle classes. This strategy would ultimately prove successful in the Reich-wide "seizure of power." The decision in 1929 was primarily one made by the bourgeoisie of Coburg, who saw the NSDAP as the best option for restoring peace and order to the city and maintaining or regaining bourgeois privileges while largely eliminating the working class.[650]Neither at the Reich level nor—and in this case much more decisively—at the municipal level had satisfactory answers and future prospects been found for the perceived permanent crisis in the urban bourgeois milieu. This crisis had been exacerbated by the particular challenges of identification, organization, and fiscal policy following the union with Bavaria and the end of independence, Coburg's border location, and the specific local nature of economic problems. The integration of the majority of Coburg's bourgeoisie into democracy had therefore already failed in the early 1920s and was hardly successful even in the quiet years of the Weimar Republic. Despite a general easing of the economic situation in the city's finances, there was no recovery, particularly because the budget was overstretched by the maintenance of the Coburg State Theater. The refusal of the bourgeois forces to balance the budget was only one symptom of the deep mistrust of government measures. Against this backdrop, nationalism, deeply rooted in Coburg's history, was able to unleash its full potential for mobilization and radicalization, which was initially taken up and reinforced by the *Young German Order*. The broad nationalist base in the Vestestadt had been further strengthened by Carl Eduard's charisma and networks, not least because of its nationalist tradition. Through the shift in the fields of political communication and the change in political practice and culture, the NSDAP succeeded in

648 For General von Massow, see Chapter III1.1.6.

649 See minutes of the city council meeting of January 18, 1931. StadtACo A 8074; *Coburger Nationalzeitung* of January 19 and 26, 1931; *Coburger Tageblatt* of January 19, 1931, and Schwede: Kampf, pp. 189–198.

650 This is also the conclusion reached by William Sheridan Allen for the small town of Northeim in Lower Saxony, who emphasizes the importance of class differences for the success of the NSDAP among the bourgeoisie. See Allen, William Sheridan: Das haben wir nicht gewollt! – Die nationalsozialistische Machtergreifung in einer Klein-stadt 1930–1935. Gütersloh 1966, pp. 280 f.



Fig. 11: Adolf Hitler speaking at a rally in Coburg on January 18, 1931

radical nationalist potential, particularly in associations, and harness its momentum in the political process. As a political force and movement, National Socialism was able to build on existing patterns of thought and practices, thus presenting itself as a promising variant of already established patterns of interpretation. At the same time, it presented a compelling vision of the future in the idea of the "people's community," in which Coburg in particular could once again take on a pioneering role. It was therefore not mere revisionism that formed the core of the hopes of NSDAP voters, but also the prospect of the rise and upswing of the city and the nation.

After the global economic crisis of 1929 and the associated upheavals, particularly for the working class, there was ultimately a certain shift in voters from the SPD to the NSDAP in the three Reichstag elections in 1932 and 1933, as the SPD's election results fell to 24%, 23%, and 21%, while that of the NSDAP rose to 58%, 51%[651], and 56%. Here, too, many non-voters and new voters had once again cast their votes for the NSDAP.[652] While Coburg in Upper Franconia had the highest election results for the NSDAP in almost all Reichstag elections,[653] it was overtaken by its Middle Franconian neighbors in terms of support for the NSDAP at the ballot box in the 1932 and 1933 elections. Small rural towns such as Rothenburg ob der Tauber, Neustadt an der Aisch, Uffenheim, and Dinkelsbühl, which

651 The decline in votes in the Reichstag elections in November 1932 was due, among other things, to disappointment over the fact that the NSDAP had not yet seized power and to its negotiations with the Center Party. See Hambrecht: Aufstieg, pp. 280–285. Many voters in Coburg now briefly returned to the DNVP. See also Schemm's warnings in the *Coburger Nationalzeitung* of January 28, 1933.

652 See City Council 1: Overview of election results in Coburg.

653 See the overview in Hofmann: Upper Franconia, p. 525.

which had proven even more homogeneous in terms of their social structure and political affiliation, with a dominance of the middle and lower middle classes, and had voted almost entirely for the DNVP until 1928, now stood out with election results of over 70% and 80% for the National Socialists. While a phase shift between Franconia and the Reich can be assumed overall due to early propaganda and mobilization, this shift was even more pronounced in Coburg. (654)Not only Coburg, but the whole of Franconia had therefore served as a testing ground for propaganda techniques and power gains for the NSDAP due to its strong membership and voter base.[655] However, only Coburg succeeded in embarking on the path to the "Third Reich" ahead of schedule and establishing a National Socialist system of rule before 1933.

654 See Hambrecht: Aufstieg, p. 279.
655 See ibid., p. 310.

III Sphere of influence

1 Power relations and conditions for action

1.1 Structure of the sphere of influence

The National Socialist social system operated in a playing field with various large political and social groups, which ultimately also confronted each other at the local level. In addition to the party apparatus and the state bureaucracy, the churches, industry, and the military also acted as powerful forces in the Nazi state. For Coburg, the ducal house remained an important social and political player despite its loss of power. All these organizations, which themselves wielded power and influence, came together to form a space of institutionalized rule in which they underwent multiple negotiation processes and were constantly referred to each other. Not only was the urban space itself permeated by various spheres of power, but at the same time, various political spaces superordinate to the city exerted an influence on it, all of which had an impact on the shaping of politics and everyday life in the Veste city and with which the actors operating in Coburg were in constant negotiation.

1.1.1 NSDAP

The party organization, which was intended to permeate every aspect of society down to its smallest cell, initially assigned Coburg to the Gau Oberfranken, which consisted of the districts of Bayreuth, Hof, Bamberg, and Coburg. When the NSDAP was reorganized in Bavaria in October 1928, Hans Schemm, an elementary school teacher from Bayreuth, was entrusted with the leadership of this district.[1]Schemm had prevailed over Franz Schwede, who, due to his ambitions for the post, also wanted to move the district headquarters to Coburg. Schemm's organizational talent, his skills as a speaker, and his popularity among the population were decisive factors in this decision and contributed significantly to the National Socialist mobilization of Upper Franconia. While Schemm had extended his influence throughout Upper Franconia, Schwede's influence remained limited to the Coburg area. As early as 1928, this had set a decisive course for Coburg, which, despite numerous attempts, never came close to Bayreuth's position of power. At the same time, the personnel decision laid the foundation for a rivalry.

1 On Hans Schemm, see Lochmüller, Benedikt: Hans Schemm. Volume 1: 1891–1919. Bayreuth 1935 and Volume 2: 1920–1935. Munich 1940; Kühnel, Fanz: Hans Schemm. Gauleiter und Kultusminister (1891–1935) (= Nürnberger Werkstücke zur Stadt- und Landesgeschichte, Volume 37). Nuremberg 1985.

between Franz Schwede and Hans Schemm, who were also to compete for spheres of influence in Upper Franconia and played off their respective bases against each other.[2]

In February 1929, the entire Gau territory was further divided into ten districts: Bamberg, Bayreuth, Coburg, Hof, Kulmbach, Kronach, Schwarzenbach a. W., Selb, Stammbach, and Wunsiedel-Marktredwitz, although the boundaries of the party districts were not uniformly aligned with the state administrative structures. In Coburg, the local group leader Schwede was promoted to district leader. In August 1932, the organizational structure was expanded when the Gau was extended to 17 party districts. When the Gau Bayerische Ostmark was created in January 1933 in the area of Lower Bavaria, the Upper Palatinate, and Upper Franconia, the party organization took on a completely new orientation, as Protestant Upper Franconia was now united with traditionally Catholic areas. Each district office was now assigned a National Socialist district leadership in order to ensure the parallelization with state administrative boundaries required by the Reich leadership. The border location of the newly created Gau proved to be a decisive structural feature that also influenced the profile and structure of the districts within the Gau. The Gau, which was extremely heterogeneous in economic, religious, and political terms, was to come together in the "border struggle" with Czechoslovakia as a task of importance to the Reich. With extensive propaganda campaigns and the creation of joint institutions and offices, a district anthem, and "Ostmarkwaren" (East Mark goods) and "Ostmarkschauen" (East Mark shows), the NSDAP attempted to consolidate the borderland ideology and promote a sense of district identity.[3] The role of the Gau as a border region could therefore also be used by Coburg officials as a powerful argument in their demands to the Gau leadership. Ultimately, however, the success of the newly created cultural area remained limited. Despite the party-political reorganization, Coburg continued to focus less on the southern parts of its Gau and more on Thuringia.

Within the Gau, the Gauleiter enjoyed an unchallenged position of power, as he bore overall responsibility for the Gau in accordance with the "Führer principle." Hans Schemm, who also rose to become Bavarian Minister of Culture, had worked his way up to become one of the most influential Franconian National Socialists with the Ostmark. The Gauleiter also had authority over party personnel, as he appointed and dismissed his leadership staff and party officials down to the local group level, as well as the actual organizational and political structure of his Gau.

After the plane crash that led to the death of Hans Schemm, Fritz Wächtler took over the party organization in the Bavarian Ostmark district in December 1935.[5] As district leader, Wächtler was far more combative than his predecessor and developed an authoritarian and choleric leadership style that made him unpopular with the population

2 See Hofmann: Oberfranken, pp. 296–298 and Bald, Albrecht: "Braun schimmert die Grenze und treu steht die Mark!" Der NS-Gau Bayerische Ostmark/Bayreuth. Border Gau, Borderland Ideology, Economically Problem Region (= Bayreuth Reconstructions, Volume 2). Bayreuth 2014, pp. 46 f.

3 See Haller, Jörg: Die heilige Ostmark. East Bavaria as a völkisch cultural region "Bayerische Ostmark." In: Bayerische Jahrbuch für Volkskunde (2000), pp. 63–73 and Hofmann: Oberfranken, pp. 300–307.

4 See ibid., p. 307 f.; Bald: Bayerische Ostmark, p. 58–106.

5 Born on January 7, 1891, in Triebs, Thuringia, Wächtler was also a trained teacher, had been one of Schemm's confidants, and had already made a career in party and state service in Thuringia. Wächtler rose to become one of the most powerful National Socialists in Thuringia, but fell out with Gauleiter Fritz Sauckel and was eventually summoned to Bayreuth by Hitler.

and repeatedly led to conflicts with his subordinates, including Coburg National Socialists and the mayors of Coburg. The Gauleiter's unpredictable behavior was also exacerbated by his alcohol addiction. This, along with numerous allegations of enrichment and abuse of power, brought him into serious disrepute within party circles, with the result that more and more voices were calling for his dismissal. In order to expand his sphere of influence, Wächtler made several attempts to push back the state authorities within his jurisdiction and took massive action against the churches. Under Wächtler, the Gau was also expanded in 1938 to include small parts of the incorporated Sudetenland. In 1942, it was renamed Gau Bayreuth once again, as the Gau had lost its border character due to the National Socialist conquest of territory in the east. Shortly before the end of the war, the responsibilities of the Gau leadership were handed over to Ludwig Ruckdeschel, who had already served as Schemm's and Wächtler's deputy after Fritz Wächtler was shot by the SS in Herzoggau on April 19, 1945, presumably for "cowardice in the face of the enemy."(6)

Below the Gauleiter, the Kreisleiter (district leaders) acted as a link between the Gauleitung and the individual local groups, blocks, and cells in the party hierarchy at the district office or county level. They were initially appointed by the Gauleiter and, from April 1935, by Hitler on the recommendation of the Gauleiter. Their task was less administrative than coordination and supervision. They were responsible "for the entire political, cultural, and economic organization of all expressions of life according to National Socialist principles."(7) Since they were bound by the instructions of the Gauleiters, they were hardly able to act independently, but they did act as intermediaries between the party leadership and their subordinates, which gave them a certain amount of power and allowed them to act authoritatively towards those below them.[8] Among themselves, the district leaders united a network of about 30 party offices and functional areas that worked in parallel with the state and municipal authorities.[9]

Initially, Franz Schwede himself was entrusted with the office of district and county leader in Coburg, but had to resign due to his appointment as third mayor. He was succeeded from October 1932 to December 1933 by Otto Schmidt, who was born on November 1, 1888, in Erfurt. As an insurance broker, he had moved to the Coburg Municipal Savings Bank and joined the NSDAP in 1926.[10]However, due to his promotion to director of the Association of Public Life Insurance Companies in Berlin, he handed over the office on a temporary basis at the end of 1933 to Albert Schramm, a confidant of Schwede who was born on November 30, 1888, in Merbelsrot. Schramm had joined the NSDAP in 1925 and had been active as a local group treasurer. Schwede had arranged a position for him at the municipal works, which he also transferred to the insurance company in May 1934.

6 See ibid., pp. 116–136 and Hofmann: Oberfranken, pp. 322–338. On the Gau Bayerische Ostmark, see also: Schaller, Helmut: Die Bayerische Ostmark – Geschichte des Gaues 1933–1945. Twelve Years of Shared History of Upper Franconia, Upper Palatinate, and Lower Bavaria. Hamburg 2006 and the same author: The Gau Bayerische Ostmark/Gau Bayreuth. Aspiration and Reality 1933–1945. In: Archive for the History of Upper Franconia 81 (2001), pp. 415–480.

7 The Reich Organization Leader of the NSDAP (ed.): Organizational Book of the NSDAP. Munich 1937, p. 130.

8 See Roth: Parteikreis, pp. 110–115.

9 See City Address Book of 1937, Part 4, p. 1 and Roth: Party Circle, pp. 122–131.

10 See Otto Schmidt denationalization file. StACo Denationalization Chamber Coburg City Sch 183.

in Munich and left Coburg. [11]Due to the dual role of district leader and mayor established in Coburg under Schwede until 1944, the office of district leader in the Vestestadt ultimately had a special profile. The district leadership here was focused more on municipal politics and the Coburg town hall than on the district office. This resulted in a close intertwining of party and administrative authorities. Despite numerous personnel changes in the district leader position, the combination of the two offices significantly enhanced the status of its holder, so that the mayor-district leaders were able to act more as pure district leaders in local politics due to their dual function.

Even after Schwede's departure from Coburg, the rivalry between Schwede and Schemm meant that the Coburg district, emboldened by the city's status as "Germany's first National Socialist city," always strove to pursue an independent policy. Even as Gauleiter of Pomerania, Schwede continued to exert a decisive influence on the Coburg district until 1937.[12] An important vehicle for preserving the right to a certain degree of independence from the Gau leadership were the internal party networks that Franz Schwede had established, particularly in Munich, with Karl Fiehler and the Bavarian Minister of the Interior and Gauleiter of Upper Bavaria, Adolf Wagner.[13] In addition, the Coburg NSDAP attempted to maintain direct contact with Hitler and exploit it for political purposes. The awarding of the first honorary citizenship of a German city, the grandly staged visits by Hitler to Coburg until 1937, which served as praise and recognition of the "Führer," and his involvement in municipal construction projects are just a few examples of this. As it turned out, both strategies were initially successful, but proved unsustainable in the long run in terms of power politics.

1.1.2 State level

The fact that state and party structures did not coincide had a decisive influence on the organization of Coburg's territory, which led to specific organizational challenges. On January 1, 1933, the administrative districts of Upper and Middle Franconia were merged, primarily for economic and administrative reasons. While Ansbach, which was under the party leadership of Gauleiter and "Franconian leader" Julius Streicher, was chosen as the seat of the state administrative hierarchy, the party organization in the same area was concentrated in Bayreuth. The activities of the district presidents were particularly relevant at the local level due to their function as the highest supervisory authority for the city mayors or their involvement in municipal personnel policy. However, their position between two Gauleiters significantly weakened their overall position. The merger therefore prompted Otto Ritter von Strössenreuther, who had been district president of Upper Franconia since 1916, to divide the Coburg district office into two spheres of influence, with Schwede responsible for the Coburg region and Schramm for the city of Coburg.

11 Schramm and Schwede had divided the Coburg district office into two spheres of influence, with Schwede responsible for the Coburg region and Schramm for the city of Coburg. Schramm later moved with Schwede to Pomerania, where he rose to become deputy director of the *West Prussia and Danzig* State Insurance Institution. See BA R 9361-II/892423 and R 9361-III/569390.

12 See Chapter III1.3.1. Due to the destruction of the Coburg district leadership's records, little can be said about the internal organizational workings of this body.

13 See Chapter III1.3.1.

Retirement. After the revolution of 1918/19, von Strössenreuther initially proved himself to be an effective crisis manager, but he dealt rather lightly with the National Socialist movement and its attacks on democracy, as he saw it as a counterforce to the communist threat from Thuringia. Especially in the struggles that were waged from Coburg against the government, which was stylized as the enemy, until 1933, he repeatedly failed to take decisive action. The former district president of Middle Franconia, administrative lawyer Dr. Gustav Rohmer, temporarily took over the leadership of the united districts for him, but was forced into retirement in April 1933. The two national conservatives, who had shown themselves willing to cooperate with the NSDAP, were succeeded on an interim basis by retired colonel Johann Georg Hofmann, a party member loyal to the party line. Hofmann had made his career in the Reichswehr and had joined the party in May 1931, being appointed Inspector General of the SA and later leader of SA Obergruppe IV, which covered Thuringia, Franconia, Saxony, and the Bavarian Ostmark. He represented the NSDAP in the Reichstag from 1932 to 1942. To implement and monitor the "Gleichschaltung" (enforced conformity) of government circles, Hofmann was assisted by SA Special Commissioner Hanns Günther von Obernitz and, as subgroup leader of Upper Franconia, Special Commissioner Heinrich Hager, who were to serve as guardians of the "National Socialist revolution." During the political upheaval, there was thus no administrative expert in the state apparatus, but rather a former military man in a central position.

As early as the spring of 1934, Hofmann was replaced in his position by Julius Streicher after disputes with him, once Streicher had risen to become the state government's political representative for the government of Upper and Middle Franconia. However, Streicher ultimately rejected the position of government president offered to the Gauleiters in July 1934. He was succeeded by Hans Dippold, who was already regarded by contemporaries as the "executive arm of the Gau leadership," even though he did not always act in accordance with Nazi ideology. Even under Dippold, an administrative lawyer who joined the NSDAP in May 1933, the problem of the mismatch between the organization of the Gau and the administrative districts became politically apparent in his rather weak position, especially when, after the war began, the Gauleiters were appointed Reich Defense Commissioners and empowered to carry out civil defense with authority over the civil administrative branches. Despite his official residence in Ansbach, Dippold actively sought to become involved in Upper Franconia and was directly involved in the affairs of the city as chairman of the Coburg State Foundation.(15)

However, in the day-to-day political affairs of the city, the head of the district office, who was subordinate to the district president in the state structure, had much more concrete influence on events in Coburg.This was mainly because he was responsible for Coburg as an independent city.

14 See Hofmann: Upper Franconia, pp. 168–180, 383–393.

15 See ibid., pp. 393–399; Schott, Herbert: The Presidents of the United Administrative District of Upper and Middle Franconia (1933–1948). In: Nöth, Stefan; Rupprecht, Klaus (eds.): The Presidents. 200 Years of Government of Upper Franconia in Bayreuth. Bamberg 2010, pp. 338–389 and Blessing, Werner K.: Eventful Times. Upper Franconia 1914–1945. In: Nöth, Stefan; Rupprecht, Klaus (eds.): The Presidents. 200 Years of Government of Upper Franconia in Bayreuth. Bamberg 2010, pp. 64–92.

16 On district administrators and district administrators, see: Penzholz, German: Beliebt und gefürchtet. Die bayerischen Landräte im Dritten Reich (= Historische Grundlagen der Moderne, vol. 8). Baden-Baden 2016.

The city acted as city commissioner, which included, among other things, the right to dispose of the security police as well as association, assembly, and press matters. Although the head of the Coburg district office, Ernst Fritsch, had repeatedly acted benevolently toward the völkisch camp due to his fear of the labor movement and had even joined the DNVP in 1931, he had repeatedly opposed the rigorous behavior of the National Socialists by enforcing bans on speech, uniforms, and assemblies by virtue of his office. After a personal attack in 1931, he also initiated a temporary ban on the publication of the *Coburger Nationalzeitung*.[17] Nevertheless, in 1933 he initially supported "Gleichschaltung" (enforced conformity), banned communist and social democratic literature in the Coburg district, and signed "protective custody orders" for SPD and KPD members.[18] On March 9, 1933, the Nazi city council faction finally submitted a motion to remove the district administrator from office, whereupon Interior Minister Adolf Wagner suspended him. [19] On March 11, 1933, Fritsch was finally arrested by the SS with "faces filled with hatred and scorn" [20] in the
Taken into "protective custody." During the proceedings, the district administration, Franz Schwede, city councilor Dr. Otto Schmidt, and others presented evidence and allegations against Fritsch dating back to "German Day" in 1922, including his relationship with Abraham Friedmann and his alleged alliance with the Social Democrats. The NSDAP wanted to use this to terrorize the national associations as a whole. The government of Upper and Middle Franconia determined that there was no reason to dismiss Fritsch, that he was simply acting too cautiously so as not to fall out with a party. However, a return to his position in Coburg was out of the question. Instead of retirement, Franz Schwede demanded Fritsch's transfer and demotion and even initiated disciplinary proceedings against him for aiding and abetting breach of trust.[23] Ultimately, on the recommendation of the government and contrary to the Gauleiter's assessment, Dr. Fritsch was transferred to a position with the government of Lower Bavaria and the Upper Palatinate, Chamber of the Interior, in April 1934.[24]

Fritsch's temporary successor, Dr. Anton Heydenreich, was ultimately assigned Fritz von Baczko[25]as a special commissioner to oversee the "Gleichschaltung" (enforced conformity). Heydenreich soon became aware of his power-political weakness vis-à-vis the SA man and, lacking support from the government, resigned at the end of March 1933. On the instructions of the Gauleiter, Franz Schwede himself and Fritz von Baczko initially ran the district office on an interim basis until, in May 1933, Franz Dehler was appointed as the new head on Schwede's recommendation, a position he held until 1938.

17 See Chapter III2.1.2.
18 See memo from the Coburg police department dated March 2, 1933; Ernst Fritsch to the city council, March 3, 1933, and Ernst Fritsch to the government of Upper and Middle Franconia, March 3, 1933. StadtACo A 7870.
19 See resolution of the NSDAP city council faction, March 9, 1933. BayHStA MInn 78116.
20 Statements by Senior Government Councilor Dr. Fritsch on the accusations made against him by the city council in Coburg and various other authorities, June 16, 1933. BayHStA MInn 78116.
21 See State Ministry of the Interior, July 7, 1933. BayHStA MInn 78116.
22 See Presidium of the Government of Upper and Middle Franconia to the State Ministry of the Interior, June 23, 1933; State Ministry of the Interior, July 7, 1933. BayHStA MInn 78116.
23 See judgment of the Criminal Division of the Coburg Regional Court, January 31, 1934. BayHStA MInn 78116.
24 See letter from the Gauleitung to the government of Upper and Middle Franconia, August 15, 1933. BayHStA MInn 78116. For more on Ernst Fritsch's subsequent career and the harassment he suffered at the hands of Schwede and the NSDAP, see Chapter III2.3.3.
25 For special commissioner Fritz von Baczko, see Chapter III2.2.1.2.

held.[26] Dehler was finally succeeded in April 1939 by Dr. Gerhard Derks, a lawyer born on February 17, 1902, in Großheirath. He had already been working in Coburg during his training and was transferred to Coburg after assignments in Münchberg, Weißenburg i. Bay. and Uffenheim. During his military service, Derks was represented from 1943 onwards by Hermann Finck, who was also district administrator in Münchberg.([27])

The dual roles of district leaders and mayors meant that the lower authorities of the internal administration in Coburg were opposed by a powerful counterpart. However, thanks to Franz Dehler's many years of work in the city administration, there was a close connection between the town hall and Allee 7 during his tenure as district administrator, making it easy to achieve Nazi goals. In contrast, Dehler's successor, Derks, who had only joined the NSDAP in August 1935 but had been sent to Poland several times and then served in the military, hardly made any political appearances and instead acted as an executive organ of the party.

1.1.3 Ducal House

1.1.3.1 Carl Eduard

Despite Carl Eduard's open and covert support for nationalist associations and the NSDAP, it took until May 1933 before the former Duke of Coburg actually brought himself to join the party. After the "seizure of power," he had confirmation that the National Socialists would indeed prevail. He himself had tried to contribute everything possible to this end. In December 1929, after Coburg had fought for and won the status of Germany's first Nazi city, Carl Eduard and Viktoria Adelheid ([28])heard Hitler speak again at an NSDAP election campaign event in the Hofbräu brewery restaurants. The ducal couple also invited Hitler to lunch at Callenberg Castle, where they presumably laid the foundations for far-reaching cooperation. Both the public expressions of sympathy for the Nazi movement and the attempts at unification between the *Stahlhelm,* DNVP, and NSDAP in the spirit of the "Harzburg Front" promoted the rise of the National Socialists. The promising option of regaining power with Hitler finally seemed within reach in 1932. In January 1932, Arno Graf von Kriegsheim, director of the Reichslandbund, spoke with Joseph Goebbels himself after exploratory talks with Carl Eduard and proposed the Coburg native for the office of Reich President. However, this appointment never seemed to be a real option, as Goebbels merely noted in his diary that Kriegsheim
"advocates for the Duke of Coburg. I admire this naivety."[29]

For the second round of the 1932 presidential election, Carl Eduard finally had a public appeal printed in the *Coburger Nationalzeitung newspaper*, in which he expressed his support for Hitler and declared it a "national duty" for everyone.

26 For Franz Dehler, see Chapter III2.2.4.2.

27 See Gerhard Derks' personnel file and Gerhard Derks' curriculum vitae dated October 20, 1938. BayHStA MInn 83363.

28 Viktoria Melitta herself did not join the NSDAP.

29 Goebbels, Joseph: "Diary entry from January 20, 1932." The Diaries of Joseph Goebbels Online. Berlin, Boston , 2012. https://www.degruyter.com/database/TJGO/entry/TJG–2088/html. (last accessed January 19, 2024).

The newspaper ran the headline "Duke Carl Eduard for Adolf Hitler!" on its front page. The former duke aggressively promoted the "people's community" when he announced:
"It is not about the leader of a party, but about the breakthrough of a movement that bridges all differences and will thus have the necessary strength for the tasks ahead."[30] As a result, 57% of Coburg's eligible voters voted for Hitler as Reich President in the second round of voting, compared to 37% in the Reich. However, the call to vote brought Carl Eduard into direct conflict with the Stahlhelm leadership, prompting Franz Seldte to initiate expulsion proceedings against him, which ultimately led to the Duke throwing his full support behind Adolf Hitler.[31] As can be seen from the few comments in his pocket diary, this step did not seem to have been taken out of mere opportunism, but was based on a deep conviction that Germany's resurgence could succeed with the National Socialists, and on genuine enthusiasm and devotion to Adolf Hitler. [32]

Carl Eduard's final commitment to the NSDAP

Carl Eduard submitted to Hitler's movement, as evidenced by a series of symbolic and performative acts whose significance can hardly be overestimated. When, following renovation work on Callenberg Castle in 1932, a large swastika was affixed to the top of its tower, the symbol of the Nazi movement was literally enthroned on the duke's residence. The wedding of his daughter Sibylla to the Swedish Prince Gustav Adolf in Coburg in 1932 resembled a party rally with aristocratic guests of honor, as members of the European high nobility gathered here under swastika flags and surrounded by SA and SS men. Despite numerous objections and diplomatic condemnation, Carl Eduard deliberately wanted to display his solidarity with the *Stahlhelm* and the NSDAP here. [33] In addition, Carl Eduard had literally joined the ranks of the NSDAP. On the eve of the Reichstag elections, the NSDAP held a patriotic rally in Coburg to mark the "Day of the Awakening Nation." The ducal family attended the event with representatives of the NSDAP and the *Stahlhelm* on the balcony of the town hall. Afterwards, the former monarch marched through the streets of the city in a torchlight procession of allegedly 1,000 people consisting of the SA, SS, Hitler Youth, *Stahlhelm,* veterans' associations, marksmen, and scouts. This image of all the national forces of Coburg standing together with the duke in their midst was intended to make the much-praised "people's community" tangible and perceptible for a moment. After the NSDAP's victory in the Reichstag elections and its seizure of power in Bavaria on March 9, 1933, Carl Eduard completed the symbolictakeover of the urban space by hoisting a swastika flag on the Veste Coburg, so that the Nazi symbol was displayed prominently at the town hall, the Ehrenburg, the district court, the district office, and the Volkshaus as central places of power.

30 *Coburger Nationalzeitung newspaper* dated March 23, 1932. Carl Eduard published the appeal together with Count Rüdiger von der Goltz and Admiral von Schröder, who were also members of the "Harzburg Front."

31 See Büschel: Herzog, p. 136.

32 See Carl Eduard's pocket calendars from 1932 to 1944. House archive of the Saxe-Coburg and Gotha Foundation. See also Büschel: Herzog, pp. 123–129, on Carl Eduard's pocket calendars.

33 See chapter IV1.1.2.1.

34 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, March 6, 1933.



Fig. 12: Carl Eduard on the balcony of the town hall

On site, Carl Eduard achieved a perfect and beneficial symbiosis with the Nazi regime. This was also to be celebrated publicly by the city administration itself. On the occasion of a festive meeting of the city council to celebrate the inauguration of the now state-sworn Mayor Schwede, the city decided to award Carl Eduard honorary citizenship of Coburg for his services. The Duke responded with a telegram of thanks: "Your notification of the award of honorary citizenship of my old residence of Coburg, the first National Socialist city in Germany, fills me with deep joy. It is an expression of the fact that the inner bond between the people of Coburg and myself has not been lost despite all the attempts of a happily overcome system, but has been deepened in the common struggle for the new Reich."([35]) On his 50th birthday, the city finally emphasized the importance of the duke, who "was the first of the then ruling princes to recognize the causes of our misery immediately after the shameful days of November 1918, especially in the racial question, and to immediately put himself at the service of the political struggle. He was also the first among the former ruling princes (...) to make an open commitment to National Socialism and always spoke out in favor of unity among the German people. He unreservedly integrated himself into the front of National Socialism and thus, as a former ruling prince, set a unique example and model for a great national community."([36])

35 *Coburg National Newspaper*, November 27, 1933.
36 See *Coburger Zeitung newspaper* dated July 19, 1934.

The awarding of the honorary citizenship certificate to Carl Eduard in a ceremonial session on June 9, 1935, in Coburg's town hall marked the culmination of the mutual declaration of loyalty between the National Socialist city administration and Carl Eduard. On this occasion, the former monarch donated a chain of office to the city, adorned with a swastika and German rock crystals, as "external sign of the common bond: the ducal house, the city council, and the people of Coburg."(37) He also emphasized his own role in the city: "Being the duke of a people is not a matter of formal law, but of innermost obligation. One is always or one is never." Once again, however, he reaffirmed his commitment to the
"people's community" and highlighted Coburg's success in the "Third Reich" as that of the population: "If my family has given the name Coburg prestige and renown throughout the centuries, it is to the credit of the people of Coburg that they have earned the name Coburg a worthy place in the Third Reich."[38]

However, as demonstrated by his continued practice of awarding orders primarily to distinguished National Socialists such as Hermann Göring, Joachim von Ribbentrop, and Hjalmar Schacht, the Duke's integration into the "people's community" had certain limits. His conviction that he could place his own orders alongside the National Socialist system of awards and that he himself was entitled to award orders even in the Nazi state indicates a considerable residual class consciousness that was supposed to be a thing of the past after 1933, as the Nazi leadership ultimately made clear to him.

Carl Eduard and day-to-day politics in Coburg

Even though Carl Eduard enjoyed being photographed alongside Coburg's mayors and councilors at formal gatherings in the town hall and on other special occasions, his actual day-to-day influence on the politics of the city or district does not appear to have been particularly significant. This was not least because the duke was appointed to higher positions within the regime, spent a lot of time in Berlin and traveling on behalf of the regime, and, as the notes in his pocket calendar show, was more interested in Reich and foreign policy than in local politics. It was only through his seat on the administrative committee of the Landestheater, which he had been offered in 1932, that he was directly involved in municipal affairs. However, as he only attended one or two administrative committee meetings a year, his office was more symbolic in nature.[40] His pocket calendars show occasional meetings, for example with Franz Schwede or the Coburg Stahlhelm leader Dr. Konrad Gerstenmeier, but these took place too rarely to suggest that he was involved in extensive advisory work for the city administration or its representatives. [41] When Carl Eduard was in

37 See *Bayerische Ostmark*, June 11, 1935.
38 Ibid.
39 See Büschel: Herzog, p. 122 f.
40 See *Coburger Zeitung newspaper* dated December 15, 1932, and minutes of the meeting of the administrative committee of the Landestheater. StACo Landestheater 3430.
41 Carl Eduard continued to meet with Schwede regularly even after his time in Coburg had ended. See entry in pocket calendar dated February 7, 1939. House archive of the Saxe-Coburg and Gotha Foundation.



Fig. 13: Church Councilor Weiß, Mayor Rehlein, Duke Carl Eduard, Mayor Dr. Schmidt, in the background Building Director Claaßen, Fire Chief Ringler, Traffic Director Weidmann, and Pastor Pistorius at the topping-out ceremony for the renovation of St. Moriz

Coburg, he mostly performed representative duties, accepted invitations to official events, or, in 1933, attended simple local group meetings.[42] After 1945, there were voices claiming that, for example, the Coburg ducal house always had to be taken into consideration when filling the position of mayor in Coburg. [43] However, no real evidence of this was found.

In fact, the duke stayed in Coburg and Callenberg primarily to recover from his extensive political activities.[44] In Berlin, which served as another base, Carl Eduard initially resided at the Hotel *Kaiserhof* and, from 1936, lived in the *Coburg House* in Berlin Wilmersdorf together with his cousin Josias zu Waldeck und Pyrmont, who opened up contacts for him to the top SS leadership. [45] Not only through this

42 See, for example, for the year 1933: entries in the pocket calendars dated May 16, December 10, and December 16, 1933. House archive of the Saxe-Coburg and Gotha Foundation. However, the pocket calendars mostly contain gaps when Carl Eduard was staying in Coburg and primarily document his trips abroad and time in Berlin.

43 See lawyer Friede to the Bavarian Administrative Court, May 15, 1956. StadtACo Tax Office, personnel file August Greim.

44 He also used Rheinhardsbrunn Castle in Thuringia for hunting trips and brought several foreign guests and Nazi officials there. See Büschel: Herzog, p. 132 f.

45 Josias, who had risen through the ranks of the SS as a party member since 1929, was involved in the murder of several SA men in the course of *the Röhm Putsch* and was eventually appointed people's judge and SS Obergruppenführer at the Buchenwald concentration camp. On Prince Josias, see Schmeling, Anke: Josias Erbprinz zu Waldeck und Pyrmont. Der politische Weg eines hohen SS-Führers (= Nationalsozialismus in Nordhessen – Schriften zur regionalen Zeitgeschichte, Heft 16). Kassel 1993.

Thanks to his family connections, Carl Eduard soon had extensive networks in the capital, which made him an important political instrument in Hitler's service. Carl Eduard had his own staff office in Berlin, first in Steglitz and later in Kreuzberg, which was headed by Dr. Ferdinand Ernst Nord and which the Duke expanded into his personal adjutant's office with far-reaching powers.[46]Here, the former monarch had contributed decisively to the "Gleichschaltung" (enforced conformity) of influential monarchist circles, particularly through his role as president of *the National Club* since 1932, thereby also making their capital accessible to the Nazi movement. In addition, Carl Eduard was able to realize his long-cherished goal through his role in *the Stahlhelm* and contribute to the merger or integration of *the Stahlhelm* into the SA, whereby he himself rose to the rank of SA-Obergruppenführer. (47)

In the service of the Nazi regime

Carl Eduard's work was therefore of central importance because he used his membership in many gentlemen's clubs, societies, and supervisory boardsto open up channels of communication that helped to circumvent the polycratic nature of the regime.[49] The National Club and the Society for the Study of Fascism in particular were important instruments in bringing together old and new elites during the phase of system stabilization.[50] Carl Eduard rendered his greatest service to the Nazi regime in his role as Hitler's pseudo-diplomat. As "representative of the Reich government abroad with special assignment," he undertook 39 trips abroad, including two world tours, without an official mandate from the Foreign Office. Thanks to his aristocratic background, he opened numerous doors for the Nazi regime, particularly in England, acting as a guarantor of Hitler's alleged desire for peace and harmlessness and appeasing foreign countries at a time when the Nazi regime had already begun murdering tens of thousands of inmates in mental hospitals and nursing homes and deporting Jews to extermination camps. In return, the Duke was elevated to a number of honorable and influential offices, such as President of the German-English Society,(51) the Association of German Front-Line Combatants' Associations, the International Front-Line Combatants of the German Red Cross, and Reich Commissioner for Voluntary Nursing, all of which were linked to significant foreign policy objectives. Primarily through the appointment of December 1, 1933, to

46 See Büschel: Herzog, pp. 130–133.

47 See ibid., pp. 133–137.

48 These included Wanderer Werke AG and Rhein-Metall-Borsig AG, Deutscher Ring Lebensversicherung AG, Deutsche Bank and Discontogesellschaft, as well as Deutsche Centralboden-Kredit AG and Europäische Güter- und Reisegepäckversicherung AG.

49 Polykratie refers to "a multitude of largely autonomous, competing rulers" who sometimes blocked each other during National Socialism and could have a paralyzing effect on the system. Hüttenberger, Peter: Nationalsozialistische Polykratie. In: Geschichte und Gesellschaft 2 (1976), pp. 417–442, here p. 436. See also chapter III3.1.4.

50 See Hachtmann: Neuen Staatlichkeit, p. 63; Schulz, Gerhard: Der "Nationale Klub von 1919" zu Berlin. Zum politischen Zerfall einer Gesellschaft. In: Jahrbuch für die Geschichte Mittel-und Ostdeutschlands 11 (1962), pp. 209–237 and Wichmann, Manfred: Die Gesellschaft zum Studium des Faschismus: Ein antidemokratisches Netzwerk zwischen Rechtskonservativismus und Nationalsozialismus. In: Bulletin für Faschismus-und Weltkriegsforschung 31/32 (2008), pp. 72–104.

51 See Wolz, Alexander: Duke Carl Eduard of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha and the German-English Society (1935–1939). In: Coburg History Journal 31 (2023), pp. 109–123.



Fig. 14: Duke Carl Eduard of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha with Adolf Hitler Berlin 1940, photographer: Heinrich Hofmann

Despite the internal curtailment of his power, Carl Eduard's influential position as president of the already "aligned" German Red Cross enabled him to help conceal from the outside world the crimes committed in concentration camps and in the murder of inmates of mental hospitals and nursing homes, in which the German Red Cross played a significant role.

Carl Eduard had ultimately helped bring Hitler to power and cultivate the reputation of the Nazi regime internationally. He tolerated and covered up Nazi crimes. By making himself an integral part of the new Nazi regime, he ultimately threw the weight associated with his person and the House of Coburg fully behind the party. At the same time, he tied his personal fate, his reputation, his standing, and his lifestyle so closely and directly to Nazi rule that he had to contribute to its preservation until the very end. On the one hand, this led to a career within the regime that sufficiently fed his craving for recognition and his need for participation, allowing him to move in the corridors of power in Nazi Germany and abroad and enabling him to continue to lead a representative lifestyle and enjoy aristocratic privileges, as he had done since 1918.centers of power in Nazi Germany and abroad, and allowed him to continue to lead a representative lifestyle and enjoy aristocratic privileges, which had hardly been possible between 1918 and 1933. On the other hand, he also completed the myth of Coburg as the chosen city, as it had risen to new greatness together with its duke, entirely in the tradition of Ernst II. Instead of causing his loyal subordinates, who were imbued with expectations of leadership, to feel conflicted by taking a stand against the regime, he made it easy for them to assimilate into Nazi rule.

52 See Büschel: Herzog, pp. 138–232, Urbach, Karina: Hitler's Secret Helpers. The Nobility in the Service of Power. Darmstadt 2016, pp. 204–281 and Sandner: Herzog.

Carl Eduard's after the collapse of the Nazi regime

After the end of the war, Carl Eduard was not arrested by the US military government until June 1945. However, an interrogation by an American captain had already taken place on April 11, during which the duke's loyal attitude toward Hitler could not be concealed, even in the midst of collapse. A transcript of the conversation between the *Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force (*SHAEF) and the British Embassy stated:

> "Quotes DUKE as thinking HITLER did wonderful job in GERMANY. Protested removal of great stores of food from castle for distribution among people of COBURG. Announced that if he were head of the new German state, he would choose co-workers from the Nazi party. His postwar program is that it would be a crime to force GERMANY to pay in kind or in labor for reparations. Feels that the United Nations should furnish GERMANY with raw materials to become a great nation again and that no one in GERMANY is guilty of any war crimes."(53)

Carl Eduard's Coburg possessions were subsequently confiscated and he himself was housed in various camps, including the Moosburg and Ludwigsburg internment camps, until his release in December 1946. The former monarch also had to answer to the Coburg Denazification Court, which declared him to be a minor offender on June 15, 1948, but sentenced him to a fine of DM 2,000 as a follower. The military government then had the verdict overturned by the Court of Cassation. The judgment of the Ansbach Main Chamber, which classified him as a minor offender on March 1, 1949, sentenced him to six months' probation, 18 months of special labor to be served through internment, and a one-time payment of

The decision to impose a fine of DM 15,000 on the Reparations Fund was contested by both the plaintiff and the defendant. [54]On August 3, 1949, the Bamberg Appeals Chamber again classified him as a follower with a penalty of DM 2,000.After the Court of Cassation intervened again in 1950, the Munich Appeals Chamber finally classified him as a minor offender with a probationary period and sentenced him to pay [5],000 DM in compensation.

In addition to numerous Persilscheine (certificates of denazification) for a large number of personalities who had been part of Carl Eduard's networks, a group of 50 Coburg citizens, including the two clergymen Karl Pistorius and Curt Weiß and the city administrator Alfred Sauerteig, had also appealed to the Berufungskammer (appeals chamber) on behalf of the duke., affirming the unconditional loyalty of the Coburg population to the ducal family and explaining that the Duke had held his offices in the NSDAP only in an honorary capacity.[57] Apart from the widow of the late Franz

53 Secret Shaef Outgoing Massage to US Embassy London, May 4, 1945. Arolsen Archives 06030101 033.285. (Emphasis in the original). The Duke's protest against distributing food stored at the Veste to his Coburg *subjects* is also significant.

54 See ruling of the Ansbach Main Chamber of March 1, 1949. StACo Denazification Chamber Coburg City S1.

55 See ruling of the Bamberg Appeals Chamber dated August 3, 1949. StACo Denazification Chamber Coburg City S1.

56 See ruling of the Munich Appeals Chamber, Nuremberg External Senate, June 6, 1950. StACo Denazification Chamber Coburg City S1.

57 See collected Coburg documents to the Munich Appeals Chamber, May 26, 1950. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg City S1.

Klinglers, Ida Klingler, there were hardly any Coburg residents who wanted to speak out against the Duke, which had a decisive influence on the denazification proceedings, which concluded that the Duke had not acted in the interests of the Nazi movement, but rather out of humanitarian concerns.

1.1.3.2 Ferdinand of Bulgaria

In contrast to Carl Eduard, Ferdinand of Bulgaria did not allow himself to be exploited to the same extent for propaganda purposes and the regime as such after 1933. He accepted invitations to major Nazi events far less frequently. When he did appear in public with the NSDAP as a guest of honor, as at the consecration of the Franz Schwede bell in September 1933, the NSDAP immediately used the images of Ferdinand's appearance and a personal conversation with Schwede to promote the "people's community" image.[59] The former tsar's relationship to National Socialism seemed to be ambivalent, which was evident time and again, at least in small gestures. On the one hand, Ferdinand's correspondence, for example in his letters to the city leaders at Christmas, New Year's, or his birthday, did not include the closing formula "Heil Hitler" commonly used in the "Third Reich."[60] On the other hand, in 1933, for example, he provided the full-time SS leader Mazuw, who was known for his particular brutality towards opponents of the regime and Jewish citizens of Coburg, with a car to make it easier for him to travel around his extensive area of responsibility[61] and continued to contribute funds to the city administration even after 1933. In addition to donations to his beloved state theater and municipal construction projects, he also provided funds to the municipal welfare system, repeatedly recommending individuals for welfare benefits himself.(62)

Ultimately, little changed in his position as an outsider in the midst of Nazi Coburg. Ferdinand also maintained his friendship with his former Jewish doctor, Franz Colmers, who had since emigrated to the US, through correspondence until his death.[63] His rather distant attitude toward the Nazi city administration also became clear when they wanted to award him honorary citizenship on his 80th birthday on February 26, 1941, and had to request an exemption from the Gau leadership, the Reich Ministry of the Interior, and finally Hitler himself because Ferdinand was a foreigner.[64] Although the ex-tsar gratefully accepted the honor from the city, he dictated his own rules. First, the award ceremony could only take place more than a year after Ferdinand's actual birthday.

58 See affidavit by Ida Klingler dated February 10, 1948, and ruling by the Munich Appeals Chamber, Nuremberg External Senate, dated June 6, 1950. StACo Denazification Chamber Coburg City S1.

59 See Walter: Coburg, pp. 35, 37. See also Chapter IV1.1.1.2.

60 While Ferdinand's adjutant general Gantchew ended his correspondence with "German greetings," Ferdinand's correspondence ended with only "warm regards" or "friendly regards." See Stadt-ACo A 5764. Unlike Ferdinand, General Gantchev also took part in SA marches together with Carl Eduard. See *Bayerische Ostmark*, January 7, 1935.

61 See *Coburger Zeitung*, November 24, 1933.

62 See Chapter IV1.2.1.2 and various letters from Ferdinand of Bulgaria to the Coburg city administration. StadtACo A 15253.

63 See Bartl: Beziehungsgeschichte, pp. 146–148.

64 See the mayor to the party representative Dr. Müller, August 29, 1940, and the Reich Ministry of the Interior to the State Ministry of the Interior in Munich, January 23, 1941. StadtACo A 5764.

as he was initially away on a trip and subsequently found it difficult to find a suitable date. In addition, Ferdinand refused to attend a large award ceremony at the town hall organized by the National Socialist Party, for which a complete program of ceremonies had already been drawn up. Instead, he received a delegation from the city consisting of Mayor Greim, Mayor Rehlein, and councilors and deputies August Gerspacher, Ernst Bernhard, Georg Linke, and Wilhelm Schulz on
May 16, 1942, in his palace. Here, in gratitude for his financial contributions to the State Theater, the Natural History Museum, the construction of the Trade and Commerce School, and the gate tower of the Veste, the Bulgarian Tower, he was presented with an artistically designed letter of honorary citizenship. In his acceptance speech, Ferdinand said that he appreciated the honor all the more "because it is taking place at such a historically memorable time and has only been realized under the government of the Third Reich"([65]) and spent an hour discussing Coburg affairs with his guests. However, the former tsar's independence had deprived the local Nazi regime of an opportunity for publicity that would have been invaluable for strengthening the "home front" after the outbreak of World War II.([66])

From 1941 onwards, despite occasional visits to Coburg, Ferdinand of Bulgaria spent most of his time at Svätý Antol Castle in Slovakia, but in November 1944, as a result of the war, he was forced to return to Coburg, where he lived until his death on September 10, 1948.

1.1.4 Protestant Church

The Protestant Church in the Coburg area played a decisive role in permeating society with völkisch and National Socialist ideology. Even during the Weimar Republic, many pastors in the Coburg deanery had openly expressed völkisch and anti-Semitic ideas. In the Nazi state, the recent unification with the Bavarian regional church and the associated concerns about separation movements within the Coburg deanery had a particular impact on the relationship between the NSDAP and the clergy. The city thus set itself apart from its Franconian surroundings. After 1933, the tradition of a nationalist orientation among many clergymen in the Coburg deanery, founded not least by Helmut Johnsen, continued and intensified. With 15 pastors who had joined the NSDAP by 1937, the deanery ranked first in Upper Franconia in terms of numbers. Overall, 38% of the pastors in the Coburg deanery were NSDAP members, which placed it slightly behind the Bayreuth deanery. Hans Schemm's church-friendly policy with the slogan "Our religion is Christ; our politics is Germany" played a significant role in the high mobilization of the NSDAP in church circles in Upper Franconia.[68]

65 Memo from Mayor Greim, June 10, 1942. StadtACo A 5764.
66 See ibid.; agreement by Mayor Greim on the awarding of honorary citizenship to Ferdinand of Bulgaria on May 16, 1942. StadtACo A 5764 and Schaller: Ferdinand I, pp. 346–348.
67 The discrepancy between the two figures can be explained by the high degree of organization and the larger number of pastors in the Coburg area as a whole. Cf. Mensing, Björn: Pastors and National Socialism. History of an entanglement using the example of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria. Göttingen 1998, pp. 152, 182.
68 See ibid., pp. 119, 180, and Kittel: Province, p. 624.

The Coburg deanery therefore made a relatively smooth transition to the "Third Reich." National Socialist terminology was integrated into sermons, and Hitler was praised as the savior of society from secularization. Pastors seemingly willingly made themselves available for National Socialist propaganda, and in return, political leaders integrated themselves into parish life.[69] The Protestant parish magazine for the Coburg region, *Heimatglocken,* celebrated the union of the church and National Socialism by printing excerpts from *Mein Kampf*.[70] The NSDAP succeeded in exerting direct influence on internal church personnel policy without triggering any visible resistance. In the summer of 1933, Hans Schemm had made it clear that he wanted the second parish position in St. Moriz to be filled by a staunch National Socialist pastor. Although Karl Pistorius, the holder of the third parish position, had been earmarked for this, Hans Hoffmann, who had previously worked in Burk in Middle Franconia and had joined the NSDAP before 1931, was transferred to Coburg. Since the National Socialists had also infiltrated and "brought into line" the church council in Coburg in 1933, the political encroachment on church affairs was not resisted.[71] In addition there was already a tradition of state intervention in church affairs in Coburg, established by the Evangelical Lutheran state church that existed until 1918, in which the duke acted as head of the church. Loyalty to the state and the intertwining of spiritual and political issues were clearly pronounced here. (72)

Curt Weiß, born in Sonneberg, Thuringia, in 1886, had a decisive influence on realizing the symbiosis of National Socialism and Protestantism as historical providence in the Coburg deanery. Influenced by liberal Jena theology, he took up a parish post in Coburg in 1918 and was promoted to dean in 1928. In 1933, Weiß was appointed to the regional synod and in 1935 to the church council. Although Weiß himself did not join the NSDAP, after 1933 he initially made himself available to the party and offered his full cooperation, which also tolerated the first encroachments on church affairs.[73]However when the NSDAP's anti-church stance became increasingly apparent after its successful consolidation, he felt compelled to draw the attention of party representatives to the great promise of the "people's community" and to stand up for harassed pastors within his deanery. After the Wiesenfeld pastor Werner Prückhauer was severely restricted in his official duties by the local mayor and local group leader Willi Puff, and an unauthorized Bible study was broken up with the help of a rigorous police force, Weiß called in the district office as well as the state church council, the Reich Church Committee, and the Reich Church Ministry. After a short-term success, partly due to the clear support of Pastor Prückhauer's parishioners, Weiß ultimately had to bow to

69 See, for example, Dean Weiß's sermon on the consecration of the Franz Schwede bell and the holding of the Luther Days in Chapter IV1.1.2.1.

70 See Heimatglocken from July 30, 1933. LAELKB Nuremberg. Parish newsletters, Coburger Heimatglocken.

71 In addition to pastors and vicars, this group included Franz Heimberger, Otto Schilling, Ernst Bernhard, Karl Güntzel, and Ernst Kuhn, among others, and was thus clearly dominated by Nazis. See city directories from 1931 and 1934.

72 See Weber: Handlungsspielräume, pp. 146–151, 420.

73 See ibid. pp. 141–143, 491.

anti-church legislation of the NSDAP. [74] As with the internal church disputes in Protestantism, which would later be referred to as *the Kirchenkampf (church struggle)*, the primary issue was not the compatibility of National Socialism and the Christian faith, but ultimately questions of power.

Questions of power in the Protestant Church

After 1933, these divisions split the entire Protestant Church, had to be resolved locally, and required all pastors and congregations to take a position. The "German Christians" who formed within the Protestant Church and were willing to adapt Protestantism unreservedly to National Socialist ideology aimed to realign the entire church apparatus. Theologicaly, this was to be achieved by purging Christian doctrine of Jewish elements such as the Old Testament and the theology of Paul, or by proclaiming a heroic Jesus instead of the crucified one. With the introduction of the "Aryan clause" for church offices and the creation of a Reich Church, the German Evangelical Church (DEK), into which all regional churches were to be incorporated, the state took control of the church. In response, the so-called Emergency League of Pastors was formed, which became the foundation of a "Confessing Church" that insisted on the church's autonomy. In this spirit, the Bavarian regional bishop Hans Meiser and his Württemberg counterpart Theophil Wurm refused to allow the regional churches to be forcibly incorporated into the DEK and were subsequently removed from office and placed under house arrest in October 1934.

From Coburg, the ducal house had made a final attempt at mediation in the manner of a state church, which Dean Weiß had pinned great hopes on. He wrote to Senior Church Councilor Prieser:

> "I am particularly pleased that the Veste Coburg was once again able to intervene actively and contribute to the resolution of the confused ecclesiastical situation. On January 4, we managed to get our Duchess to give me a telegram for Hindenburg, which, as I know from Hindenburg's reply, prompted him to summon the Reich Bishop and thus ultimately led to the willingness of the state authorities to hear the church leaders in order to clarify the situation. The Duke was also able to mediate in Berlin."(76)

While Meiser's arrest now triggered a wave of protest, particularly in Protestant Franconia, with memorial services, petitions, letters of protest, and the dispatch of

74 See Prückhauer, Werner: Kirchenkampf im Coburger Land (Church Struggle in the Coburg Region). Memories of the communities of Meeder and Wiesenfeld 1933–1945. Meeder 1992, pp. 20–27 and Weber: Handlungsspielräume (Scope for Action), pp. 215–222.

75 See Baier, Helmut: Die Deutschen Christen Bayerns im Rahmen des bayerischen Kirchenkampfes (= Individual works from the church history of Bavaria, volume 46). Nuremberg 1968; Baier, Helmut; Henn, Ernst: Chronology of the Bavarian Church Struggle 1933–1945 (= Individual Works from the Church History of Bavaria, Volume 47). Nuremberg 1969; Baier, Helmut: Regional Bishop Meiser and his Environment. Networks of Church Leadership. In: Hamm, Bernd; Oelke, Harry; Schneider-Ludorff, Gury (eds.): Spielräume des Handelns und der Erinnerung. Die Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in Bayern und der Nationalsozialismus (= Arbeiten zur kirchlichen Zeitgeschichte, Series B : Darstellungen, Volume 50). Göttingen 2010,
pp. 99–119 and Mensing: Pastor.

76 Dean Weiß to Senior Church Councilor Prieser, February 5, 1934. LAELKB Bavarian Deanery Coburg 39.

Following delegations to Munich, the situation in the Coburg deanery turned out somewhat differently. Both Dean Weiß and the holders of the fourth and fifth parishes, Georg Reichenbacher and Hans Rößler, held protest services in which they declared their allegiance to the Bavarian regional bishop. (77) The concern about a split among the Coburg pastors and congregations, as well as about new separation movements, greatly inhibited Dean Weiß in particular. Weiß, himself a member of *the National Socialist Evangelical Pastors' Association,* took a middle position, appearing to support a Reich Church, but rejecting the coercion and treatment of Hans Meiser in the integration of the Bavarian regional church. He wrote to the senior church councilor Karl Prieser:

> "The situation in Coburg is catastrophic. It is becoming abundantly clear that 14 years of membership in the Bavarian church, as beneficial as they have been in awakening and revitalizing church life in the Coburg congregations, have not been enough to make Coburg a member of the regional church. Communities that are uncommitted, alien to the true nature of the church, and now aligned with the Reich Church as well as the Bavarian Church, which are entirely under political command, are completely baffled by the latest developments in church affairs, and the laboriously suppressed battle cry: 'Hie Coburg-hie Bayern' (Here Coburg-here Bavaria) resounds powerfully throughout the land."(79)

Within the deanery, eleven of the 35 pastors and candidates were in favor of the "German Christians" and the establishment of a Reich Church, thirteen positioned themselves behind Bishop Meiser, and another eleven, mostly native Coburgers, "who, with regard to our congregations, felt they had to stay away from the aggressive struggle of the Confessional Front and stand ready for action."[80] With regard to the Coburg pastors themselves Hans Hoffmann had loyally supported the Reich Church and was accordingly temporarily appointed deputy senior church councilor in Munich. Karl Pistorius also shared his view, whereas the fifth Coburg pastor, Hans Rößler, aligned himself with the Confessional Front.[82] The lack of ties between the Coburg pastors and the Munich church leadership was particularly noticeable in this regard. Overall, the protest movement against Meiser's dismissal in the Coburg deanery did not achieve the same level of mobilization among the population as in the rest of Franconia. The integration of the regional church was widely seen as the will of the Nazi state and a necessity for "Gleichschaltung" (enforced conformity) and was accepted in the tradition of the state church. The liberal theological influence and the National Socialist penetration of the congregations also contributed to this. (83)

77 See police memo dated October 14 and 21, 1934. StadtACo A 8424.
78 See Dean Weiß to the Evangelical Lutheran Regional Church Council, December 3, 1934. LAELKB Bavarian Deanery Coburg 39.
79 Dean Weiß to the Senior Church Council Prieser, October 19, 1934. LAELKB Bavarian Deanery Coburg 39.
80 Ibid.
81 The Coburg clergy consisted of Dean Curt Weiß, Hans Hoffmann, Karl Pistorius, Georg Reichenbacher, and Hans Rößler, as well as the city vicar Erwin Grell.
82 See Dean Weiß to Senior Church Councilor Prieser, October 19, 1934. LAELKB Bavarian Deanery Coburg 39.
83 See Report by the Criminal Investigation Department and SS on the surveillance of churches, October 15, 1934. StABa District leadership of the NSDAP M 33 501 and Weber: Handlungsspielräume, p. 248 f.

Although Hitler decided at the end of October 1934 to reinstate Meiser and Wurm and declare the Reich Church's interference in Bavarian affairs unlawful, the conflict continued to smolder locally. Many of the pastors who had broken ranks, including Karl Pistorius and Hans Hoffmann, declared their allegiance to the Bavarian regional church after the church dispute had been settled. A Coburg pastors' conference at the end of 1935 decided to follow Meiser's line, to cooperate with the Reich Church, and to reject the North German brother councils of the "Confessing Church."([84])

"German Christians" and "German Faith Movement"

The Coburg parish group of the "German Christians," which was founded in June 1935 without the involvement of the Coburg clergy on the initiative of Coburg lawyer and senior government official Dr. Carl Wiegand, initially met with no resistance, partly because of its modest size, even though measures taken by the dean to "reintegrate" the "German Christians" failed. Their demands for shared use of St. Maurice's Church failed not least because of Meiser's decree that such use should not be approved by the "German Christians" in Bavaria, which Dean Weiß also supported. However, a loophole had opened up in the form of the Coburg Castle Church, which was owned by the Coburg State Foundation and over which the district administrator Franz Dehler had authority as chairman. Despite the objections of Dean Weiß, who lodged appeals with the State Foundation, the State Church Council, and the ducal couple, Dehler got his way. He made the castle church the new home of the "German Christians," who were primarily recruited from Unterlauter, Neuses, Ebersdorf, and Seidmannsdorf, whose pastors Adolf Siegel, Friedrich Kroll, Friedrich Lochner, and Friedrich Meyer had joined the DC, and which had a particularly large number of older female members. In the city of Coburg, the "German Christians" had about 110 members and therefore remained a marginal phenomenon, which, after joining the Thuringian "German Christians," became primarily anti-Semitic and radicalized.([85])

Dean Weiß wanted to take a much more concrete approach to combating the "German Faith Movement" of Tübingen professor Jakob Wilhelm Hauer in Coburg, which sought to establish itself as a new third religion and was characterized by a radically anti-Christian, anti-church, and anti-Semitic stance.A local group had been founded in Coburg in July 1934, initially under the leadership of Wolfgang Freiherr von Gersdorff. Since its foundation, the local group had had a disproportionately high proportion of

84 See Dean Weiß to Oberkirchenrat Prieser, December 11, 1935. LAELKB Bavarian Deanery Coburg 39 and Weber: Handlungsspielräume, p. 267 f.

85 See Franz Dehler to Dean Weiß, May 24, 1937; Dean Weiß to Franz Dehler, May 27, 1937; Franz Dehler to Dean Weiß, May 31, 1937. LAELKB Bavarian Deanery Coburg 39; Dean Weiß to the Regional Church Council, June 2 and 17, 1937; Dean Weiß to Court Marshal von Schack, June 4, 1937; State Church Council to Dean Weiß, October 6, 1937.LAELKB Bavarian Deanery Coburg 41 and Dean Weiß to the State Church Council, September 25, 1937.LAELKB Bavarian Deanery Coburg 40. Later, Willi Döbrich from Neustadt was also counted among the DC pastors. For disputes between Dean Weiß and Pastor Pürckhauer with Friedrich Lochner, see Prückhauer: Kirchenkampf und Weber: Handlungsspielräume, pp. 309–312.

86 As an amalgamation of various anti-church and anti-Christian associations, the "German Faith Movement" positioned itself as a nationalist and "Aryan" alternative to the Christian faith, encouraging its members to leave the church and striving to be placed on an equal footing with the Christian denominations.

teachers who also acted as speakers and agitators. [87] In response, Dean Weiß called for the establishment of a confessional community in Coburg in the spring of 1935, which was joined by a total of about 4,000 members, or 6% of the parishioners of the Coburg deanery. It was intended to be a defensive movement against the German Believers, but without speaking out against the efforts to bring about "Gleichschaltung" and create a Reich Church.([88]) Partly due to the minor importance of the
"German Christians" within the deanery, the influx into the Confessional Community remained equally low.

Overall, the behavior of the Protestant Church during National Socialism was primarily characterized by a willingness to cooperate, except when the state rigorously interfered in church affairs. The population of Coburg, which had always been considered distant from the church, behaved accordingly during the Third Reich. Political leaders of the NSDAP generally stayed out of the church dispute in Coburg, but their relationship with the church was mostly tense.[89] Dean Weiß was optimistic in December 1935 after some "leading gentlemen" of the party had shown themselves to be friendly, he was able to "speak Christian" at a local group meeting, and the congregation's participation as collectors on "National Solidarity Day" had made an impression on the party.[90] Despite all this, the Protestant Church was viewed critically and closely monitored, regardless of its willingness to cooperate. District Administrator Franz Dehler, who was entrusted with many church matters in the deanery, often took an anti-church stance and repeatedly opposed Dean Weiß. Thus, the role of the Protestant Church within the Coburg domain was massively weakened, not least by the protracted internal church disputes. The influence of the churches declined noticeably, partly because a number of party representatives were critical of the pastors and even left the church themselves.

1.1.5 Economy

The most relevant cross-sector organization representing the interests of commercial enterprises in Coburg was its own Chamber of Industry and Commerce, which was established in 1896 as the Chamber of Commerce for the Duchy of Coburg and whose right to exist was also guaranteed by the State Treaty of 1920. When Coburg was united with Bavaria, it did not merge with the Upper Franconian Chamber of Commerce in Bayreuth, so that Coburg initially retained its own self-governing economic organization in the form of a "mini chamber."([91]) The chamber, which

87 See bi-monthly report dated August 15, 1934. StadtACo A 6588 II. On the dispute with German nationalist teachers, see Weber: Handlungsspielräume, pp. 343–354. A dispute with a teacher at the Lutheran school also arose in Coburg in connection with the German nationalist Ludendorff movement. See ibid., pp. 357–359.

88 See Dean Weiß to the Regional Church Council, May 17, 1935. LAELKB Bavarian Deanery Coburg 91 and Confessional Community Coburg to the Police Office, July 4, 1935. StadtACo A 8424.

89 See Dean Weiß to the Regional Church Council, September 25, 1937. LAELKB Bavarian Deanery Coburg 40.

90 See Dean Weiß to the Senior Church Council Prieser, December 11, 1935. LAELKB Bavarian Deanery Coburg 39.

91 See Dr. Fritz Meyer: The circumstances of the Coburg Chamber of Industry and Commerce as an example of a small chamber, October 4, 1940. BA R 3101 9455 IHK Coburg.

Before 1933, it had been critical of Weimar's economic and social policies and had spoken out strongly against the Young Plan, for example, but after 1933 it ultimately served as a transmission belt for the Nazi state in local businesses.[92] After 1933, the Coburg Chamber of Industry and Commerce was also brought into line, among other things through the at least formal introduction of the "Führer principle" and with the help of a special commissioner, the Coburg publisher Dr. Hans Müller. From 1934 onwards, the chambers were subject to the supervision of the Reich Minister of Economics, who was responsible for appointing new chamber presidents. The previous chairmen of the chamber, Hans Leh and Dr. Hans Müller, who had been elected in May 1933, were replaced by a president. The president, in turn, was able to appoint the chamber members, who now only acted as an advisory board. The office was assigned to Max Brose, co-owner of *Max Brose G Co.*, who was born on January 4, 1884, in Osnabrück and had founded the *Max Brose* company in Berlin in 1908. After serving as a reserve officer in World War I, Brose expanded the *Max Brose G Co.* company in Coburg from 1919 onwards together with his business partner, the chemist Ernst Jühling.[93] Brose had been a member of the Coburg Chamber of Commerce since 1926. He was initially a member of the DVP and NLLP, then turned to the DNVP and joined the NSDAP, backdated to May 1, 1933, when he was also elected second chairman of the chamber.[94] Vice President of the Chamber of Industry and Commerce Fritz Linke, party member since 1931, brother of Schwede's confidant Georg Linke and new director of the "Aryanized" company *C. Großmann AG*,[95] and Wilhelm Kühnhold, owner of a company of the same name for central heating systems, who had already joined the NSDAP in 1929 and had been a member of the SS since 1932. [96] This marked a generational change at the top of the chamber from the founding generation of old dignitaries to the "front generation," which was primarily committed to economic efficiency.[97] With the departure of the Jewish commercial councilor and financial administrator Julius Mai and the arrival of well-known National Socialist businessmen such as Karl Hartung, the chamber was reorganized in line with the Nazi system.[98] Within the "Third Reich," the chambers were closed

92 See IHK Coburg: The 1930 financial year. BWA K6/846.

93 See Schöllgen, Gregor: Brose. A German family business 1908–2008. Berlin 2008, pp. 9, 13, 30–35.

94 See Bavarian State Gazette of June 1, 1933.

95 See denazification file of Fritz Linke. StACo Denazification Chamber Coburg City L 372. Linke was initially classified on August 2, 1948, in Group II of the incriminated, but was reclassified on appeal on March 10, 1950, by the Main Chamber in Nuremberg in the group of followers.

96 See Wilhelm Kühnhold's denazification file. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg City K 309. Kühnhold was classified as a minor offender by the denazification tribunal on June 4, 1948.

97 See Stremmel, Ralf: Kammern der gewerblichen Wirtschaft im „Dritten Reich" (Chambers of Commerce in the Third Reich). General developments and the case study of Westfalen-Lippe (= Untersuchungen zur Wirtschafts-, Sozial- und Technikgeschichte, vol. 25). Dortmund/Münster 2005, pp. 232–290. It is unclear exactly when Max Brose became president of the Chamber of Industry and Commerce. The information ranges from 1933 to 1935. In his registration form for the denazification proceedings, Max Brose himself states the year 1933. See registration form Max Brose. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg City B 312. In the city's 1934 address book, however, he is still listed as deputy chairman. For Max Brose, see Chapter V2; for Fritz Linke, see Chapter IV3.2.2.1.

98 See membership lists of the advisory board of the Coburg Chamber of Industry and Commerce. BA R 3101 9455 9456 IHK Coburg. For information on chambers of industry and commerce in *the Third Reich*, see Stremmel: Kammern. For information on Bavarian chambers of industry and commerce, see Moser, Eva: Industrie- und Handelskammern (IHK). In: Historisches Lexikon Bayerns. URL: http://www. historisches-lexikon-bayerns.de/Lexikon/Industrie-_und_Handelskammern_(IHK) (last accessed on March 24, 2022) and Will, Martin: Selbstverwaltung der Wirtschaft. Recht und Geschichte der Selbstverwaltung in den Industrie- und Handelskammern, Handwerksinnungen, Kreishandwerkerschaften, Handwerkskammern

at the expense of their self-governing powers, they were given more responsibility in their wide range of tasks, ultimately contributing as hubs to the functionality of the Nazi regime and its objectives.[99]

In addition to the Coburg Chamber of Industry and Commerce, the 1920 state treaty also established a separate Chamber of Crafts, which functioned as one of nine Bavarian chambers. Mayor Wilhelm Rehlein took over as its chairman, leading the chamber with a partially replaced board of directors. It was "brought into line" by the "Law on the Provisional Structure of German Crafts" of November 29, 1933, and the "Law on the Preparation of the Organic Structure of the German Economy" of February 27, 1934 and reorganized according to the "Führer principle." In addition, 51 compulsory guilds for various branches of crafts, 28 of them in Coburg, and four district craftsmen's associations, whose chairmen were appointed by Rehlein, were established for the organizational structure of the crafts. [100]

1.1.6 Military

Coburg's resurgence as a garrison town in 1934 following the incorporation of Neuses, Cortendorf, Ketschendorf, and Wüstenahorn added another significant power factor to the urban sphere of influence.[101] In addition to the opportunity to create jobs, the revival of the garrison location and the stationing of Wehrmacht units also represented a boost in purchasing power for the ailing economy in Coburg and its surrounding area. The new barracks expanded the urban area and enhanced its value. ([102])At the same time, the stationing of troops paved the way for a renewed militarization of everyday life and restored another element of the "good old days," as military parades, which had been part of everyday life until 1918, once again became a feature of the urban landscape.[103] The troops also impressively embodied the fulfilled promise of remilitarization and radiated an aspiring modernity that the regime wanted to claim for itself.

Coburg as a garrison town

In October 1934, the II Battalion of Infantry Regiment 42 Bayreuth was established in Coburg within Military District VII. For camouflage purposes, it still bore its old name and was not until October 1936 that it was given the number 95 again, in the tradition of the Royal Prussian 6th Thuringian Infantry Regiment No. 95.[104] Commander of the

and Chambers of Agriculture. Tübingen 2010. The influence of *the Bavarian Chamber of Commerce*, established in 1934 for Bavaria on the right bank of the Rhine, remained somewhat limited politically in the Gau Bayerische Ostmark, as political and economic leadership were separate here.

99 See Stremmel: Kammern, p. 579 f.

100 Rehlein thus replaced Wilhelm Feyler, who henceforth served as his deputy. For the Coburg Chamber of Crafts, see Knoblich, Peter: Die Handwerkskammer Coburg im Wandel der Zeiten (1921 bis 2004). Bayreuth 2007. On the chambers of crafts under National Socialism, see Elkar, Rainer S.: Handwerkskammern (bis 1945). In: Historisches Lexikon Bayerns. URL: http://www.historisches-lexikon-bayerns.de/Lexikon/Handwerkskammern_(bis_1945) (last accessed on March 24, 2023).

101 For information on incorporations, see Chapter III1.3.1.

102 For information on the barracks buildings, see Chapter III1.3.2.

103 See, for example, *Bayerische Ostmark* from April 20 and 21, 1937.

104 See *Bayerische Ostmark* of October 6, 1934.



Fig. 15: Reception of MG Batl. 6 at Coburg Market Square in 1939, postcard

Infantry Battalion 95 and the senior officer was initially Lieutenant Colonel Otto Strasser. The regiment was initially housed in the armoury in Herrengasse and later in the Von Berg and Passchendaele barracks. It was not until October 1937 that a corresponding regimental staff was established under the command of Colonel Siegmund Freiherr von Schacky.[105]

On October 15, 1936, thanks to the efforts of Mayor Dr. Schmidt, a further expansion of the garrison was initiated, resulting in the addition of the 800-strong MG Battalion 6 from Bamberg, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Xaver Adelhoch, to the Coburg garrison. From then on, the location had two branches of the armed forces, with the motorized battalion and its light machine guns representing one of the Wehrmacht's most modern special units. Their move into the newly built Hindenburg Barracks significantly enhanced the status of the Coburg garrison location.[106] By holding soldiers' balls in the hall of the Hofbräu restaurants, in the Wöhner Neuses und Kummer and Martin Cortendorf restaurants, the population and the members of the Wehrmacht were to get to know each other and contribute to the idea of a "people's army" by establishing a connection between the locals and the soldiers. Free beer for the soldiers and the extension of closing time by the mayor were intended to do the rest. ([107])The city, the party, and the Wehrmacht pledged their loyalty as a "people's community" when the battalion moved into Coburg.

105 See *Bayerische Ostmark*, October 13, 1937. In September 1939, Colonel Ernst Schnarrenberger took over this position.

106 See *Bayerische Ostmark*, October 15, 1936.

107 See *Bayerische Ostmark*, October 14 and 15, 1936. In this context, the *Bayerische Ostmark* wrote: "Smiling faces everywhere, especially among the girls of Coburg!" *Bayerische Ostmark*, October 16, 1936.

stand together.[108] In addition, dance teas, Christmas parties, and company celebrations were regularly organized by the senior officer in Coburg, to which the mayors and city councilors were always invited in order to forge close ties between the administration and district leadership and the garrison.[109] Carl Eduard also sought to emphasize the military tradition of the city and the bond between the old and new armies by attending the garrison's events and ceremonies.[110] A decree amending the division of military districts and replacement districts, which came into force in 1936, also resulted in the establishment of a Coburg military district command with the military registration offices in Coburg, Lichtenfels, and Sonneberg. [111]

Members of the old army

It was not only the new Wehrmacht that was prominently represented in Coburg by the two battalions. Members of the old army also formed influential networks in the Vestestadt, particularly through Carl Eduard, Kyrill Romanow, and Ferdinand of Bulgaria. Retired Major General Ewald von Massow, born on April 17, 1869, in Belgrade, lived in the guest house of the Veste Coburg between 1928 and 1931. Here, according to his own statements, he met Adolf Hitler personally in 1929 and subsequently resigned from the *Stahlhelm*.[113] Massow had played a key role in the formation and development of the völkisch camp, joined the NSDAP in August 1930, and was actively involved in the party's election campaigns in Coburg, among other things as a district speaker for the NSDAP and an SS man.[114]He held NSDAP election rallies together with Hermann Es-ser in Coburg and attempted to influence Erich Unverfähr during the "Gleichschaltung" (enforced conformity) of the Coburg town hall.[115] After moving away from Coburg, Massow remained connected to the city and was called upon as a leading figure in the staging of the anniversary of "German Day," for example. [116]In 1933, [he]was appointed president of the German Academic Exchange Service, head of the Foreign Policy Office of the NSDAP, and president of the German-Bulgarian Society and the National Club 1919 in Berlin. By 1939, he had risen to the rank of SS-Obergruppenführer in the staff o f the Reichsführer SS. He died on October 12, 1942, in Berlin.[117]

108 See ibid.

109 See Der Standortälteste (The Site Commander) to Mayor Dr. Schmidt, November 26, 1934, and further invitations StadtACo A 6296 and *Bayerische Ostmark (Bavarian Ostmark)* of August 9, 1937.

110 See *Bayerische Ostmark*, October 13, 1937.

111 See *Coburger Tageblatt*, January 3, 1936, and *Bayerische Ostmark*, October 13, 1936.

112 Massow had already been a member of the East Asian Expeditionary Corps in 1900, served as military attaché in Bucharest, Belgrade, and Sofia, as well as German representative at the Bulgarian headquarters during the Balkan War, and had served as aide-de-camp to Kaiser Wilhelm II and German military observer in Bulgaria during World War I.

113 See Ewald von Massow's curriculum vitae. BA R 9361-III/542341.

114 It is unclear exactly when Massow moved into the guest house. Letters sent from the Veste as early as 1926 have been found. See Ewald von Massow on November 22, 1926, and January 8, 1927. BA N 39/258.

115 *Coburger Tageblatt* of September 12, 1930, and Coburg Legal Office, December 8, 1954. StadtACo Personnel file Erich Unverfähr, submitted by the main office.

116 See, for example, his contribution to the *foreword to Coburger Führer*. *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, October 15, 1932.

117 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung newspaper* dated October 15, 1942, and Ewald von Massow's personnel files from the NSDAP and SS. BA R 9361-I/48679, R 9361-I/2216, and R 9361-III/542341.

Lieutenant General Karl Hoefer, born on December 29, 1862, in Pleß, Upper Silesia,
retired Lieutenant General Karl Hoefer, who was born on December 29, 1862, in Pleß, Upper Silesia, had settled in Coburg in 1920 after a career in the German army and service in the Prussian War Ministry.[118] Hoefer was then involved again in 1921 during the "Third Polish Uprising" as leader of the "Upper Silesian Self-Defense" in the storming of St. Annaberg. He returned to Coburg as a celebrated hero, where he was given an impressive reception by the entire national and bourgeois camp as well as the duke. Hoefer enjoyed enduring "popular popularity" in the Vestestadt.[119]

Although General Hoefer never joined the party, he was always present during "Führer visits" to the city, participated in collections for the Winter Relief Fund (WHW), and was therefore awarded the rank of SS-Oberführer on April 20, 1936, on the initiative of Franz Schwede and Mayor Dr. Otto Schmidt.[120] On December 28, 1935, Mayor Dr. Schmidt presented Karl Hoefer with a certificate of honor on behalf of the city on the occasion of his 73rd birthday.[121] In addition to the ceremonial meeting in the town hall, the war hero was honored with marches on the market square, a comradeship evening in the "Adolf Hitler House," and visits from the local NSDAP Ost group, the Hitler Youth, and the Jungvolk. The celebration was also used to stage Hoefer's personification of the resurgence of the Wehrmacht and the reintroduction of conscription in March 1935 as a continuation of the tradition of the old army. The address to the general stated: "It is no coincidence that in Adolf Hitler's third year in office, the thoughts and feelings of the population are focused on you. For with the reintroduction of universal conscription, which the Führer proclaimed in early spring this year, the eyes of the nation have once again been turned urgently to our great military leaders and soldiers of the World War."[122] When Coburg was reinstated as a garrison town, the general's attendance was also used to publicly showcase the bond between the Wehrmacht and the old army.[123] Hoefer died on May 12, 1939, in Würzburg, where he had moved in 1937. On May 16, 1939, the Wehrmacht and the Nazi movement held an impressive memorial service in Coburg in honor of the general, attended by numerous guests of honor.

1.2 Informal and institutionalized networks

As was already evident among retired generals of the German Army, the urban sphere of influence was dominated by a large number of more or less distinguished

118 Hoefer was wounded seven times and was presumably the only general in the German army to wear the Wound Badge.
119 See *Coburger Zeitung*, July 14, 1921.
120 See Mayor Schmidt to the Reichsführer SS, December 10, 1935, and Franz Schwede. BA R 9361-III/77698 and R 9361-III/531475.
121 While it was claimed in 1939 that Hoefer had been awarded honorary citizenship of the city, there was no mention of this in 1935. See also StadtACo A 6568.
122 *Bayerische Ostmark*, December 31, 1935. See also *Bayerische Ostmark*, December 30, 1935.
123 See *Bayerische Ostmark*, October 16, 1936. In this context, mention should also be made of retired Lieutenant Colonel Kurt von Wangenheim, Fritz von Selle, and retired Major General Otto Schneider, who had appeared as dignitaries in the city and allowed themselves to be exploited by the Nazi regime for the staging.
124 See *Bayerische Ostmark*, May 17, 1939.

were permeated by informal networks that operated in parallel to the party and administrative structures. These old and new networks developed forms of communication and cooperation that sometimes bypassed or supplemented the political decision-making processes, often enabling them to become secondary centers of power. They were also able to mitigate polycratic friction losses and promote the balancing of interests and the exchange of information.

In addition to the political and social connections established by individuals, three forms of networks can be identified for Coburg which did not replace the state and party authorities, but made them more dynamic and flexible. This led to the emergence of vertical communication and coordination channels within and beyond the urban sphere of influence, as well as new political forums where decisions were made.[125]

1.2.1 Local political networking in the German Association of Municipalities

With regard to National Socialist local politics, the decisive influence in the 1920s had been primarily at the regional level, since apart from the initiatives of Karl Fiehler as the party's representative for local politics, there had been no organization within the party that was interested in local political issues. As was evident in the case of Coburg, a high degree of decision-making and discretionary power therefore lay at the local and regional level in the districts, counties, and local groups. Within the NSDAP, a forum for the exchange of information between Nazi officials responsible for local politics was established through the *newsletter for National Socialists in parliaments and local councils*. The Coburg approach repeatedly served as a model in this regard. In addition, Franz Schwede's personal contact with Karl Fiehler served to coordinate National Socialist urban policy. However, it was not only within the circles of the party that the exchange of information on individual municipal issues had always been an important aid to decision-making. Time and again, mayors preferred to obtain information from their counterparts in other cities, have organizational plans presented to them, and gather information about local regulations and measures. In the case of Coburg, the old administrative ties to Thuringia came to the fore in this area, as medium-sized towns in Thuringia in particular were consulted for this exchange of information.

At the latest with the appointment of Franz Schwede as First Mayor of Coburg, he also began to use existing local political networking bodies such as the Bavarian and German City Councils and to explore them as possible coordination centers for the encirclement policy pursued by him and Karl Fiehler, according to which a takeover of power was to be initiated at the local level.[126] In October 1931, Schwede took Erich Unverfähr's seat on the main committee of the Bavarian Association of Cities and Towns and, together with Karl Fiehler, advocated for a National Socialist

125 See Reichardt, Sven; Seibel, Wolfgang: Radicalism and Stability: Ruling and Administering under National Socialism. In: ibid. (ed.): The Precarious State. Ruling and Administering under National Socialism. Frankfurt; New York 2011, pp. 7–27, here pp. 10 f.

126 See Dietrich, Otto: Mit Hitler an die Macht. Persönliche Erlebnisse mit meinem Führer. Munich 1934, p. 34 and Matzerath: National Socialism and Local Self-Government, p. 51.

cunning local politics.[127] He tried to influence the Bavarian Association of Cities and Towns' stance and instructions on financial and tax policy, for example by submitting petitions from Coburg.[128] He also took part in meetings of the German Association of Cities and Towns, even though the city of Coburg itself was not a member, and tried to get the association to hold its conferences in Coburg.[129]

In the course of the National Socialist "Gleichschaltung" in 1933, the interest groups of the German municipalities were also merged into the German Municipal Council (DGT) on the instructions of Reich Organization Leader Robert Ley and NSDAP Reich Leader Fiehler, and membership in it was made compulsory for all cities. Franz Schwede had also been involved in this decision.[130] As an institutionalized network of local governments, the committee continued to serve as an information exchange for the municipal level. Under the leadership of Karl Fiehler, the German Municipal Council now coordinated the exchange of experience and information between mayors and lord mayors on the basis of the "Führer principle." To this end, Fiehler set up a consultative board composed of representatives from small and large cities as well as districts and provinces, which was thus able to operate across the entire German Reich. In addition, six specialist departments were responsible for all areas of National Socialist policy that were relevant to cities and municipalities.[131] Franz Schwede worked at the German Municipal Council as a member of the executive board and the committee for municipal economy until his appointment to Pomerania, after which he handed over his position on the executive board to his successor, Dr. Otto Schmidt, thus ensuring that the city of Coburg retained a central position within the council.

Under Georg Knorr, former mayor of the city of Weiden, the Bavarian Association of Cities and Towns also submitted to the new rulers under Karl Fiehler's direction and reappointed its executive committee in March 1933, with Fiehler being appointed chairman and Franz Schwede deputy chairman. By the end of 1933, the Bavarian Association of Cities and Towns was finally incorporated into the German Association of Municipalities as one of 23 sub-associations and, from May 1934, operated as the Bavarian regional office of the German Association of Municipalities.

As the most important communication platform for local political issues, the German Association of Municipalities ultimately also gained a central domestic political function in the Nazi state, as it enabled municipalities to obtain information quickly and often bypass the administrative hierarchy. Particularly in the case of structural changes in local politics, such as the establishment of new National Socialist offices or the implementation of the German Municipal Code, the city of Coburg, for example, used the coordinating body of the Association to translate higher-level guidelines more efficiently into actual

127 See minutes of the main committee meetings of the Bavarian Association of Cities, December 19, 1931, March 21, 1932, February 13, 1933. StadtACo A 6207.

128 See Coburg City Council to the office of the Bavarian Association of Cities, September 11, 1931. Stadt-ACo A 6211.

129 See Mayor Schwede to the Presidium of the German Association of Cities, May 16, 1933, and Mayor Schwede to the Presidium of the German Association of Municipalities, June 20, 1933. StadtACo A 6197.

130 See Matzerath: National Socialism and Local Self-Government, p. 102.

131 See Gruner: Kommunen, pp. 189–204.

132 See Deppe, Ina; Kamp, Michael; Walter, Alexander: Der Bayerische Städtetag. 125 Jahre im Auftrag der Städte (The Bavarian Association of Cities and Towns: 125 Years on Behalf of Cities and Towns). Munich 2021, pp. 32–47.

administrative practice.[133] Through conferences of mayors or administrators from specific administrative sectors, those responsible networked with each other and discussed special topics, which in turn led to changes in administrative action at the local level.[134] Even in the case of special requests, the DGT used its surveys to gather empirical data from other municipalities, thereby steering the exchange of information and allowing local conditions to be classified and synchronized within larger contexts. The recommendations and resolutions of the DGT were authoritative within the Coburg city administration and were equivalent to direct orders from the superior authorities.

The Association of Municipalities played a coordinating and standardizing role, particularly with regard to exclusionary policies.[135] Through the DGT, the municipalities were ultimately able to exert a certain degree of influence on Reich legislation if experience could be gained from administrative practice at the local level and this was made available to a powerful political actor through the Municipal Council, so that such initiatives could also be brought to the attention of the relevant decision-making bodies. The DGT acted as an intermediary between the state and local administrations, as it advised both sides. ([136])On several occasions, Coburg sent inquiries to the German Municipal Council with the aim of encouraging a Reich-wide regulation for a uniform approach. In this way, municipalities such as Coburg, with their established, forward-looking practices, were able to have their approach reassured and secured, and also to exert a dynamic influence on other municipalities via the DGT.([137])

1.2.2 New communication channels

After a number of established communication channels were closed in the wake of the seizure of power, new organizations and associations took their place. Two associations stood out in Coburg, which became important within the local sphere of influence and also formed networks that gave the city access to supra-regional power structures, especially in the early stages of the regime. Both the *National Socialist Motor Corps (*NSKK) and the *Reich Loyalty League of Former Professional Soldiers* could be utilized for municipal purposes after 1933. The decisive factor in the growing importance of both formations was personnel, as two of the key players and networkers in the Coburg domain, Franz Schwede and Carl Eduard, also held important positions in the associations at the Reich level.

133 See various inquiries and circulars from the DGT on the implementation of the German Municipal Code. StadtACo A 6232.

134 See, for example, Alfred Sauerteig's memo on the DGT conference of personnel and finance officers, December 14, 1933. StadtACo A 6208.

135 See Gruner, Wolf: The German Municipal Council and the Coordination of Anti-Jewish Local Politics. On the Market Ban for Jewish Traders and the "Utilization" of Jewish Property. In: Archive for Municipal Sciences 37 (1998), pp. 261–291; Gruner: Municipalities, pp. 197–201 and Deppe, Kamp, Walter: Bavarian Association of Cities, pp. 39–43.

136 See also Gruner: Kommunen, pp. 194 f.

137 See, for example, Mayor Rehlein to the German Association of Municipalities, June 29, 1939. StadtACo A 5881; German Association of Municipalities to Mayor Schmidt, December 28, 1935. StadtACo A 15327.

The NSKK

Thanks to Carl Eduard's enthusiasm for technology and automobiles, motoring had been a constant theme in the Duke's life ever since. He had been a member of the Imperial Automobile Club and the Automobile Club of Germany since 1906.[138] In *the Stahlhelm*, he served as leader of the Reich Motor Corps and became co-founder and president of *the National German Automobile Club* (NDA), which was founded in 1929. Motor sports served to restore his reputation beyond Coburg and at the same time made possible the idea of a union between *the Stahlhelm* and the NSDAP. The *National Socialist Automobile Corps (*NSAK), which from 1931 onwards was called *the National Socialist Motor Corps (*NSKK), had thus joined the NDA as a corporate club in 1930 with the support of Carl Eduard. The two were also politically linked through the *National Motorcycle Association*.[139] In 1932, Carl Eduard finally officially joined the NSKK and provided it with funds, which ultimately earned him the position of *Reich Commissioner for Motor Transport* and the appointment as Honorary Leader and, in 1935, as Obergruppenführer of the NSKK, which by then was functioning as an independent party organization.[140] The NSKK was thus the Duke's first step toward a leading position throughout the Reich, which gave him prestige beyond Coburg and linked him and the city of Coburg with contacts reaching all the way to the top of the party.

The corps was significant due to the modernity and forward-looking perspective of motor transport, which also had an enormous appeal to the bourgeoisie, so that people who were not prepared to become members of the NSDAP often joined the NSKK. It thus represented an interface between old and new elite milieus not only throughout the Reich, but also in Coburg, and occupied a central place in urban party life. The NSKK Motorstandarte 95 was under the command of Georg Linke, a close confidant of Schwede and city councilor. Not least thanks to the support of Carl Eduard it was built up into a powerful organization and, from around April 1936, was equipped with police powers for several months as an armed nighttime NSKK patrol service to maintain peace, order, and security, and later for traffic controls.

The symbolic and power-political high point of the alliance between the NSKK, Carl Eduard, and the city of Coburg was the general roll call of the NSKK leadership corps, which was held on October 19, 1935, at the Veste Coburg and was also attended by Adolf Hitler himself in Coburg. The meeting emphatically demonstrated the new channels of communication and information that Carl Eduard had opened up for the Veste city with the NSKK and the gains in networking, power, and prestige that the Coburg NSDAP had achieved as a result. Hitler and with him high-ranking party officials and several NSKK leaders not only stayed in Coburg, but also took part in public events here. Hitler himself was received at the town hall by the mayor and the "Old Guard."

138 See Sandner: Herzog, p. 483.

139 See Hochstetter: Motorization, pp. 21–39.

140 See Büchel: Herzog, p. 109.

141 See police memos dated December 10, 13, 18, and 19, 1935; February 21, 1936; and December 13 and 19, 1936. March 14, 1936. StadtACo A 8468. The NSKK men were provided with service ID cards stamped by the police department as auxiliary officers of the municipal police and patrolled in pairs for four hours in one of eight districts of the city. They were authorized to carry weapons and make arrests. From June 1937, the service was taken over by the SS.



Fig. 16: Hitler's visit to Coburg on October 19, 1935: Hitler giving a speech in the great hall of the town hall, with Mayor Dr. Schmidt and NSKK Corps Leader Hühnlein, among others.

In this context, the Führer's attention was drawn to projects in Coburg, and Hitler was shown the new war memorial on Schlossplatz.[142] Finally, in the words of Franz Schwede, Reich Corps Leader Adolf Hühnlein "linked the city of Coburg and the National Socialist Motor Corps into an inseparable concept"[143], as the coordinating NSKK general appeals at the Veste were now to take place annually on the anniversary of the "March to Coburg." As was already apparent from the speeches in October 1935, an attempt was made to achieve synergy between the resurgent Carl Eduard, the NSKK, and Coburg as the "pioneer of the movement," from which all parties involved were to benefit.([144])

Beyond that, the city of Coburg was also able to benefit from Carl Eduard's contacts within the party leadership, for example when it came to Reich subsidies for the Coburg State Theater, which the head of his staff office and NSKK Brigade Leader Ferdinand Nord secured for the city through direct negotiations with the Reich Theater Chamber.[145] The connections between Coburg and the NSKK were ultimately so influential and the resulting impact so promising that the city administration considered making Coburg the "City of the NSKK" and to try to establish a Reich motor sports school there, for example. [146]

142 See *Bayerische Ostmark*, October 21, 1935.
143 Schwede: Kampf, p. 247.
144 See *Bayerische Ostmark*, October 21, 1935.
145 See Franz Heimberger to the NSKK Brigadeführer Nord, April 27, 1938. StACo Landestheater 73.
146 See memo from Mayor Dr. Schmidt dated August 8, 1936. StadtACo A 6232.

The Reich Loyalty League of Former Professional Soldiers

The situation was very similar with the *Reich Loyalty League of Former Professional Soldiers*. In November 1933, Reich Minister of War Blomberg, in agreement with Hitler, appointed Franz Schwede as its leader. The league acted primarily as a "combat and support community" with the task of providing civilian care for former professional soldiers, promoting the training of appropriate care candidates, and supporting them financially through social institutions. Schwede was now responsible for the National Socialist restructuring of the organization in 1933, whereby he sought close cooperation with the SA and the Wehrmacht and also promoted ideological training in the Soldiers' League, which was opposed to the Wehrmacht.[147] The communication channels and connections opened up here by Schwede, which, in contrast to his party offices, extended beyond the circles of the NSDAP, enabled him, for example, to contribute to the financing of a number of projects in Coburg, such as the construction of the "Adolf Hitler House" or the renovation of the old town at Gräfsblock.[148] From October 1936, the association finally became part of the veterans' association of *the Union of German Front Fighters' Associations*, which Carl Eduard presided over as president. [149]

1.2.3 Ruling cliques

In addition, powerful ruling cliques formed within the urban sphere of influence, which were not bound to a political body but acted on the basis of personal loyalty and a shared desire for power. As a personal ruling association with quasi-feudal substructures, camaraderie and belonging to a conspiratorial community formed a constitutive element of Nazi rule.[150] The effectiveness of these ruling cliques was primarily characterized by the fact that they linked several organizational levels through personal interconnections, thereby enabling effective cooperation between the NSDAP, its branches and associations, and the municipal administration.

The most powerful ruling clique in Coburg was a group of party members around Franz Schwede, which defined itself on the one hand by its loyalty to Schwede himself as the local leader. This distinguishing feature became all the stronger as the mythologization of Schwede's persona progressed.[151] On the other hand, the merit of the individual in helping to make Coburg the "first National Socialist city in Germany" became the bond that created a conspiratorial group that saw itself as superior to other party members. Accordingly, a further differentiation was made in Coburg among the "old fighters," i.e., those who had joined the NSDAP during the "struggle" before 1933. The Coburg "old

147 See Schwede-Coburg, Franz: Der Reichstreubund ehemaliger Berufssoldaten (= Writings of the German College of Politics, Volume 12). Berlin 1937; memo of the meeting with Gauleiter Schwede and his representative, May 4, 1936, and Franz Schwede to Gauleiter Wagner, August 27, 1937. BA NS 23/1401.

148 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, May 11, 1934, and *Bayerische Ostmark*, October 12, 1936.

149 On the Association of German Frontline Combatants and Carl Eduard, see Büschel: Herzog, pp. 169–172.

150 See Koehl, Robert: Feudal Aspects of National Socialism. In: The American Political Science Review 54 (1960), pp. 921–933 and Bajohr, Frank: Parvenüs und Profiteure. Korruption in der NS-Zeit. Frankfurt a. M. 2001, pp. 148–164.

151 See Chapter III1.3.1.

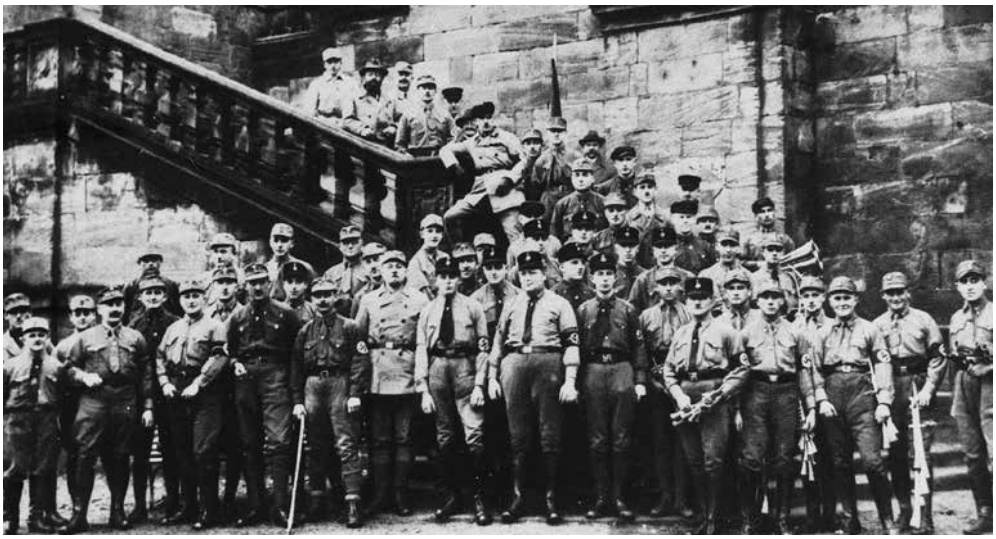


Fig. 17: The old guard of Coburg, group photo on the arcade steps at Schlossplatz

The "guard" of those who had already been active in the NSDAP, the Nazi combat organizations, or had already been active on "German Day" in 1922[152]before the party was banned in 1925, also sought a special position of power for themselves within the territory under their control. At the center of this clique were the merchants Ernst Kuhn, Georg Linke, and Schwede's secretary Karl Schunck, who in turn gathered around them a group of merchants who espoused radical anti-Semitism.([153])

Their influence ultimately came to bear when Franz Schwede left Coburg and the question of how and by whom his legacy in the Vestestadt should be continued became apparent. On the one hand, this conflict shaped the structure of Coburg's sphere of influence, so that Schwede's successors could hardly engage in politics without having the "old fighters" on their side and involving them. On the other hand, this ruling clique enforced a style of governance in Coburg that became particularly radical in its exclusionary practices, with the intention of living up to the city's reputation as a National Socialist pioneer and model city.

1.3 The mayors of Coburg as municipal decision-makers between the party and the administration

1.3.1 Franz Schwede

1.3.1.1 Further career

After being appointed Coburg's first mayor in 1931, Franz Schwede not only wanted to have created Germany's first National Socialist city, he also stylized himself

152 This affiliation was also symbolically marked from 1932 onwards with the award of the "Coburg Medal of Honor" to the comrades-in-arms of 1922. See Chapter IV1.1.1.3.

153 All of the individuals mentioned will be presented in more detail below. See Chapter III2.2.



Fig. 18: Franz Schwede around 1934, E. Struthoff Coburg

also became the first Nazi mayor in the Reich. However, he did not actually deserve this fame unreservedly. Before him, Mayor Fritz Hess had joined the NSDAP in Dannenfels in the Palatinate in 1922. In Obermenzing too miller Georg Oberpriller joined the NSDAP in 1926 as acting mayor and from then on claimed the title of first National Socialist mayor for himself. Nevertheless, the success that Franz Schwede achieved as a politician in and with Coburg for the NSDAP marked the beginning of a meteoric political career for him, characterized by the accumulation of offices and the expansion of political networks. Already during the 1932 election campaign, the machine master had risen to become an essential tool of the NSDAP, appearing as a speaker at various rallies throughout the Reich and promoting the party there with his politics and the success of the NSDAP in Coburg. In addition to his role as Reich speaker for the NSDAP, Schwede became a member of the Upper Franconian district council in 1928 and the Bavarian state parliament in 1930, rising to become first vice president in 1932 and second vice president in 1933. Schwede had also been represented in the German Reichstag since November 1933.

154 See Probst, Robert: Die NSDAP im Bayerischen Landtag 1924–1933 (= Munich Studies on Recent and Contemporary History, Volume 19). Frankfurt am Main et al. 1998, pp. 232, 234 and History of the Bavarian Parliament. People: Hess, Fritz. URL: https://www.bavariathek.bayern/medien-themen/portale/geschichte-des-bayerischen-parlaments/person/129845736 (last accessed January 10, 2024).

In Coburg, too, Schwede had been able to significantly expand the NSDAP's sphere of influence and thus his own personal sphere of influence, even though Schwede had no professional qualifications for the office of mayor, which was repeatedly denounced by parts of the bourgeoisie.[155]Shortly after the "seizure of power," following a motion by the Nazi faction, the Coburg City Council decided at its meeting on May 12, 1933, to confer on Schwede, thanks to the city's reputation and his services as First Mayor, the official title of Lord Mayor, which had last been used under Gustav Hirschfeld.[156] From June 1934, following the resignation of Albert Schramm as district leader, Schwede ran the district leadership in parallel with his office as mayor. In addition, Schwede became part of a large number of networks. These gave him access to important power-political communication channels and information exchanges. As one of the leading local politicians of the NSDAP, he became a member of the executive committee of the German Municipal Council and deputy chairman of the Bavarian Municipal Council. This put him in a leading position alongside Karl Fiehler in two influential committees responsible for shaping National Socialist local politics. In addition to his position in *the Reich Association of Former Professional Soldiers*, he was also chairman of the Association of Public Life Insurance Institutions in Germany and the Association of Public Accident and Liability Insurance Institutions in Germany, a member of the board of the Bavarian Savings Banks and Giro Association, chairman of the administrative board of "Bayern," public institution for national and life insurance, chairman of the district association for Upper and Middle Franconia of the Bavarian savings banks, and as a member of the supervisory board of Überlandwerke A. G. Oberfranken.([157])

Attentive contemporaries suspected, given his accumulation of offices, that Coburg was only to be the first stop in Schwede's political career. At the beginning of 1934, numerous rumors to this effect spread throughout the city, some of which were also published in *the Coburger Tageblatt* and the *Neustadter Tageblatt newspapers* and had to be retracted by order of the police.[158] In July 1934, Schwede was finally appointed district president of Lower Bavaria and the Upper Palatinate, based in Regensburg, but never took office because he was appointed by Hitler as Nazi Gauleiter on July 21, 1934, and shortly thereafter as president of Pomerania and, in September, as a member of the Prussian State Council. At first, at the express request of the city council, Schwede remained honorary mayor of Coburg in a purely formal capacity. Retroactively to August 1, 1934, he finally resigned from Bavarian civil service and in November 1934 also requested official release from his position as mayor of Coburg.After initially trailing his rival Hans Schemm in Upper Franconia, Schwede was now clearly rewarded by Hitler for his services in Coburg through his dual role in Pomerania. Schwede's predecessor in office, Wilhelm Karpenstein, had been eliminated in the wake of the Röhm murders, so that the experienced "old fighter" Schwede now took his place at the

155 See *Coburger Zeitung* of October 31, 1931.

156 See motion by the Coburg city council faction of the NSDAP dated May 8, 1933. StadtACo A 6342 and *Coburger Nationalzeitung* dated May 13, 1933. The title of mayor was introduced throughout the Reich in 1935 in the course of the introduction of the German Municipal Code for cities directly subordinate to the district.

157 See list of Schwedes' offices, undated. StadtACo A 6344.

158 See memo from the city police dated January 5, 1934. StadtACo A 6344 and *Coburger Tageblatt* dated January 2, 1934.

159 See Franz Schwede to the Coburg City Council, November 19, 1934. StadtACo A 6342.

He was at the forefront of a reconstruction effort that was intended to transform the structurally weak district into a model district. Schwede's pioneering spirit now accompanied him in his work in Stettin, where he acted in an exemplary manner in line with the regime, particularly with regard to the implementation of "Aryanization" and National Socialist social and extermination policies. Schwede was responsible, for example, for the deportation and murder of institutional inmates even before the official start of "Aktion T4," the mass murder of people with physical, mental, and psychological disabilities. Central agreements between Schwede and Heinrich Himmler on the transfer of hospitals in Pomerania to the SS were at the starting point of the action, which was most likely due to the personal commitment of the Gauleiter. In October and November 1939, for example, approximately 3,500 people were shot in a forest near Neustadt in West Prussia. Schwede was also involved in conducting trial gassings, which made him a key pioneer of the patient murders. ([160])In addition, after the deportations were completed, he claimed to be the first Gauleiter to
"Jew-free" district, so that Pomerania ultimately became a hub for various Nazi exclusion and extermination measures.

At the same time, Schwede once again secured a comprehensive sphere of influence by accumulating further offices, such as member of the National Synod of the German Evangelical Church, honorary judge at the Supreme Court of Honor and Discipline of the German Labor Front, deputy chairman of the supervisory board of the Central European Insurance Bank AG, Berlin, and territorial delegate for voluntary nursing in Pomerania. In 1939, Schwede was finally awarded the "Blood Order of the Movement" by Hitler for his services. From May 1938 onwards, the award, which was originally reserved for participants in the "Hitler Putsch," was extended to persons who had either served prison sentences of at least one year or been seriously injured in the struggle for the movement. Schwede's fall at a party event in Wallenfels, which led to a hospital stay of several weeks due to a complicated bone fracture and which he reinterpreted as a communist assassination attempt, served as proof of his alleged martyrdom.

After the end of the war, members of the British armed forces arrested Schwede on May 13, 1945, on the island of Rügen and transferred him to the Neumünster internment camp and later to Eselsheide. The Bielefeld denazification court in the British zone sentenced him to ten years in February 1948, and the appeals court to nine years in prison. An appeal

160 For Schwede's involvement in the murders of patients, see Klee, Ernst: "Euthanasia" in the Nazi State. The "Destruction of Life Unworthy of Life." Frankfurt 2010, pp. 95–98 and Bernhard, Heike: "Euthanasia" and the Beginning of the War. Die frühen Morde der Patienten aus Pommern. In: ZfG 44 (1996), pp. 773–788 and ibid.: Anstaltspsychiatrie und "Euthanasie" in Pommern 1933–1945. The murder of sick children and adults using the example of the Ueckermünde State Hospital. Frankfurt am Main 1994. Emil Mazuw was also part of the chain of command responsible for carrying out the murders of patients.

161 See Bernhard: "Euthanasia," p. 788. On the Gau Pommern, see Gaede, Herbert: Pommern (= Die deutschen Gaue sei der Machtergreifung, vol. 5). Berlin 1940, pp. 17–21; Inachin, Kyra T.: Der Aufstieg der Nationalsozialisten in Pommern. Schwerin 2002 and the same author: Der Gau Pommern. Eine preußische Provinz als NS-Gau. In: John, Jürgen; Möller, Horst; Schaarschmidt, Thomas (eds.): Die NS-Gaue. Regionale Mittelinstanzen im zentralistischen "Führerstaat." Munich 2007, pp. 280–293.

162 Cf. Nolzen, Armin: Schwede-Coburg, Franz. In: Neue Deutsche Biographie 24 (2010), pp. 36–37. URL: https://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd123232430.html#ndbcontent (last accessed January 8, 2024).

163 See *Pommersche Zeitung newspaper* dated May 6, 1939.

The confiscation of assets determined by the proceedings was revoked on appeal.[164]After Schwede had moved back to Coburg and was living on his wife's property at Heckenweg 1c, from where he had claimed benefits as a professional soldier under the 131 Act, the Munich Main Chamber also initiated denazification proceedings against Schwede in 1953. It ended in June 1953 with his classification in Group 1 of the main culprits. The two-year sentence in a labor camp imposed in the proceedings was offset by Schwede's internment. However, a confiscation of property was again enforced, which was to affect all assets exceeding the minimum necessary for subsistence. A request for a retrial was rejected. Schwede's petitions for clemency to the Bavarian Ministry of Justice, which focused in particular on the lifting of the property restriction, were pursued until 1959, with Schwede ultimately

On December 11, 1959, he was able to obtain a decree for the confiscation of assets. Schwede himself was temporarily employed by the construction company Max Janson in Coburg in the 1950s and lived partly on public assistance while his three children attended school in Coburg.[165]

1.3.1.2 Leadership style

Even though Coburg was only the first stop on Franz Schwede's career ladder and his rise and involvement in the Nazi regime – especially in connection with the crimes committed therein – reached new dimensions after 1934, the city became a groundbreaking place of learning for him and his entourage, which had an impact on his personality as a National Socialist.

A high degree of initiative and anticipatory obedience in Schwede's political style contributed significantly to shaping his appearance as a charismatic leader. While his idiosyncratic actions repeatedly brought him into conflict with the party leadership in Munich in the early 1920s, this mindset, coupled with his ruthlessness and unwillingness to compromise, can also be seen as the core of his political rise. Schwede's willingness to actively shape the Nazi state on both a large and small scale with his own ideas and concepts ultimately made him increasingly important to the party elite in Munich. When Coburg finally came into the focus of the Office for Local Politics, Schwede retained the forward-looking character of his politics, but now coordinated his actions with Fiehler and Hitler himself, which ultimately benefited his career and allowed him to rise into Hitler's circle of favorites. According to Joseph Goebbels' records, Hitler himself had great confidence in Schwede, who in turn could always hope for a direct political line to the "Führer" when making his political decisions. ([166])

164 See judgments of the Bielefeld Tribunal of February 5 and November 26, 1948. StAMü Tribunal files Franz Schwede Box 1736.

165 See ruling of the Munich Main Chamber of June 30, 1954. StAMü Tribunal files Franz Schwede Box 1736. On the denazification proceedings, see also: Hofmann: Oberfranken, pp. 447–452. Transcripts of the Bielefeld tribunal proceedings against Schwede are included in the files of the Coburg public prosecutor's office. For the proceedings of the Coburg Regional Court against Schwede, which were also initiated in 1948, see Chapter V4.

166 See Fröhlich, Elke (ed.): The Diaries of Joseph Goebbels. Part II, Volume 8. Munich et al. 1993, p. 250.

Even in his role as head of the Coburg administration, Schwede remained a party man who was able to maneuver politically and teach himself the ins and outs of administration, but who was unable to think in terms of administrative details. The fact that he exchanged the traditional political neutrality of the mayor's office for strict party politics as early as 1931 was an indication of his understanding of the office from the outset. In the exercise of his office, he was ultimately always dependent on the help of experienced administrative experts. In the post-war proceedings to investigate Schwede's role in National Socialism, the political style he established was judged as follows: "He lacked a sense of the importance of honor and integrity in the structure of the state and the Reich, as well as for people's feelings of personal dignity and the importance of the civil service and an inviolable legal system. Over the years, this was compounded by a certain tendency toward despotism, i.e., a certain imperious stubbornness and arrogance."[167] In his political activities, Schwede worked toward the complete Nazification and, in his eyes, improvement of Coburg. However, the success of the NSDAP achieved here was always a means to an end for him and was geared toward a higher National Socialist goal, detached from local conditions. The aim was to serve the party both inside and outside the city.

The entire policy of the NSDAP in the city council before 1933 was therefore aimed at discrediting the existing Weimar system. Schwede used the city council's work to engage in targeted power struggles with the government. The special rights that Coburg had been granted when it joined Bavaria were deliberately abused in the fight against the system, and the limits of what the city was entitled to under municipal self-government law were deliberately exceeded. Schwede appointed himself the champion of this very right of self-government, while driving the higher state authority into a corner. However, the blame placed on corrupt political leadership, an unjustified tax burden, or Jewish influence on politics and administration bore fruit among the population of Coburg.

Nazi financial policy under Schwede's leadership

The financial policy that Schwede had developed for Coburg together with Werner Faber and presumably also Karl Fiehler is a lasting representation of Schwede's political style and that of the NSDAP before 1933. In fact, even before the NSDAP came to power, Coburg's finances were in extremely poor shape in the German Reich, not least due to the consequences of the economic crisis and enormous municipal debt, and were further burdened by the problem of maintaining the state theater.[168]Nevertheless, Schwede and Faber now set about implementing a financial concept that focused primarily on public image and the fulfillment of propaganda promises, rather than taking actual measures to alleviate the financial crisis. This strategy proved to be consistently successful. As the Coburg city council passed a budget with considerable deficits year after year, the government of Upper Franconia in Bayreuth was forced to intervene in the city's right to self-government and, for example, order tax increases or ultimately completely withdraw the city's financial sovereignty. In this way, the NSDAP attempted to win over its electorate, for example

167 Indictment by Chief Public Prosecutor Coburg dated July 15, 1950. StACo StAnw Co 900.
168 See Chapter IV1.2.1.1.

1929 with tax cuts, which the government had to partially prevent. While the higher level of government and its "policy of fulfillment" could always be denounced as a scapegoat, the NSDAP did not have to justify its unsuccessful financial policy. By having its financial policy legitimized by the citizens through acclamation at public events, the NSDAP was able to completely absolve itself of responsibility for the city's financial collapse. However, this simplified black-and-white system seemed to have been positively received in the tense atmosphere and to have channeled the population's discontent with the Weimar system. Although the other parties saw through the NSDAP's strategy, their frustration with the financial plight of the municipalities was so great that they often unanimously rejected government orders in the city council. The financial policy of the Coburg NSDAP was thus strategically instrumentalized in the fight against the Weimar system.[171]However, the hope that the majority of German municipalities would join in this action and thereby bring down the government failed.[172]The NSDAP's expected seizure of power in 1932 was supposed to end Faber's aimless budget planning, and Hitler's promised job creation program was supposed to guarantee the final relief of the municipalities.[173] For the 1932 election campaign, Coburg attempted to present a balanced budget, but this was quickly exposed as a propaganda ploy, as the city was on the verge of insolvency and found itself in an economically hopeless situation.[174] The "first National Socialist city in Germany" thus began its journey in the "Third Reich" after 1933 with a miserable financial starting position.

Franz Schwede's understanding of office and power politics

Schwede was an unyielding advocate of a "leader principle" that placed him and his creative power in Coburg at the top of the decision-making hierarchy in both the party and the administration, even before the German Municipal Code of 1935 enshrined such a system in law for municipal administrations.[175]His style of rule was based primarily on his role as a charismatic leader. As such, he had assembled a staff of loyal subordinates who soon tied their personal advancement to Schwede himself and swore allegiance and loyalty to him in return. The actual acts of violence and atrocities committed by National Socialists in Coburg were therefore not carried out by Schwede himself, but by subordinates who were known for their brutality and to whom he granted sufficient leeway to act accordingly.[176]Schwede also offered many of these confidants the opportunity to accompany him to Pomerania, where a number of Coburgers ultimately found high-ranking positions that exceeded their actual competencies.

169 See *Coburger Volksblatt* of September 10, 1929, and *Coburger Nationalzeitung* of May 2, 1931.
170 See *Coburger Tageblatt* and *Coburger Volksblatt* of May 9, 1931.
171 Hans Dietrich had already identified this as a strategy in 1926. See *Der Weckruf* No. 1 from June 1926.
172 See Faber: Coburg, p. 21.
173 See minutes of the city council meeting of December 9, 1932. StadtACo A 8074.
174 See Werner Faber to the government of Upper Franconia, April 16 and 22, 1932. StABa K3/1967, 1690. For Coburg's economic situation, see Chapter IV2.1.2.1.1.
175 See Chapter III3.1.3.
176 See Chapter IV3.1.2. on Coburg's "Prügelstube" (beating room).

who made their careers here and participated in the development of the National Socialist "people's community" and Hitler's campaign of e x t e r mination. Arno Fischer became state building officer, Kuno Popp became Gau propaganda leader and head of the Pomerania office of the Reich Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, Alfred Seidler as Gau treasurer, Johannes Künzel as Gau chairman of the German Labor Front, Emil Mazuw as staff leader of SS Section XIII, Werner Faber as mayor of Stettin, and Ludwig Förster, the former mayor of Neustadt near Coburg, as district administrator of Greifenhagen. (177)

Modesty and his role as a social politician were central to the image Schwede wanted to project of himself. Despite outwardly effective self-adulation, his biography was permeated by a tone of frugality that, despite all the personal advantages he had actually acquired, was intended to embody a selfless and dutiful "Grenadier of Adolf Hitler."[178] Thanks to the propagandistic social policy of the NSDAP, which before 1933 worked with tax breaks for the population while simultaneously driving the city into financial ruin, Schwede was always surrounded by an aura of benevolence. The establishment of the Coburg labor camp, initiated by *the Stahlhelm*, and with it an action-oriented program to solve the unemployment problem, was also credited to Mayor Schwede. In Stettin, Schwede also focused on a radical National Socialist social policy and allowed himself to be celebrated as an "outstanding master in the field of social welfare" (179), as Hitler allegedly described him. In his description of the Pomeranian district, Gaupress office manager Herbert Gaede devoted two separate chapters to Schwede's pioneering work and the "social recovery" of the district.[180] His party friends in Coburg also consistently emphasized Schwede's selflessness in the fight for the NSDAP, as he allegedly did not value money and possessions.[181] The fact that he apparently did not claim the salaries from his many additional posts for himself, but instead used them for social purposes, was conducive to this assessment.[182]

Another political motive for Schwede in Coburg was revenge. He punished those who had stood in the way of the machine master's rise to Nazi officialdom as soon as he had the power to do so. As his power grew, he developed the attitude that any rejection of his person or his plans must be regarded as a rejection of the National Socialist idea in principle. According to this logic, appropriate punishment seemed only logical and in line with the regime's interests. Those affected by this rigorous mindset ranged from a restaurateur in Wallenfels, in whose establishment Schwede had suffered a complicated fracture during an appearance due to inadequate safety precautions, to all those involved in advocating his dismissal from the municipal works in 1929. While the former was punished by court proceedings and enforcement measures

177 See Inachin: Aufstieg, p. 38. Even minor officials, such as city secretary Ernst Meyer and slaughterhouse administrator Bernhard Brand, transferred with Schwede to the provincial administration of Pomerania. See The mayor to the government of Upper and Middle Franconia, May 11, 1935. StadtACo A 8006.

178 *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, May 13, 1933.

179 Gaede: Pomerania, p. 17.

180 See ibid., pp. 17–26.

181 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, March 5, 1934.

182 See Mayor of Trauenstein Kößl to Ministerial Director Dr. Elsässer, Munich, May 28, 1958. StAMü Denazification Tribunal file Franz Schwede Box 1736.

robbed of their economic basis,[183] the latter lost most of their posts and offices due to Schwede's influence.[184]

1.3.1.3 Political and administrative guidelines

Hardly any other person was as closely associated with Coburg's role as a National Socialist pioneer and model city as Franz Schwede. On the occasion of his 50th birthday, for example, it was declared at a festive meeting of the councilors and deputy mayors:

> "When we look back today to the time when parliamentarianism was still flourishing in this town hall, until the moment when the National Socialist majority moved in here in December 1929 and then, after just over three years, the flags of National Socialist Germany were flying throughout the Reich, after Pg. Schwede, as mayor of the city, hoisted the swastika flag on this town hall, the first in Germany, then there is a single straight line of true and strong Germanism from the former local group leader and faction leader to Mayor Schwede, then the personality of our Pg. Schwede as a responsible leader of a city and the champion of a worldview, whose fanaticism and steely will enabled the achievements that placed Coburg at the forefront of German cities in the history of the movement."([185])

The role of savior, as embodied by Adolf Hitler in the eyes of many Germans, was also assumed in the city by Franz Schwede, who, as local party leader, enjoyed enormous prestige and influence and was able to expand his power. Without competing with the figure of the duke, he represented a new leader in Coburg who was able to follow in the tradition of the dukes and live up to the prevailing expectations of leadership, even in a small space. The fact that the ducal house and Carl Eduard himself repeatedly supported Franz Schwede in real political and symbolic terms contributed significantly to this situation. Political calculation and a sense of Coburg's stubbornness probably prevented Schwede from acting as a counterfigure to the former duke, but rather led him to instrumentalize the ducal house, its charisma, and political relevance for his own purposes and to maintain his own power.

Through his action-oriented politics, Schwede was regarded as a doer who actively contributed to solving the prevailing problems and seemed able to overcome them. Schwede and his entourage sought to cultivate this image in order to live up to the consistency demanded of the National Socialist fighter who had made Coburg the first Nazi city. Both in Coburg and later in Pomerania, his politics were always based on a concept geared toward external impact. In this respect, the efforts of the Nazi official to no longer primarily play the role of rowdy and agitator after the successful takeover of power as mayor had also been successful.

183 See trial documents in the case of Schwede v. the Schrepfer couple, 1930. StadtACo files of attorney Dr. Faber, submitted to the main office. Although virtually all the files of the Coburg NSDAP were destroyed before the end of the war, a bundle of files was found in a safe in the legal office in June 1951, which included the personal files of lawyers Dr. Otto Schmidt, Dr. Werner Faber, and Dr. Max Fey.

184 See Chapter III3.1.

185 Formal meeting of councilors and deputy mayors on March 1, 1938. StadtACo A 12247.

but rather to play the role of a serious politician who could measure himself against the discredited city dignitaries. Even when political opponents were being harassed and tortured behind the closed doors of City Hall, Schwede insisted on maintaining the appearance of absolute integrity to the outside world and, for example, relieved SS men who had helped themselves to cigarettes during a house search of their duties.[186]Although he stripped the office of mayor of any form of impartiality, he was able to play the role of "father of the city." In this capacity, he introduced consultation hours for the population so that they could voice their concerns directly. The extent to which his role as a leader bringing about change was accepted by the people of Coburg was demonstrated by the fact that in 1933 there was such a rush to see the mayor in person that a new regulation had to be found only allowing those who had already approached the municipal department responsible for the matter in question and had written confirmation to come to him. Only such confirmation was considered valid identification for a consultation in the mayor's anteroom. ([187]) The trust in Franz Schwede went so far that even several victims of political violence turned to him personally, as they expected him to intervene on their behalf. ([188])

Nazi prestige projects in Coburg

Schwede's policy in Coburg focused primarily on high-profile prestige projects that underscored the city's status as a National Socialist pioneer and expanded its sphere of influence. Schwede benefited in particular from the head start Coburg had over other cities, which only had to put their energy into "Gleichschaltung" (enforced conformity) and the restructuring of administrative structures in 1933, while Coburg was able to benefit immediately from the support programs launched throughout the Reich and the changed balance of power.[189]Schwede was also able to draw on projects that had already been developed and planned, which he ultimately realized with the help of the political circumstances after 1933. Although Schwede's achievements were largely due to the preparatory work of his predecessors and were often only accomplished under enormous party pressure, they were credited to him as his merits for the city until well into the post-war period. ([190])

The first major project of the National Socialist city administration, which was exploited to the utmost for propaganda purposes, was the establishment of the Coburg Labor Service. In doing so, the NSDAP drew heavily on the preliminary considerations of *the Stahlhelm*, which had publicly taken up the issue and initiated measures that

186 See police memo dated March 16, 1933. StadtACo A 7870 and Chapter IV3.1.2.1.

187 See Dr. Schmidt to the management of the State Theater, October 23, 1933. StACo State Theater 72.

188 See: The State Association of the Central Association of German Citizens of the Jewish Faith to the District Government of Upper Franconia, July 30, 1931; Alfred Masur to the Coburg District Office, August 18, 1931; Siegfried Besser to Alfred Masur, June 26, 1931. StadtACo A 8521.

189 The establishment of the first Reich School of the National Socialist Women's League at Hohenfels Castle, which came about on his initiative, can be seen as a "reward" for Schwede's services to the party.

190 See, for example, the statements by Alfred Sauerteig, Elfride Erbslöh, Ludwig Meyer, Karl Güntzel, and Christian Reichenbecher in the denazification proceedings against Franz Schwede in the 1950s. StAMü Denazification files Franz Schwede Box 1736.

A youth labor service camp set up in Wüstenahorn near Coburg, which housed unmarried young welfare workers between the ages of 18 and 25, ultimately became the focus of Coburg's socio-political experiments. Despite its development by the *Stahlhelm*, the Coburg labor service as such was the showcase project of Germany's first National Socialist city, with which Schwede presented himself as a doer who had implemented concrete solutions to the pressing issues of the time in Coburg. During his election campaign tour of various towns and villages in 1932, as well as in his detailed publications on the work of the NSDAP in Coburg, Schwede always placed the labor service at the center of his propaganda.

In addition, Schwede devoted particular attention to the expansion of the urban infrastructure and the spatial expansion of the city. With effect from July 1, 1934, at Schwede's instigation, the municipalities of Neuses, Cortendorf, Ketschendorf, and Wüstenahorn were incorporated into Coburg, giving Coburg a considerable amount of space for the establishment of commercial enterprises and enabling the city to become a garrison location again in the course of the Wehrmacht's secret rearmament. In order to be granted this status, a population of 30,000 was required, which Coburg only just fell short of as a result of the incorporations. (192)As a garrison town, Coburg was not only able to expand its sphere of influence, but also to position itself as a hub in a network of important authorities. In addition, Coburg's new suburbs offered sufficient space for the creation of new residential areas and, in particular, large areas for the economic expansion and development of the city. (193)

In fact, however, some of the incorporations could only be enforced against the vehement opposition of the municipalities concerned, which left no stone unturned in their efforts to prevent Schwede's plan. After Schwede had initiated the relevant negotiations by administrative senate decision in January 1933, he pushed ahead with the incorporation efforts in April 1933 after the Nazi municipal councils had taken office, which met with immediate resistance from Neuses, Cortendorf, and Ketschendorf. On the one hand, the residents and leaders of the municipalities were concerned with preserving their right to self-government, which, according to Hitler's statements, was to remain untouched. On the other hand, the rural municipalities rejected urbanization, particularly in line with Nazi ideology, and invoked the ideal image of a farming and rural society. The affected population expected only disadvantages and additional burdens from becoming suburbs of Coburg. (194)As early as June 1933, the city of Coburg initiated a request for arbitration proceedings with the government of Upper and Middle Franconia and involved the Bavarian Ministry of the Interior to push the matter forward. In December 1933, Schwede finally convened the local councils of Neuses, Ketschendorf, and Cortendorf for discussions and announced to them that the step was unavoidable, as the new Reich reform provided for incorporations, but the State Ministry had previously requested a

191 For information on the Coburg labor service and the labor service camp in Wüstenahorn, see Chapter IV2.1.2.1.
192 See *Coburg Official Gazette* of June 11, 1934.
193 See: The City of Coburg to the District Government, April 19, 1934. StadtACo A 7961.
194 See: The municipality of Ketschendorf to Minister of State and Gauleiter Schemm, March 5, 1934; The municipalities of Neuses and Ketschendorf to Reich Governor Epp, April 9, 1934. BA NS 25/185.

peaceful resolution of the matter. Schwede emphasized that the surrender of their independence was a political necessity and made it clear that he intended to pursue the project ruthlessly and could respond to any refusal with the cutting off of gas, water, and electricity from Coburg. Schwede strictly rejected the idea of consulting the population itself.

Furthermore, the mayors and municipal councils who wanted to wait for the actual legal framework established by a Reich reform were put under enormous pressure by the district leadership as party members, so that they turned to higher party and administrative authorities for advice and assistance. On behalf of the district office, Franz Dehler replied that he had already assured Schwede of his support on the issue. Ludwig Ruckdeschel, the district manager and deputy district leader in the Bavarian Ostmark district, emphasized that the city of Coburg could not force the municipalities to merge, but called on the petitioners to give their immediate consent, citing the interests of the general public and the major problems of the future as decisive factors.[196]Although Schwede had rejected Hans Schemm's involvement, the Nazi faction leaders of Neuses and Ketschendorf, the merchant Wilhelm Weisleder and the estate inspector Edwin Forkel, also approached the Gauleiter and, at the same time, the Bavarian Prime Minister Ludwig Siebert. They presented their concerns and threatened that the municipal councils of Neuses and Ketschendorf would resign en masse in the event of incorporation. Like Interior Minister Wagner before him, Schemm ordered an immediate decision on incorporation into Coburg for reasons of state policy. There was now also talk of forced incorporation. The two faction leaders finally traveled to Munich and spoke personally with Reich Governor Epp. Although they emphasized that, as loyal party members, they were accustomed to obeying orders, they expressly requested to be allowed to present their arguments, to be given the exact political reasons for the incorporations, and to have the question clarified as to what extent this was an administrative or party-political matter.

On the one hand, the merger of the state and party levels that had already taken place in Coburg became clear, as the local politicians affected were unsure of Schwede's role in relation to them. On the other hand, it became apparent that the faction leaders had hoped that it would be easier to intervene if the incorporations were purely administrative issues and not party political issues in the true sense of the word. Ultimately, however, the municipalities concerned had to recognize that their protest against the decision was futile, as Schwede, with his uncompromising attitude and connections within the party, had decided over the heads of those affected and had little intention of involving them in the actual process. Due to the strategic gain for the city of Coburg, the wishes of the new citizens were ruthlessly ignored. On April 12, 1934,

195 See ibid.

196 See Ludwig Ruckdeschel to the leaders of the Nazi municipal faction in Ketschendorf, February 28, 1934. BA NS 25/185.

197 See The municipality of Ketschendorf to Minister of State and Gauleiter Schemm, March 5, 1934, and April 3, 1934; Telegram from Gauleiter Schemm, April 3, 1934; the municipality of Neues to Minister of State and Gauleiter Schemm, April 3, 1934, and the municipality of Neues to Minister President Ludwig Siebert, April 3, 1934. BA NS 25/185.

198 Cf. The municipalities of Neuses and Ketschendorf to Reich Governor Epp, April 9, 1934. BA NS 25/185.

For example, the Neuses municipal council informed Schwede that "due to the order issued by our political district leadership, Minister of State Schemm, on behalf of the Minister of the Interior, Minister of State Wagner, (...) [it] decided in its meeting today by a vote of 9 to 0 to enter into negotiations with the Coburg city council regarding incorporation into Coburg." They asked Schwede to allow them to continue negotiations without obligation until Reich Governor Epp had commented on the matter. Ultimately, at the end of May, the municipalities received another letter from the Supreme Leadership of the PO of the Office for Local Politics in Munich, which underscored the Gau leadership's decision on the incorporations.[199] The forced marriage, which took place on July 1, 1934, was celebrated on September 1 with a large-scale incorporation ceremony, a local festival and market fair under the banner of the "people's community." It was declared essential for Coburg, and even former opponents of the union were now required to publicly declare their support for it. [The] former mayors of Ketschendorf, Neuses, Cortendorf, and Wüstenahorn were appointed Coburg city councilors and reminded of the obligations that came with the names Coburg and Schwede.

Since the incorporation of larger industrial plants had ultimately become an urgent issue for Coburg, the plans and initiatives for various forms of incorporation had already been initiated by Schwedes' predecessors. The first attempts at incorporation, for example of Neuses, had already been made by Mayor Gustav Hirschfeld. In 1925, Erich Unverfähr also invited representatives from Corten-dorf, Ketschendorf, Wüstenahorn, and Neuses to Coburg for talks on the subject, after architect Max Böhme had already outlined the inevitability of such an expansion of the city in 1923. Unverfähr, who wanted to avoid any coercion in the process, met with widespread resistance. Instead, a special-purpose association was founded between Coburg, Ketschendorf, and Neuses to tackle joint structured development for industrial settlements, infrastructure issues, and new residential areas. ([201]) It was not until after 1933 that Franz Schwede was willing to use his power and partisan pressure to push through the incorporations against all opposition.

The Hausen hydroelectric power plant

Another prestigious project undertaken by Schwede was the construction of the Hausen hydroelectric power plant, which expanded the energy supply of the Coburg municipal utilities, which already consisted of a gas and an electricity plant. After more and more communities in the Coburg area had been connected to the city's supply network, an interurban power station was added to the municipal power plant in 1911 to meet the steadily increasing demand for electrical energy with a special interurban network. In the long term, a hydroelectric power plant was to be used to cover the growing consumption, for which the city acquired hydroelectric power in Hausen am Main and planned to build a hydroelectric power plant. In 1922, the Coburg interurban power plant

199 See: Senior Management of the P.O. Office for Local Politics to Margarete Forkel, May 26, 1934. BA NS 25/185. Further information on the incorporations can be found at: StadtACo A 7961, 7962, and 7963.

200 See *Coburger Zeitung*, September 3, 1934.

201 See Boseckert, Christian: "Unsere Stadt ist gerettet" (Our city is saved) Coburg and its incorporations in 1972 (= Schriftenreihe der Historischen Gesellschaft Coburg e.V., Volume 32). Coburg 2022, p. 140 f.

Finally, for better financing, it was converted into a mixed-economy company, a stock corporation in which the city itself held a 55% stake. In fact, however, Überlandwerk Coburg AG made no effort to push ahead with the construction of the plant in Hausen.

As a city councilor, Schwede had now set himself the task of discrediting the stock corporation as He made "symptoms of the system" his mission, claiming in the summer of 1928 that leading Coburg politicians such as former mayor Hirschfeld had said that the Überlandwerke's balance sheets were scandalous.[203] After the city council elections in June 1929, Schwede himself became a member of the supervisory board and in 1931 was appointed chairman of the supervisory board of Überlandwerk Coburg AG, with the result that, following the seizure of power, Überlandwerk Coburg AG was finally dissolved and the Überlandzentrale was returned to the sole ownership of the city. This happened even though the district of Coburg, which was the largest customer of the Überlandwerk and had already contributed considerable funds to the construction of the plant, had vehemently opposed this move.[204] Under Schwede, the city finally pushed ahead with the expansion of the power plant, for which Schwede commissioned the building officer Arno Fischer, who took over the management of the construction based on the plans of Dr. Franz Lawaczeck and with the assistance of the government building officer Helmuth Fentzloff. Engineer and Nazi economic ideologist Dr. Franz Lawaczeck had developed an economic concept that envisaged shifting the region's energy supply away from "Jewish big capital" in order to guarantee low electricity prices through municipal energy management, as Schwede had announced for Coburg. ([205])

The project received special support from Interior Minister Adolf Wagner, who approved Fischer's plans and initiated the necessary fundraising, so that the costs of the project were financed by the "Reinhardt Program"[206] , the *German Society for Public Works AG (Öffa)*[207] and subsidies from the Reich Institute for Unemployment Insurance, leaving the city itself to pay the interest of RM 400,000. On September 21, 1933, the foundation stone for the Hausen power plant was laid. It was intended to serve as a testament to the "development and work ethic of the Third Reich"([208]), as stated on the document that was embedded in the foundation stone. For Schwede, the power plant in Hausen thus became both a job creation measure and a showcase project,([209]) which he was proud to announce

202 See Meckel, Leonhard: Die Städtischen Werke der Stadtgemeinde Coburg (The Municipal Works of the City of Coburg). In: Stein, Erwin (ed.): Monographs of German Cities. A Presentation of German Cities and Their Work in Economics, Finance, Hygiene, Social Policy, and Technology, Volume XXX Coburg. Coburg 1929, pp. 79–88 and Schwede: Kampf, pp. 243 f.

203 See Mayor Unverfährt, July 17, 1928. StadtACo A 6424.

204 See *Coburger Zeitung*, April 30, 1930.

205 See Lawaczeck, Franz: Technology and Economy in the Third Reich. A Job Creation Program (= National Socialist Library, Volume 38). Munich 1932.

206 The Reinhardt Program, named after the Reich Minister of Finance Fritz Reinhardt, was a package of measures to combat unemployment, in the course of which around 1.5 billion Reichsmarks were invested in promoting employment. See RGBl. 1933 I., pp. 323–329 and 651–653.

207 The Öffa bills were a financial instrument created in 1932 for money creation, which was used to finance public contracts. A similar pre-financing procedure was introduced in 1934 by Hjalmar Schacht with the Mefo bills.

208 Schwede: Kampf, p. 245.

209 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, September 22, 1933. Walter: Coburg, pp. 7, 37–42. It is striking how much space Walter devotes to the construction of the power plant in Hausen in his documentation of Schwede's work up to 1933.



Fig. 19: Mayor Franz Schwede at the laying of the foundation stone for the Hausen power plant on September 21, 1933.

Coburg had the honor of being "the first city to break with the old system in the area of power plant expansion."[210] On September 12, 1934, Mayor Schwede and Minister of State Wagner were able to inaugurate their joint project in Hausen. A rally on Schlossplatz and a community evening in the Hofbräu restaurants brought the inauguration celebrations to Coburg itself, and the Hausen plant was officially handed over to the population as one of Schwede's great achievements.([211])

The connection that Schwede, building officer Fischer, and Minister of the Interior Wagner formed during the construction of the power plant would subsequently have far-reaching consequences for all three. The trio built up a lucrative system in which Arno Fischer made a career for himself in Pomerania and the Bavarian state government, built underwater power plants according to his ideas, and raked in large sums of license fees for all involved. ([212])

Especially after Schwede's departure from Coburg and his subsequent political career, the former mayor of Coburg was increasingly shrouded in

210 *Coburger Nationalzeitung* newspaper, September 22, 1933.
211 See *Coburger Zeitung*, September 12, 1934.
212 See Chapter III2.2.1.3.

an aura of infallibility.[213] The subsequent glorification of his achievements, coupled with negative developments and growing discontent among the population, led to the emergence in Coburg of a "Under Schwede, something like this would never have happened."([214]) The myth surrounding the events of "German Day" and Coburg's pioneering role was thus ultimately supplemented and linked to a personal myth surrounding Franz Schwede. In particular, the NSDAP's electoral success in the Coburg city council in 1929 had made Schwede, as local group leader and faction leader, an integral part of *the Coburg myth* and conferred hero status upon him. His military career in World War I and his repeated public references to his participation in the Battle of Jutland and the sinking of the German fleet at Scapa Flow provided sufficient narrative material, in addition to his political achievements for the NSDAP in Coburg, to embellish the myth in line with national and contemporary male ideals. Schwede's willingness to sacrifice himself for the "people's community" was propagated as a heroic struggle for liberation. He embodied the person who completed the work that Adolf Hitler had begun in Coburg, thereby achieving immeasurable success for the entire movement. Like the entire *myth of Coburg,* his person was now also surrounded by mythical elements, as when the acting mayor Wilhelm Rehlein declared in a speech to the Coburg councilors in 1938: "I would like to consider it providence and not coincidence that Pg. Schwede was transferred to our city in 1922 to serve in a position of responsibility in the municipal works and, from here, to help at the forefront in building our beautiful fatherland."([215])

Franz Schwede's self-portrayal as a political "hero" and the myth of Coburg Schwede himself worked tirelessly to embellish and cement the myth surrounding himself and his *battle for Coburg*. Through publications that portrayed him as a hero, political soldier, and National Socialist conqueror, Schwede succeeded in linking his destiny with that of the city of Coburg. Herbert Gaede, head of the Pomeranian Gau Press Office, summed it up in his biography of Schwede: "Thus Coburg became his destiny, just as his struggle was Coburg's destiny."[216] Schwede's biography *Kampf um Coburg* (Battle for *Coburg*), published in 1939, which bore Hitler's statement "I made politics with Coburg" on the cover, was intended to cement his reconstruction work for eternity and guarantee a political legacy that showed him and the city of Coburg at the forefront of the Nazi movement. [217]

A series of urban development projects initiated under Schwede and primarily planned by architect Reinhard Claaßen ultimately served to

213 Beyond the Vestestadt, Schwede soon became known as a National Socialist figurehead through speeches and public appearances. Tobias Selk, a part-time composer who worked as an administrative director in Bamberg, wrote the Franz Schwede March for Infantry Music in 1933 in honor of Schwede.

214 See, for example, anonymous letter to Mayor Greim. StACo Theater 688.

215 Formal meeting of the councilors and deputy mayors on March 1, 1938. StadtACo A 12247.

216 Gaede: Schwede-Coburg, p. 9. In his description of Schwede's work in Pomerania, Gaede also portrays the history of the district until 1934 as largely unsuccessful and Pomerania as a problem district, despite the success of the NSDAP there, in order to reinforce the image of Schwede as a doer and social reformer.

217 See Schwede: Kampf.

to visually reinforce Schwede's power as local ruler. The "Adolf Hitler House" on Ernstplatz, which served as the NSDAP party headquarters, and the war memorial in the arcades were intended to be "stone embodiments of National Socialism" [218] while also providing visible information about Schwede's achievements.

This connection culminated symbolically in 1934 in a motion by the Coburg City Council to grant the outgoing mayor Schwede the additional title of Coburg. After obtaining the approval of the Reich Ministry of the Interior and the consent of the "Führer" and Reich Chancellor on April 12, 1935, the Gauleiter, his wife, and his daughter were henceforth able to call themselves Schwede-Coburg.[219] This circumstance, which Schwede described as his greatest pride, ensured that Schwede himself, his career, and his entire National Socialist activities were always associated with the city of Coburg as Germany's first Nazi city. [220] Schwede-Coburg became a household name in the "Third Reich." Even in Pomerania, the Gauleiter remained closely connected to his work in Franconia, so much so that the country house in Stettin used by the provincial administration was named Veste Coburg. ([221])On the tenth anniversary of the city council election that made Coburg the first National Socialist city in Germany, Coburg also awarded Schwede honorary citizenship of the city in 1939.[222]

The networks, projects, and social practices that Schwede had established for Coburg in the years leading up to 1934 continued to have a decisive influence on the city's politics in the years that followed. His successor, Dr. Schmidt, explained in this context: "Many of our fellow citizens know that our city is connected and linked to Pg. Schwede for all eternity through countless works. These works will ensure that the memory of Pg. Schwede will never fade in Coburg." ([223])Schwede himself continued to actively influence affairs in Coburg under his first two successors. Upon his departure, Schwede had already announced that "even in the future, when he would only rarely visit Coburg, he would keep a watchful eye on Coburg and ensure that what he had built up would be continued without alteration." [He] threatened troublemakers that he would "hold his fist to their throats even from afar and knock them ruthlessly to the ground."([224])

1.3.2 Dr. Otto Schmidt

1.3.2.1 Career

The role that Franz Schwede had played in Coburg also had direct consequences for his successors, insofar as they were constantly measured against the myth surrounding Schwede. In stark contrast to Schwede, his successor was an administrative expert who had proven himself politically as a protégé and confidant of Franz Schwede.

218 *Bayerische Ostmark*, October 21, 1935.
219 See minutes of the extraordinary confidential city council meeting on July 7, 1934. StadtACo A 8074 a; Reich Ministry of Justice to the Reich and Prussian Minister of the Interior, January 8, 1935; Hans Globke to State Secretary Wilhelm Stuckart, March 21, 1935; Reich and Prussian Ministry of the Interior to the State Secretary and Head of the Reich Chancellery, March 28, 1935. BA R 1501/127674.
220 See Schwede: Kampf, p. 256.
221 See Inachin: Aufstieg, p. 41.
222 See minutes of the councilors' meeting on June 16, 1939, StadtACo A 8074 a.
223 *Bayerische Ostmark*, October 17, 1934.
224 *Coburger Zeitung*, September 12, 1934.

Otto Schmidt was born in Offenbach am Main in December 1901, the son of a railway official. During the war, he served in the state youth defense force and the medical corps. He then studied law in Frankfurt am Main and received his doctorate from the University of Giessen in 1930. Schmidt worked as an assistant judge at the district and regional court in Meseritz and then as a partner to a judicial councilor in Sommerfeld in Lower Lusatia, where he joined the NSDAP and the SA on June 19, 1931. By chance, he came into contact with the lawyer Werner Faber in Coburg, eventually moved to the Vestestadt in 1931, and took over Dr. Faber's practice when he was appointed second mayor. In Coburg, Dr. Schmidt became part of SA Standard 95, soon appeared as a party speaker in election campaigns, and quickly advanced into the inner circle around Franz Schwede. Schmidt established himself in Coburg both professionally and in the NSDAP, took over the chairmanship of the Coburg Lawyers' Association, was appointed Reich Chairman of the National Socialist Lawyers' Association, and rose to become district speaker and deputy district leader in the party. As a legal advisor and lawyer, he defended Franz Schwede and the municipality of Coburg in several cases, including against the Jewish community, and in doing so became a ruthless advocate of the Coburg National Socialists and the ideology of National Socialism. In doing so, he fulfilled two important requirements that were useful to Schwede in establishing his sphere of influence in Coburg. On the one hand, Schmidt presented himself as a down-to-earth and committed Nazi fighter who marched in the SA and was determined and trustworthy in his work. On the other hand, as a lawyer and administrative expert, he could be employed in the administration. In 1933, Schwede finally appointed him as his closest associate and in May 1933 gave him the position of city solicitor. Shortly thereafter, in July 1933, Schmidt became a Coburg city councilor after four seats became vacant due to the expulsion of the Social Democratic members of the city council and their replacements. On November 1, city solicitor Dr. Schmidt was appointed professional and legally trained second mayor after Werner Faber moved to Wittenberg as mayor. Within the party, Dr. Schmidt also served as district training director, legal advisor, and training officer on the staff of the SA-Standarte from February 1934 and took over the leadership of the district leadership in October 1934.

Following Schwede's departure for Stettin and his official resignation as mayor, Otto Schmidt finally took on the role for which he had been preparing for months, effective December 1, 1934. The problem with filling the second mayor's position was that Dr. Otto Schmidt did not have the qualifications for higher judicial and administrative service in Bavaria, and the Bavarian State Ministry of the Interior took offense at this. However, as Werner Faber and Franz Dehler, who did have such qualifications, had already exchanged their posts, the city had to appoint at least one professional member of the city council with the appropriate qualifications. Interior Minister Wagner initially rejected a request for a dispensation submitted by the city of Coburg. (226) With reference to the short

225 See Otto Schmidt's personnel file at the Ministry of Justice. BA R 3001/74577; SA personnel form for Otto Schmidt. BA R 9361-III/569334; Personnel form of Otto Schmidt. StadtACo A 8077; Curriculum vitae of Dr. Otto Schmidt dated June 14, 1937. StAB K3, Government of Upper Franconia, submitted in 1975, 193; *Bayerische Ostmark* dated July 17, 1937.

226 See Adolf Wagner, State Ministry of the Interior to the Coburg City Council, November 28, 1933. StadtACo A 8077.



Fig. 20: Dr. Otto Schmidt in 1936

However, with the imminent introduction of the new German municipal code, Adolf Wagner withdrew his statement in February 1934, allowing Dr. Schmidt to take office as the legally qualified second mayor.[227] In November 1934, however, due to the imminent introduction of the municipal code, Dr. Schmidt was initially elected honorary first mayor of Coburg for one year and was finally appointed professional first mayor in March 1935. Schmidt thus combined the offices of district leader and mayor in his person, as Franz Schwede had done at times. At the same time, Schmidt also took over Schwede's position on the board of the German Municipal Council.

1.3.2.2 Leadership style

Having spent his entire term in office in the shadow of his predecessor and mentor Franz Schwede, Otto Schmidt was hardly able to develop his own political profile in Coburg. He had even borrowed his slogan, "It is not personal vanity, but the unshakeable will to serve the movement that commands us:
'Coburg ahead!'"[229] from his mentor's vocabulary. It became clear

227 See Adolf Wagner, State Ministry of the Interior to the Government of Upper and Middle Franconia, Munich, February 12, 1934. StadtACo A 8077.
228 See Secretariat of the Chief President of Pomerania to Mayor Fiehler, September 3, 1934. BA R 9361-II/1114468 and *Bayerische Ostmark* of May 21, 1935.
229 See special edition of Bayerische Ostmark, June 8, 1935.

This is evident in the speeches and reports on Schmidt's departure from Coburg, in which significantly more was said and written about Franz Schwede than about the person being bid farewell. In fact, Schmidt had always tried to emulate Schwede and continue his legacy in the city, but ultimately failed due to the double burden of party and administration.

Otto Schmidt had no shortage of Nazi zeal and conviction. He impressed with his radical commitment to Nazi goals, his anti-Semitic stance, and his talent as an orator. Schmidt's deep anti-Semitism came to light, for example, when he defended the municipality of Coburg in court against the Jewish community at the beginning of the year. The Jewish community had filed a lawsuit against the city of Coburg for terminating its use of St. Nikolai Chapel, which had served as a synagogue since 1873, at the end of 1932 out of pure harassment. As defense attorney, Schmidt ultimately inflated the legal dispute into a question about the very nature of Judaism, seeking the advice of Julius Streicher, who was known for his vulgar and eliminatory anti-Semitism and for his radical agitation in *the Stürmer*.[231] Schmidt's defense strategy ultimately culminated in an attempt to prove that anti-Semitism was justified by analyzing religion with the help of Dr. Erich Bischoff's book *Das Buch vom Schulchan aruch* (The Book of the *Shulchan Aruch*), quoting Luther several times, and emphasizing the anti-Semitic tradition of the city of Coburg. [232]

Despite his insurmountable anti-Semitism and commitment to the party, Schmidt remained primarily a legal and administrative expert, torn between his party and administrative offices. A report on the Coburg district leadership in the *Coburger Nationalzeitung newspaper* portrayed Schmidt as a busy bureaucrat, sitting at his desk in a suit, with a telephone in one hand and files in the other.[233] Since the administration of the city of Coburg was considered particularly difficult compared to other cities of similar size, not least because of the immensely high cultural budget, and his predecessor had left him with financial challenges in particular, his entire commitment was required in this area. Schmidt always faithfully followed the party line and made the principles of National Socialist ideology the benchmark for his administrative actions. However, he acted much more hesitantly than his predecessor. Schmidt's strength and preference lay in his attention to detail and his balanced and well-founded weighing of decisions, but his dual role in the party and the administration, combined with the sheer volume of tasks, usually did not allow him enough time and leeway, so that he repeatedly had to resort to administrative rationalization measures.[234] He preferred to consult with the councilors or to gather information by submitting inquiries to the German Municipal Council or by following the example of other cities.

230 See *Bayerische Ostmark*, October 16/17, 1937.

231 See Dr. Schmidt to the editors of Der Stürmer, January 9, 1933. StadtACo Files of attorney Dr. Schmidt, submitted to the main office.

232 See draft: Dr. Schmidt to the civil chamber of the regional court in the matter of the Jewish religious community. StadtACo Files of attorney Dr. Schmidt, submitted to the main office. At the end of the proceedings, Schmidt's efforts were overtaken by political reality. In March 1933, the religious community withdrew its lawsuit after several of its members were placed in "protective custody."

233 See special edition of the Bayerische Ostmark from June 8, 1935.

234 See, for example, Schmidt's handling of evidence of the "Aryan" ancestry of municipal employees. StadtACo A 7888 and 7889.

resolve.[235] His priority was to ensure that everything ran smoothly and that officials acted lawfully in accordance with the regime. He saw his duty and task for the National Socialist state primarily as strict compliance with the law, and he demanded the same from officials. While as a lawyer defending the National Socialist cause before 1933 he was obviously prepared to bend the law for the party, he felt much more bound by Nazi jurisprudence. [236] Significant for Schmidt's administrative professional ethics was, for example, the dispute over the question of civil registry fees for leaving the church. When church resignations increased after the end of *the church struggle*, it became apparent that since 1925 the registry office had not been charging the fees to the extent ordered by the government of Upper Franconia. When, on Schmidt's instructions, the fees were duly increased following the example of the city of Nuremberg, this immediately provoked the displeasure of the German Faith Movement, whose followers wanted to break away from the Christian denominations. Like the question of church attendance itself, the issue became a political one, and the German Faith Movement threatened to report Coburg to the Deputy Führer and the Reich Ministry of Science, Education, and National Education as hostile to "believers in God."[237]Although Schmidt fully understood the aspirations of the nationalist alternative to the Christian denominations, he insisted on the existing legal situation and the official duties of his civil servants. [238]It was Schmidt's successors, Wilhelm Rehlein and August Greim, who finally decided to take preemptive action on behalf of Coburg. Shortly after Schmidt's departure, Rehlein first reduced the minimum fees, and Greim finally ordered a fee waiver for those leaving the church, even before there was a Reich-wide, overriding instruction to do so.

Otto Schmidt in Sweden's shadow

Otto Schmidt seemed to have had less of a predisposition toward being a charismatic leader in terms of his personality and demeanor, and compared to his predecessor, he established a system of rule that was less reliant on unrestricted adherence to the "Führer principle." However, within the hierarchical structure of local government, Schmidt actively sought to align the administrative apparatus with his own views and to enforce the corresponding discipline.Nevertheless, individual departments repeatedly attempted to bypass him.

235 When Schmidt spoke out against the preliminary decision of the welfare advisory board and welfare office on the issue of naturalizing Austrians, for example, he sought information from the German Municipal Council instead of insisting on the general validity of his decision on the basis of the "Führer principle." See minutes of the meeting of the Administrative Advisory Board on September 2, 1935. StadtACo A 12244.

236 See Dr. Schmidt's files in the cases of Schwede v. Friedmann and Stadtgemeinde v. Jewish Community. StadtACo Files of attorney Dr. Schmidt, Main Office.

237 See German Religious Community to the Coburg Registry Office, June 16, 1937. StadtACo A 5881.

238 In his reply, Schmidt stated: "Charging a fee lower than the minimum fees prescribed by law is not legally permissible and would constitute a breach of official duties on the part of the officials involved, which can never be in the interests of the Nazi state." Mayor Dr. Schmidt to the German Religious Community, June 21, 1937. StadtACo A 5881.

239 See minutes of the administrative advisory board meeting of July 25, 1939. StadtACo A 5881.

240 See Hermann Vollmuth to all municipal departments, January 17, 1936. StadtACo A 6274.

act.[241] Unlike his predecessor, he did not base his office on the construct of a charismatic leader, but rather managed the administration using administrative techniques. He thus corresponded more to the image of an ideal administrative leader who combined expertise, precision, and loyalty to the NSDAP and its goals.[242] The sole responsibility of the city leader associated with the "Führer principle," the dual role as head of the party and the administration, and the special pressure inherent in Coburg's role in the "Third Reich" became more of a burden in Schmidt's case and the special challenge of Coburg's municipal work. This was all the more so because Coburg was considered "a prime example of a National Socialist city administration in the new Reich" [243]and was still held up as an exemplary municipality even after 1933. In order to meet the demands of his office and at the same time assert himself against the strong network of "old fighters," Dr. Schmidt had also enlisted the help of Hermann Vollmuth, born on September 25, 1900, an external financial expert whom he provided with sufficient authority, even though Vollmuth had only joined the party in 1935.[244] The desire for him to be accepted by the population, the party, and the administration, even though he was not a native of Coburg, also seemed to have played an important role in this. Doing justice to the city and its inhabitants in all their idiosyncrasies became an important guiding principle for the newcomer. The new mayor therefore attached great importance to explaining his policies to the population. With this in mind, he scheduled a public city council meeting in the Hofbräusaal at the beginning of 1935, at which he reported on his administration to the population in order to gain their trust.

When important major events were scheduled in Coburg, such as the groundbreaking ceremony and dedication speech for the future war memorial at the arcades in March 1935, a festive meeting of the city council in honor of honorary citizen Carl Eduard and the 75th anniversary of the founding of the German Gymnastics Association in June 1935, the general roll call of the NSKK Führer Corps, which Hitler himself attended, or the consecration of the memorial in the arcades in October 1935, as well as the topping-out ceremony for the new building at Gräfsblock in October 1936, Schwede repeatedly made prominent appearances in Coburg. He did not miss the opportunity to publicly promote the pioneering projects he had initiated during his term of office. However, Schwede's presence made it all the more difficult for Dr. Schmidt to assert his rightful claim to leadership. This made it almost impossible for him not to be perceived as merely Schwede's placeholder in Coburg.

In addition, he repeatedly involved the councilors, some of whom formed a close-knit circle of those involved in *the struggle for Coburg*, in his politics, despite their disempowerment under the German municipal code. He tried to influence them not primarily through the exercise of hierarchical power, but also through arguments and legal

241 See Emil Steiner to Mayor Dr. Schmidt, May 29, 1935. StadtACo A 6274.
242 See Gotto: Kommunalpolitik, p. 102.
243 *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, May 30, 1934.
244 After the war, Hermann Vollmuth was classified as a follower by the Coburg Denazification Tribunal. See: Penalty decision of the Coburg Denazification Tribunal, April 10, 1948. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg City V 46.
245 See public meeting of the city council. StadtACo A 6429.
246 See *Bayerische Ostmark*, March 18, June 10, October 20, October 21, 1935, and October 11, 1936.

convince them of his decisions. At the same time, a parallel network of informal communication established itself under him, especially since Schmidt's basic attitude meant that the Coburg "old guard" around city inspector Ernst Kuhn and timber merchant Georg Linke, as well as textile merchant Karl Hartung, felt called upon to engage in politics themselves. The central question was how and by whom Sweden's legacy in Coburg should be continued, as well as the possibility of aligning local economic policy for their own economic advantage. Although Schmidt advocated a thoroughly radical anti-Semitic approach to the expulsion of Jews from economic life, the network around Kuhn was a key driver of the boycott movement. Thanks in particular to their seats on the administrative senate, Kuhn and Hartung were able to assume a powerful position in important decision-making processes and influence Schmidt's policies. Partly due to the fact that Schmidt was not from Coburg, this ruling clique only accepted him to a limited extent and had only limited respect for his leadership role. In the end, the conflict escalated to such an extent that Dr. Schmidt instructed his receptionist to no longer allow certain "old fighters" to see him.

In the summer of 1936, the conflict between Dr. Schmidt and the Coburg clique
The "old fighters" also publicly broke ranks, clearly and deliberately questioning Schmidt's leadership role and demonstrating their self-confidence to the community leader. The background to the dispute was the takeover of the Conitzer & Söhne department store by Moritz Döring in the course of the "Aryanization" of Coburg's economy. Döring was not a party member himself, but he was a direct economic competitor of Karl Hartung, who in turn had expressed interest in the Conitzer business. After Schmidt had approved the takeover of the department store by Döring because, as mayor, he wanted to strictly adhere to the legal provisions and there were no grounds for refusing the planned transfer, Hartung asked to be dismissed as a councilor. He invoked the duty of councilors to represent the mayor's decisions to the population and to communicate them, a duty he no longer wished to fulfill. Although the *party representative* Dr. Paul Müller had attempted to mediate in the matter, Hartung embarrassed the mayor with his actions. The businessman now openly circumvented the "Führer principle," to which Dr. Schmidt had repeatedly referred him, convened a meeting behind the mayor's back of all retailers interested in removing Conitzer, and even traveled to Ansbach to see Senior Government Official Doebel to obtain the government's position and seek advice on his course of action. The matter became even more problematic for Schmidt when district judge and senior administrator Franz Reeg Hartung followed suit. The opposition of this central network of "old fighters," which had gained far-reaching influence, especially in economic matters, limited the mayor's room for maneuver despite the
"Führer principle." [249]

247 See, for example, the minutes of the meeting of the Administrative Advisory Board on August 17, 1936. StadtACo A 12244.
248 See affidavit by Theodor Birkner, October 14, 1947, and affidavit by Alfred Sauerteig, May 20, 1948. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg City W 73.
249 See Mayor Dr. Schmidt to Party Representative Dr. Müller, August 24, 1936. StadtACo A 6430. See also chapters III2.2.3.1 and IV3.2.1.3.

1.3.2.3 Political and administrative guidelines

As mayor, Schmidt's primary concern was to continue the legacy and work of his predecessor in Coburg, so he always used Franz Schwede as a benchmark for his actions. However, the mythologization and glorification of Schwede meant that no subsequent mayor of the city could achieve his iconic status. To make matters worse, Schwede, as Gauleiter in Pomerania, actively intervened in Coburg affairs and was repeatedly called upon to make political decisions. In addition, right at the beginning of Schmidt's term of office, the administration had to be reorganized with the introduction of the German Municipal Code, which tied up resources in the administration. However, Dr. Schmidt's organizational talent stood him in good stead for this task. In addition, for a medium-sized town of Coburg's size in the Nazi state, apart from a particular radicalism in the interpretation of Nazi ideology, there was no longer the same scope for outstanding, trend-setting, and pioneering actions as there had been before 1933. At the same time, Schmidt's term of office also coincided with a phase of the Nazi regime when such independent initiatives were to give way to a top-down, coordinated approach.

As mayor and district leader, Schmidt paid particular attention to cultural and economic policy. This was also the case after his term in office saw both the consolidation and profiling of the party externally and the decreed expulsion of Jews from economic life. Right at the start of his term in office, Dr. Schmidt sent a signal to the population that was intended to demonstrate his tough and unyielding determination in the fight to enforce National Socialist principles in Coburg. "As the head of our city, which, due to its political tradition, has a special obligation to set a good example in the enforcement of National Socialist principles everywhere and to be at the forefront of the defensive struggle against all provocative and anti-state and anti-people elements." Schmidt felt compelled to issue a circular to city officials, employees, and workers in August 1935, in which he urged each of them personally to adopt a strictly anti-Semitic lifestyle in order to keep their jobs with the city. The announcement, which was published in the daily newspapers, contained a cynical warning to the city's Jewish population that Coburg's alleged generosity toward Judaism had its limits.

Schmidt's political milestones

During his term in office, Schmidt ultimately focused on exploiting what Schwede had developed in Coburg for propaganda purposes, improving the city's public image, and highlighting its advantages. This included, for example, a targeted transport policy, the active promotion of tourism through a tourist tax, and the continued beautification and expansion of the city under his leadership. At the same time, a number of Schwede's major projects had to be completed, including measures to create jobs, the completion of municipal incorporations,

250 When Dr. Schmidt himself was asked what special achievements he had accomplished for Coburg, he initially replied that Schwede had already done most of the work when he took office. See special edition of the Bayerische Ostmark from June 8, 1935.

251 See *Bayerische Ostmark*, *Coburger Zeitung*, and *Coburger Tageblatt* of August 13, 1935.

the merger of the savings banks in the Coburg region, the construction of the "Adolf Hitler House," the memorial in the arcades, and the Gräfsblock. One focus of Schmidt's term in office was therefore on the cultural sphere. Schmidt succeeded in the long struggle to preserve the Coburg State Theater, in a tough battle with Joseph Goebbels, among others, to obtain funding and subsidies from the Reich and the state. Another personal concern of Schmidt's was to revive interest in the Coburg composer Felix Draeseke, who had been completely forgotten after the First World War.

However, the tough negotiations over financial subsidies for the state theater were not the only indication that Dr. Schmidt was by no means lacking in assertiveness, even when it came to using unfair means to achieve a political goal. When it came to Coburg becoming a Wehrmacht location again after the incorporations, a suitable site had to be found for the construction of barracks.[253] In 1935, the city only had the old barracks of the 95th in Neustädter Straße at its disposal, which meant that Coburg was initially not considered for a garrison expansion. In this context, the infantry division was to be relocated away from the city and a motorized unit was to move here instead. After several negotiations with the War Ministry, Schmidt assured Reich Minister of Defense von Blomberg that he would find a suitable site. [254]In the course of these negotiations, the Neudörfles manor came to the attention of the city administration. It was owned by the Ulmann family, whose father Erich was considered a "half-Jew" according to Nazi law. The enclosed nature of the property was ideal for growing grain, which is why the Ulmann family wanted to keep it and refused to give it up. While the Ulmann family enlisted the help of Alfred Hausknecht, a commercial councilor and former president of the Coburg Chamber of Industry and Commerce, in the negotiations, Mayor Dr. Schmidt resorted to threats and partisan pressure in the most extreme form, which he was able to exert both as mayor and as district leader. Against the backdrop of the well-known mistreatment of political opponents in Coburg, Schmidt now threatened Ulmann that it could become unpleasant for her if it became public knowledge that she was standing in the way of the city of Coburg's plans and that his behavior would certainly cause considerable agitation among the unemployed SA and SS men in particular. In this context, Schmidt made it unmistakably clear that he intended to pull out all the stops to realize the city's plan and that any rejection of Ulmann on the part of the city administration would result in corresponding action.[255]Ultimately, the owners of the property had no choice but to agree to an exchange in which they were allocated a smaller plot of land without compensation. As a "half-Jew," Ulmann was also unable to secure the support of the district farmers' association, even though he was actually entitled to special protection as a farmer. After the city gave the Wehrmacht

252 See Chapter IV1.2.1.2.

253 The discussions about the expansion of the garrison were initiated by Schwede himself.

254 See the decision of the Reparations Chamber of October 2, 1952, as well as various witness statements and transcripts in the case of Ullmann v. City of Coburg. StANü Reparations Authority III Upper and Middle Franconia 5115.

255 See Dr. Schmidt to Commercial Councilor Hausknecht, August 15, 1935. StANü Reparations Authority III Upper and Middle Franconia 5115.

Since the city had to make the property available free of charge, the route taken was a land exchange. The city then built the Hindenburg Barracks on Ulmann's land by 1936, which was later incorporated into Coburg. [256] The situation was similar with the construction of further barracks, whereby after Ulmann's death, the Reich Treasury acquired land for the army and put pressure on the family with a short reflection period and a fixed purchase price. As a result, not only was the motorized unit of Machine Gun Battalion 6 transferred from Bamberg to Coburg, but Infantry Regiment 95 also remained in the city.

The city's honorary sponsorships for mothers with many children were seen as a project with which Schmidt himself and his work as mayor wanted to raise his profile and follow in the footsteps of his predecessor as a social politician. Although this was a pioneering project in line with the city's claim to be a trailblazer, it did not achieve the same level of recognition and appreciation here or beyond the region as Schwede's projects had done. In keeping with Schmidt's style, the public events associated with the honorary sponsorships were characterized more by modesty than by large-scale self-promotion on the part of the mayor.[257]Schmidt's actual work, the reorganization of Coburg's administration, the balancing of Coburg's financial policy, and the conversion of short-term debt into long-term debt through rigorous austerity measures, for which he had gained an tireless ally in Hermann Vollmuth, remained projects that flourished more quietly in the confines of the office than on the big public stage. The fact that it fell to his term of office to clean up the mess left by his predecessor's actionist policies, which had exceeded the city's financial capabilities, contributed significantly to this situation.

At Dr. Schmidt's official farewell ceremony in Coburg, which was also attended by Carl Eduard in his brown shirt as a recipient of the "Coburg Medal of Honor," Wilhelm Rehlein summed up Dr. Schmidt's relationship with the city of Coburg in a smug and significant manner: "You can consider yourself fortunate to have led a city during these difficult years, which, due to its great tradition and its importance in the struggle for the freedom of the German people, required special commitment."[258] Dr. Schmidt's self-assessment of his work in Coburg, as he announced it upon his departure from the Vestestadt, is also significant and, typical of Schmidt, contains clearly justifying and explanatory tones. In it, Dr. Schmidt complains that his time in Coburg was not always easy for him, especially since he had had no opportunity to acquire the necessary knowledge of the subject matter and people that would have been necessary for his dual function. He acknowledged that this dual role as district leader and mayor was not uncommon after 1933, but that his colleagues had usually held one or the other office before and were therefore familiar with the tasks involved. Due to the "breathtaking pace of the first years of development," he had never found the time to deal with the various areas of his responsibility in detail, even after his appointment. At the same time, he emphasized the

256 See also StadtACo A 7965.
257 For honorary sponsorships, see Chapter IV2.1.1.3.
258 See *Bayerische Ostmark* from October 16/17, 1937.

Numerous disagreements and disputes he had had in Coburg.

In the summer of 1937, Dr. Otto Schmidt finally moved from Coburg to Bayreuth City Hall after Dr. Karl Schlumprecht had vacated the post of mayor following differences with Gauleiter Wächtler. Wächtler had specifically chosen Otto Schmidt for this position without Schmidt having applied for it and appointed him to the office without an official advertisement. Schmidt's proven loyalty to National Socialist ideology, his ability to submit to authority, and his lack of despotic tendencies compared to other National Socialist leaders seemed to have appealed to Wächtler after his disputes with his predecessor.[260] Confirmed bythe Reich Governor, Schmidt took up his new post in Bayreuth in July 1937, but soon reached his limits in terms of the loyalty he was expected to show to the Gauleiter in the Bayreuth "doctors' dispute."[261] After having to take a clear stand against Wächtler, but not wanting to show this publicly, he drew the consequences and resigned from his position as mayor of Bayreuth on May 1, 1938. Schmidt now returned to his actual mentor and, through his connections to Franz Schwede and Werner Faber, was appointed second mayor of Stettin. Dr. Schmidt then also served as mayor of Schneidemühl, which was part of the province of Pomerania.

1.3.3 Wilhelm Rehlein

1.3.3.1 Career

Until a new mayor was appointed, Wilhelm Rehlein, who had previously served as third and second mayor, took over the duties of first mayor on an interim basis. Rehlein was born on November 17, 1885, in Ketschendorf near Coburg into an established and respected family of carpenters, with Rehlein's father being awarded the title of purveyor to the court in 1913. After attending the Bürgerschule (citizens' school), Rehlein completed an apprenticeship as a machinist and gained practical experience in his field of work in order to take on tasks in his parents' business together with his brother. According to his own statements, he attended lectures at the Technical College in Hildburghausen and the Technical University of Darmstadt, but did not actually obtain a degree. At the same time, Rehlein joined the

259 See ibid.

260 See *Bayerische Ostmark*, July 17/18, 1937, and Hofmann: Oberfranken, p. 433 f.

261 In the conflict surrounding the dismissal and arrest of two doctors at Bayreuth Hospital, Wächtler had arbitrarily interfered in Schmidt's area of responsibility. See Hofmann: Oberfranken, pp. 428–437, on the Bayreuth doctors' dispute.

262 See Dr. Schmidt's personnel file from 1944. BA R 9361-II/1114468. It remains unclear to what extent the Otto Schmidt mentioned by Helge Mattheisen, who was appointed district leader of Greifswald, was the former mayor of Coburg. In Schmidt's personnel file, he is listed as mayor of Schneidemühl until 1945. See Mattheisen, Helge: The NSDAP as the core of the national community. The bourgeois-national camp in Greifswald and the new party. In: Bispinck, Henrik; van Melis, Damian; Wagner, Andreas (eds.): Nationalsozialismus in Mecklenburg und Vorpommern. Schwerin 2001, pp. 11–33, here p. 20. Harald Sandner states that Schmidt, as district leader of Greifswald, was shot on
April 30, 1945, while attempting to prevent the city from surrendering without a fight. See Sandner: Coburg, p. 190.



Fig. 21: Wilhelm Rehlein in 1933

October 1907, he joined the navy in Wilhelmshaven, where he also served during World War I. Here, Rehlein was a deck officer with the IX. Torpedo Boat Fleet Seewehr II in various theaters of war, including the Battle of Jutland, for which he was awarded several decorations, including the Duke Carl Eduard Cross of Merit, the Iron Cross Second Class, the Knight's Cross Second Class, and the Ernestine Order of Merit. It was here that he met Franz Schwede, with whom he would form a lasting wartime friendship. After the end of the war, Rehlein once again worked as an operations manager without training in his parents' company, Tobias Frommann, while also becoming actively involved in local politics in Coburg. In 1924, he was elected to the city council as the leading candidate of *the Patriotic Citizens' Bloc*. Later, Rehlein joined the *Stahlhelm*, helped found a local group in Coburg, and rose to become its district leader and deputy district leader. In 1929, Rehlein was re-elected to the city council as a candidate for the DNVP and then the *Bürger- und Wirtschaftsblock (Citizens' and Economic Bloc)*.[263]

In the process of the NSDAP's seizure of power in Coburg, Wilhelm Rehlein can ultimately be seen, alongside Karl Güntzel, as the decisive figure from the bourgeois camp.

263 See Wilhelm Rehlein's curriculum vitae. StadtACo A 6349; curriculum vitae dated April 20, 1948. StACo Spruchkammer Coburg Stadt R 45; personnel file Wilhelm Rehlein. StadtACo A 8082 and BA R 9361-II/1049372.

who bridged the gap between the urban bourgeoisie and the NSDAP. [264] Not least his wartime comradeship with Schwede and the National Socialists' promise to reward him politically later on for his support in the mayoral question ultimately persuaded him to support the NSDAP's plans. Even though Rehlein's Stahlhelm comrades initially condemned his solidarity with Schwede, the signal effect of the bourgeoisie on Coburg's urban society and, in particular, on the nationalist Coburg milieu should not be underestimated. Schwede deliberately exploited his war comrade for his own political purposes. Rehlein later justified his decision not to join the NSDAP immediately after his vote had enabled Franz Schwede to become Coburg's third mayor, thereby shifting the balance of power in the city council definitively in favor of the NSDAP, by referring to an agreement between himself and Schwede. According to this agreement, he was to ensure that his comrades in *the Stahlhelm* did not fall under the influence of the reactionaries. He later tried to make up for the stigma of his late entry into the party – by Coburg standards – by

December 28, 1929, when he took a positive stance toward the NSDAP, as he wanted to claim his actual date of joining the party. [265]With the permission of the Bayreuth SA Brigade, he was ultimately also allowed to wear the armbands from 1929 onwards.[266] Rehlein actually joined the NSDAP and the SA in May 1932. In the election proposals submitted for the "Gleichschaltung" (enforced conformity) of the city council, he was ultimately proposed as a substitute for the NSDAP.

Wilhelm Rehlein initially served as the city's third mayor after Schwede and Faber from October 16, 1931, and shortly thereafter was assigned responsibility for the housing department and the housing office.[267] In addition, he was active as a district speaker and, after joining the party, as the Nazi district office manager for local politics and district economic advisor, and later as head of the main office for job creation, where he was supposed to ensure that self-employed "old fighters" were given sufficient work.[268] Once the Third Reich came to power, he was immediately able to expand his influence and benefit from his party membership. From April 1933, Rehlein served as special commissioner of the Coburg Chamber of Crafts and, from February 1934, as its honorary president. On top of that, Rehlein was appointed settlement officer in SA Standard 95 in December 1933. In July 1933/April 1934, Rehlein finally rose to the position of professional city planning officer after Ernst Köster was dismissed, and from March 1935 he was appointed professional deputy mayor under Schmidt, while retaining the city planning office. By cleverly scheduling Rehlein's re-election a few days

264 However, Karl Güntzel never joined the NSDAP, but only the NSV. For many who ruled out joining the party, this step was a way of signaling their goodwill toward the party and its branches and affiliated associations while reducing the pressure on them to become involved in the party. See Karl Güntzel's personnel file. StABa Government of Upper Franconia K3/1967, 2905.

265 See Wilhelm Rehlein to Standartenführer Grempel, October 22, 1934. BA R 9361-II/1049372.

266 See Wilhelm Rehlein's curriculum vitae dated July 15, 1937. BA R 9361-II/1049372.

267 Rehlein initially did not want to accept the office of third mayor and expressed this in a letter to Franz Schwede. Rehlein cited health reasons. He was absent from the meeting at which he was appointed third mayor.

268 See: The district economic advisor in the Bavarian Ostmark district, Coburg district, to district administrator Franz Dehler, March 6, 1935. StACo LRA 12266.

Since this had taken place before the new DGO came into force, the requirement to advertise the position and obtain confirmation from the Reich Governor could be circumvented in accordance with § 12 of the 1st Implementation Ordinance. In fact, without a university degree, Rehlein would have had little chance of getting the job in this case, since his predecessors as city planning officer had all been university graduates and the municipal administration and police senate had expressly required a university education, practical experience in urban planning, and artistic talent for the position. After the reform of the German Municipal Code, this office was converted into that of First Deputy Mayor. Rehlein continued to receive the salary of a full-time Second Mayor, even though he did not have his own department to manage as mayor. After Schmidt's move to Bayreuth, Rehlein finally rose to the position of acting mayor.

1.3.3.2 Leadership style

Shortly after Rehlein joined the NSDAP, he presented himself as a staunch National Socialist and supported the NSDAP's measures after it came to power. Rehlein deliberately presented himself as a local political figure who belonged to the inner circle of those in charge. He always made public appearances in his SA uniform and positioned himself in the front row. His superiors described him as energetic, tireless in his work, and imbued with a strong sense of duty.

In fact, however, he also had problems asserting himself in the administration in his role as acting mayor and enforcing the "Führer principle." Not least because, given the large number of "old fighters" in Coburg and in the administration itself, Rehlein could not claim this honorary title for himself, had repeatedly spoken out against them in the NSDAP's struggle for power, and had only joined the party in 1932, which disqualified him in the eyes of some as a National Socialist leader. A few months after taking office as acting mayor in November 1937, he felt compelled to send a circular to the various departments of the city administration complaining that there were increasing cases of individual departments taking arbitrary decisions on matters that were exclusively the responsibility of the mayor. These included, for example, changes in the positions of municipal workers, the awarding of professional titles, and other personnel matters that had been initiated behind his back. In this context, Rehlein drew attention to the provisions of the German Municipal Code and made it clear that he would no longer tolerate any arbitrary actions in the future. In the event of further violations of the Führer principle in the city administration, he reserved the right to take "appropriate measures" against the guilty officials.[272] Rehlein demanded absolute punctuality and conscientiousness in the performance of their duties from his subordinates in the city administration and announced that he would apply strict standards in all cases of neglect of duty. [273] In his dealings with

269 See Mayor Dr. Langer to the State Ministry of the Interior, July 1, 1949. StadtACo A 8082.
270 See judgment of the Coburg City Tribunal of September 3, 1948. StACo Coburg City Tribunal R45.
271 See assessment for SA leaders dated November 14, 1941. BA R 9361-III/569079.
272 See Rehlein's circular dated November 13, 1937. StadtACo 6274.
273 See memo from police sergeant Gerber to the police department, March 29, 1938. StadtACo A 8462.

Even before his appointment as mayor, Rehlein often used a harsh tone with his subordinates and made his decision-making authority clear.In July 1938, he obliged city administration employees to show the "German salute" as a sign of "the German people's solidarity with their Führer." The city leadership reserved the right to take action against any officials who failed to comply in the future for neglect of their official duties.

Under Rehlein's leadership, the network of "old fighters" and councilors ultimately remained a decisive power factor. The provisional nature of his office and the fact that Rehlein allowed other leaders to claim the right to define the welfare of the city contributed to this. However, this constellation of power was to give rise to a conflict that provoked a direct power struggle with the Gau leadership.

Shortly after Dr. Schmidt's departure from Coburg, the position of mayor of the city of Coburg was publicly advertised in accordance with § 41 of the DGO. This was done at the express request of Gauleiter Wächtler in consultation with Ludwig Ruckdeschel. By law, Dr. Müller was also involved in the process as *the party representative* to whom all applications had to be forwarded for review before the Gau leadership made a selection. Wilhelm Rehlein applied for the position of mayor himself in order to make his provisional appointment official. In his letter of application, he expressly noted that the entire Coburg municipal council, but above all the "old guard," stood behind him and his application. Rehlein also named Franz Schwede as his advocate, from whom information about his local political activities could be obtained.Rehlein would not only have been able to serve the local "old fighters" as a compliant mayor, he would also have guaranteed that Franz Schwede could maintain his influence on affairs in Coburg. However, it soon became apparent that the Gau leadership, and Gauleiter Wächtler in particular, were no longer willing to accept Schwede's attempts to interfere in his Gau, as had been commonplace under his predecessor Schemm. Rehlein's application was therefore not approved by the Gau leadership.

Ultimately, the party representative and city council chose Dr. Karl Haidn from among 28 promising applications from experienced and mostly highly educated administrative officials. Haidn was born in Loizersdorf in Lower Bavaria in September 1903, studied law, and passed the higher judicial and administrative service examination in 1927. After obtaining his doctorate and passing his second state examination, he worked as a lawyer in Waldkirchen, where he joined the NSDAP in March 1931 and rose to become mayor and district leader in 1933. In 1934, Haidn, who also wrote Nazi legal literature himself, took up a position in the Reich Legal Office of the NSDAP, where he worked until 1938.[277] The first disagreements between the councilors had already arisen during the negotiations on Haidn's salary. Since Haidn had received a higher monthly salary in his last position than was stipulated for the position of mayor of Coburg, his salary in Coburg was also to be adjusted, where

274 See, for example, Rehlein to the police department, April 4, 1935. StadtACo A 8376.
275 See circular from the city treasurer dated July 8, 1938. StadtACo A 8462.
276 See Wilhelm Rehlein's letter of application dated August 25, 1937. StadtACo A 7940.
277 See BA R 9361-II/351787.

against which councilors Georg Linke, Ernst Kuhn, and Max Link officially lodged their objection.[278]

Shortly before Haidn's official inauguration ceremony, which was to take place at the same time as August Greim's appointment as district leader and in which Gauleiter Wächtler was also involved, he withdrew his application. The reason for this was a meeting in February 1938 between Karl Haidn and a group of councilors at the Hotel Excelsior, during which they made it clear to the mayoral candidate that he would not have the support of the "old guard" in Coburg and would find it difficult to pursue his political agenda against this united front.[279] Ernst Kuhn had already attempted to speak to Rudolf Hess, the Führer's deputy, in Munich about the question of the mayor of Coburg and had reported the facts to Alfred Leitgen, the Führer's deputy's adjutant. Haidn's visit to Coburg had probably come about at Rehlein's suggestion when he had met Haidn in Munich and advised him to talk to the councilors in Coburg before taking office. [280]

Despite their rejection of Rehlein's candidacy, the councilors around Linke and Kuhn were keen to appoint a mayor from among the ranks of Coburg's citizens and had already divided their spheres of influence among themselves in this constellation. Ernst Kuhn in particular wanted to become deputy mayor under a mayor Rehlein. An outsider as mayor, to whom they would have to submit in accordance with the "Führer principle," was not in the interests of those who claimed that, with Schwede's backing, they actually wanted to determine the shape of Nazi Coburg in order to secure their influence and do justice to Coburg's role as the first Nazi city. To this end, they had deliberately accepted a power struggle with Gauleiter Wächtler, relying on the supposed backing of the Gauleiter in Pomerania and his connections to the party leadership. However, given Wächtler's actual real political power, the attempt to usurp Coburg City Hall was doomed to failure. Although the whole affair was a public embarrassment for the Gau leadership and Wächtler's preferred candidate did not accept the post in Coburg, Wächtler was ultimately able to place a trusted party comrade in the Coburg mayor's chair. At the suggestion of party representative Dr. Müller, Coburg district leader August Greim was then appointed mayor of the city without the position being re-advertised. In this context, Dr. Müller made it clear to the Coburg councilors that their approval of Greim's appointment was essential, whereupon they approved Greim's appointment without any debate.

At the same time, the campaign highlighted divisions among the councilors, as the other members of the council and Deputy Heimberger had supported Rehlein, but Haidn's appointment and compliance with the will of the

278 three councilors put their dissenting opinion on record, and another had certain reservations. See Mayor Rehlein to the Gau Office of the Bavarian Ostmark, Office for Municipal Policy, February 21, 1938. StadtACo A 7940.

279 See the Coburg district leadership to Gauleiter Wächtler, February 4, 1938. StABa M 30, 1104.

280 See ibid.

281 See transcript of the closed-door meeting between the NSDAP representative for the city district of Coburg and the councilors, September 27, 1938. SatdtACo A 7940.

Gauleiters, however, had immediately responded positively. The other councilors sharply condemned the actions of Kuhn's clique. [282]

1.3.3.3 Political and administrative guidelines

What Rehlein himself wanted to declare his life's work did not fall within his time as acting mayor, but rather within his time as city planning officer. The former *Stahlhelm member* was primarily involved in Coburg politics in two major areas. On the one hand, the establishment of the Coburg Labor Service, including the labor service camp in Wüstenahorn, was due to the preparatory work of *the Stahlhelm* and Rehlein, although this was later primarily attributed to Franz Schwede. After Schwede had also handed over responsibility for the youth labor camp to Wilhelm Rehlein, the latter took charge of implementing and developing Coburg's prestigious project. Rehlein carried out inspection visits to the camp several times a week and represented it to the outside world.[283] For their services to the labor service, Franz Schwede and Wilhelm Rehlein were ultimately the first politicians in the Reich to be awarded the golden badge of the Förderverband (Support Association) in December 1933.[284]

In addition, Rehlein presented himself in his role as city planning officer as the architect of a new Coburg and a key pioneer of urban development. In 1938, he summarized the city's work, which he had influenced, as an example of National Socialist reconstruction efforts as follows:

> "In quick succession, the most important buildings constructed in the past five years were the war memorial in the arcades on Schlossplatz, the new commercial and vocational school building, the new building at the hospital tower and the Hitler Youth home, the exterior renovation of St. Moritz Church, the construction of 86 small housing developments on Spittelleite and 32 small housing developments on Schindberg, the Huth homeowner development and in the Ketschendorf district. The new administration building for the United Coburg Savings Banks, with the simultaneous establishment of a new office building for the executive and administrative police, is currently still under construction. The strong promotion of private housing construction, the creation of the male and female labor service camps, and the expansion of Hohenfels Castle as a school for female Nazi leaders, the construction of a new retirement home, the renovation and expansion of the slaughterhouse, and the establishment of a livestock market, renovation and improvement work on the state theater, the expansion of the Mönchröden waterworks, the construction of the Hausen power plant, and many new road construction projects show that the city of Coburg is aware of its duty and responsibility as Germany's first National Socialist city."[286]

In fact, however, due to his lack of training and skills, Rehlein did not primarily function as the creative force and architect of the projects entrusted to him, all of which he attributed to the plans of the city planning office. This role was played by the architect in the majority of the city's prestigious construction projects.

282 See Die Kreisleitung Coburg an den Gauleiter Wächtler, February 4, 1938. StABa M 30, 1104.
283 See Chapter IV2.1.2.1.2.
284 See Deutscher Arbeitsdienst Arbeitsgau 28 Franken, Sinnerer to the group leadership 280 Deutscher Arbeitsdienst Kulmbach, May 18, 1934. StadtACo A 7992.
285 See Boseckert: NS-Baupolitik, pp. 109–126.
286 Rehlein, Wilhelm: Coburg baut! In: Die nationalsozialistische Gemeinde. Munich 1938, pp. 722–723, here p. 722.

Reinhard Claaßen took over. Much of the planning for the construction measures dated back to before the First World War, but could not be tackled after the end of the war due to the municipal financial crisis. Rehlein, on the other hand, acted primarily as an administrator and, under his responsibility and in his role as acting mayor, built up the municipal building authority into a powerful municipal office, which had to be reinforced in terms of personnel in order to be able to carry out the large number of planned and initiated construction projects.[287] The creation of a central economic plan and a large-scale urban development plan ultimately represented the crowning achievement of Rehlein's work as city planning officer and mayor. However, as the planning dragged on until 1940, the reality of the Second World War had already overtaken Rehlein's "will to rebuild."

Mayor Rehlein had not only established himself as city planning officer, but also held an important position within the Coburg domain, from which he was able to exert his influence. Within the SA, Rehlein was promoted to Obersturmbannführer in November 1937 and to Standartenführer for special duties in August 1942. In the assessment of his person, it was particularly positively emphasized that, as mayor and city planning officer, he always exerted his influence on behalf of the SA and, as SA settlement officer, had created the SA settlement in Coburg Ketschendorf. As a job creation measure, housing estates were built here, which were given preference to deserving SA fighters. [288]In addition, he served as deputy chairman of the Coburg State Foundation and, after the Coburg Chamber of Industry and Commerce was absorbed into the Bayreuth Regional Chamber of Commerce, took over the post of head of the Coburg branch of the Regional Chamber of Commerce.

Ultimately, however, the power associated with holding multiple offices led Rehlein to accept personal benefits. Since the death of his father in 1935 and his mother in 1938, Rehlein had been a partner in his father's construction business, resulting in a conflict of interest between his activities as mayor and city planning officer. The Frommann company, which had fallen into financial difficulties, experienced a rapid upswing under Rehlein's co-ownership, leading to increasing criticism within the city community of Rehlein's alleged influence and acceptance of benefits. Cases allegedly came to light in which Rehlein made objectively unjustified difficulties for freelance architects or builders who were not members of the party or lodge members in the execution of their plans and construction projects. In addition, it is said that those builders who had not hired the Frommann company were disadvantaged by the city planning office. Rehlein is also said to have used his secondary position as vice-chairman of the Coburg State Foundation to give his company preferential access to timber from the foundation's parks. The issue became even more controversial because allegations had already been made against Rehlein in 1931 that his company was being given preferential treatment in the awarding of municipal contracts, and Mayor Dr. Schmidt had already regulated the awarding of municipal contracts in May 1936 in such a way that Rehlein was excluded from matters involving

287 See minutes of the consultation on promotions and higher classifications requested by the city planning office, February 26, 1937. StadtACo A 8007; Mayor Rehlein's file notes from November 5, 1937, and January 12, 1938; Minutes of the confidential consultation with the councilors on November 19, 1937. StadtACo A 8008 and the staffing plans of the city of Coburg. StadtACo A 8005–8009.

288 See assessment for SA leaders dated November 14, 1941. BA R 9361-III/569079.

Frommann could gain advantages, had no decision-making power.[289]Although there was no concrete evidence against Rehlein, Mayor Greim felt compelled to act in order to avoid fueling rumors of corruption in the town hall. In October 1940, after consulting with the councilors and contacting the ministry, Mayor Greim finally decided to exclude Rehlein from the awarding of construction contracts and the granting of building permits in which the Frommann company had any economic interest. At the same time, Rehlein had to assure that he did not perform any secondary activities at Frommann, but only provided administrative support to the company.

Probably because of his connection to his hometown and his status there, Rehlein had refused to move to Pomerania in 1941 to work as a state building officer for Schwede. [291]Towards the end of the war, Rehlein was arrested by the US Army and subsequently spent two years in the Moosburg internment camp. In his denazification trial in September 1948, he was initially classified in Group III of those with minor culpability, with a fine of DM 5,000 and a professional ban, against which the public prosecutor lodged an appeal in order to have him classified in Group II. Ultimately, however, Wilhelm Rehlein was also judged to be a follower in January 1949.Rehlein died on October 22, 1954, in Coburg.

1.3.4 August Greim

1.3.4.1 Career

August Greim was born in June 1895 as the son of an accountant in Helmbrechts, Upper Franconia, and attended school there and in Lichtenberg. After graduating from school and until he was drafted, he worked as a commercial apprentice in his parents' manufacturing business in Lichtenberg. After the end of the World War and his service in the navy, he founded the textile company Martin Greim in Lichtenberg together with his siblings, where he managed the linen production. He became politically active in 1922, initially in a *hiking club*, which joined the *Bavarian and Reich Federation* in 1923. From 1924, Greim was also politically active on the Lichtenberg city council. In April 1926, Greim joined the NSDAP, took over the leadership of the Lichtenberg local group in 1927, and led the SA-Standarte XI from 1929 to 1930. In 1930, Hans Schemm, with whom he had a personal relationship, finally appointed him full-time district leader and in 1932 district leader of Lichtenberg-Naila, where he played a key role in building up the party and was awarded the "Golden Party Badge of the NSDAP."[293]From here, Greim became a member of the Bavarian State Parliament in 1932 and the Reichstag in 1933, while also serving as a district speaker. After

289 See *Coburger Zeitung* newspaper dated June 15, 1931, and Mayor Dr. Schmidt to the City Planning Office, May 19, 1936. StadtACo A 6274.

290 See minutes of the consultation with the councilors dated December 9, 1940. StadtACo A 8074 a; Mayor Dr. Langer to the State Ministry of the Interior, July 1, 1949. StadtACo A 8082 and Boseckert: NS-Baupolitik, p. 122.

291 See transcript of a letter from Wilhelm Rehlein to Mayor Greim, January 28, 1941. StACo Spruchkammer Coburg Stadt R 45.

292 See ruling of the Coburg City Denazification Tribunal of September 3, 1948, and ruling of the Bamberg Appeals Chamber of January 26, 1949. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg City R 45.

293 See August Greim's curriculum vitae dated January 11, 1939. BA R 9361-II/316822.



Fig. 22: Inauguration of District Leader August Greim as Mayor of Coburg on December 17, 1938: Duke Carl Eduard of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha in conversation with Mayor Greim, next to them Gauleiter Wächtler

Greim's organizational talent had been noticed by the party, and in 1929 he was also appointed leader of a work detail at the Reich Party Congress, where he was responsible for setting up mass quarters for the SA. After 1933, he joined the organizational leadership of the Reich Party Congresses as representative of the Bavarian Ostmark district, where he was in charge of the mass quarters in Fürth. In 1934, he was finally assigned responsibility for hotel accommodations for the entire Reich Party Congress, in 1935 for hotel and private accommodations, in 1936 for mass accommodations, and subsequently also for the Congress and Special Conferences Department.

In October 1937, August Greim was appointed district leader of Coburg by Gauleiter Fritz Wächtler and, the following year, mayor as well. [295]However, the fact that Greim was in no way a suitable or obvious candidate for this office was evidenced by the fact that two special regulations had to be invoked for his appointment.

294 See *Bayerische Ostmark* of December 16, 1938, and lawyer Dr. Kunze to the Main Chamber in Ansbach, January 31, 1949. StAMü Denazification Tribunal Box 553, Denazification Tribunal File August Greim.

295 Greim gives October 15, 1937, as the date of his appointment as district leader. Official confirmation is only available from January 1938. See Fritz Wächtler to District Leader August Greim, January 11, 1938, and Gauleitung Bayerische Ostmark to Gauinspektor Nord Dr. Müller, January 25, 1938. BA R 9361-II/316822.

Since Greim, like Wilhelm Rehlein, did not have the qualifications to serve as a judge or in higher administrative service, an application had to be submitted to the government of Upper and Middle Franconia for exemption from the provisions of § 40 of the DGO. At the same time, since 1937, the Gau leadership had considered the dual role of district leader and mayor to be detrimental to the interests of the party. While this dual role was common in the period after 1933 due to a lack of suitable personnel loyal to the regime and the desire to amalgamate the party and the state, it was officially prohibited by an order of the Deputy Führer on February 19, 1937. After both the Reich Governor and the Deputy Führer had agreed to the corresponding exemptions for Greim, he was able to officially take up his dual office on December 17, 1938. This made Greim one of only five district leaders for whom this type of intertwining of party and administrative office was established after the NSDAP had consolidated its power. Even when the directive to dissolve such dual offices was issued again in September 1943, Greim remained in both offices.

Gauleiter Wächtler appeared in person at Greim's inauguration in the Vestestadt, thus once again emphasizing his authority in the mayoralty issue and his full support for his candidate. In this context, he stated:

> "For this reason, I have made the best man I had available to the state here and asked that he be appointed mayor, in full agreement with the Deputy Führer, Pg. Heß, who, at my request, still had to decide on this matter himself. It is no longer customary to have a dual role between a district leader and a mayor. This single exception has been granted for Coburg. (...) This hall also saw the first National Socialist mayor of Germany. This tradition is a commitment."[297]

The appointment of a loyal party member to the city's highest administrative post was therefore also intended to remain faithful to Coburg's special role and the custom established by Schwede. Greim himself emphasized that his appointment was based "not so much on the qualities and abilities of the administrative official, but rather on those of the National Socialist" [298]. A few months after taking office, Greim reported to the Führer's Chancellery: "All the authorities involved in my appointment as mayor made it clear that I was appointed mayor of Coburg primarily as a National Socialist. I see my sole task as preserving and continuing Coburg's tradition as a National Socialist city. (...) Coburg, which plays an extraordinary role in the history of the party's development, has an even greater obligation."[299] In contrast, government director Wilhelm Hetzel, who represented District President Hans Dippold at Greim's inauguration, stated in his

296 See Roth, Claudia: Party Circle and District Leaders of the NSDAP with Special Reference to Bavaria (= Series on Bavarian Regional History, Volume 107). Munich 1997, pp. 234–243. In addition, there were a number of officials who already held dual office in 1937 and did not resign despite being asked to do so.

297 *Coburger Tageblatt* and *Bayerische Ostmark*, December 19, 1938.

298 Ibid.

299 See August Greim to the Führer's Chancellery, March 14, 1939. StACo Theater 73.

Speech to understand subtly that the state did have certain reservations about the appointment of a mayor from the private sector. He emphasized the necessity and expediency of the large number of regulations and decrees that might be rather foreign to the work of a district leader, who had to be focused on leadership. Hetzel tried to admonish Greim not to sever his close ties to the government, emphasizing its supervisory duty and reminding him of his duty as a civil servant.

Like Dr. Schmidt before him, Greim was confronted with a resource-intensive double burden, but at the same time had greatly increased scope for action and power. This made it possible to translate party political premises more directly into concrete local politics. The challenging task of managing both the city administration and its party apparatus, as well as the difficulty of being accepted locally as a non-native, had already been discussed in the city before Greim's introduction, and the population and Greim's future colleagues in the administration were called upon to work together with Greim for the good of the city. A drawing and a poem by the Coburg caricaturist August Bräutigam pointed out to the population in a seemingly humorous way, "I only ask that you do not provoke him, for he does nothing but his duty. Do not make his high office difficult for him, for he can never bear it." In his inaugural speech, Greim himself emphasized how extraordinarily difficult it was "to live up to the tradition that this city of Coburg can look back on" [303]and, with a sideways dig at the circumstances of his appointment, underlined that he could only succeed in this task if the deputy mayors and councilors stood by him as loyal advisors and helpers. Significantly, Wilhelm Rehlein did not explicitly assure Greim of this loyalty and assistance when he handed over the affairs of the city administration to him at the inauguration ceremony, but instead pointed out to Greim the special 700history of Coburg, to which he would now be bound, emphasized that he himself, as mayor, had had the full support of the deputy mayors and councilors behind him, and merely promised that the members of the entire city administration and the councilors would do their duty as National Socialists. A certain discontent could still be read between the lines here, but this was to be covered up by party loyalty. Councilor and NSKK Oberführer Linke also assured Greim of his constant loyalty in accordance with party duty. Last but not least, Gauleiter Wächtler deliberately emphasized the principle of leadership and allegiance in his speech, personally admonishing the councilors to remain loyal to the mayor and holding them accountable in their role as mediators between the city leader and the population. The previous disputes thus clearly resonated throughout the entire ceremony.

1.3.4.2 Leadership style

The circumstances surrounding his appointment as mayor ultimately had a decisive influence on Greim's leadership style at the beginning of his term of office. Greim was appointed by Wächtler under

300 *Coburger Tageblatt* and *Bayerische Ostmark*, December 19, 1938.gl. *Coburger Tageblatt* and *Bayerische Ostmark*, December 19, 1938.
301 *Bayerische Ostmark*, December 17/18, 1938.
302 *Bayerische Ostmark*, December 19, 1938.
303 See ibid.

He had been appointed to his office partly because, as a loyal party member, he was now expected to take sides in the conflicts prevailing in Coburg, or at least to side with the Gau leadership. His dual role as mayor and district leader gave him the authority he needed to assert himself against resistance within the party and the administration and to act forcefully against the long-established "old fighters." Nevertheless, the conflicts continued to smolder beneath the surface during Greim's term of office, so that party life in the city did not initially settle down due to power struggles and the staking out of spheres of influence.

Within the administration, Greim initially pursued a dual strategy. On the one hand, he ruled with an iron fist and fully embraced the "Führer principle" in the exercise of his office. Greim admonished city administration employees, for example, that he was receiving too many requests for promotions, which he considered a violation of the "Führer principle," since it was within his area of responsibility to identify those individuals whose performance warranted promotion. To set an example, he announced that he would not allow those who had applied for a promotion and thus, in his eyes, questioned the authority of the mayor, to be promoted in the administration. [304]Greim also initially prevailed over the group of "old fighters" around Kuhn. The dismissal of Ernst Kuhn as councilor and local group leader had already been initiated before Greim took office and was finally carried out under him. Similarly, the fact that Greim did not support the mayor in the 1940 dispute over Rehlein's possible acceptance of benefits as co-owner of the Frommann company, but instead ensured that his powers were restricted, was testimony to his willingness to take action even against the existing ruling clique of Schwede loyalists. Even when the group around Kuhn and Linke intrigued against the city legal advisor Dr. Schulze-Döbold after the dispute over Rehlein's acceptance of benefits, because he had examined the extent to which Rehlein could continue to sign building permits, Greim stood up for the city legal advisor and advocated his appointment as a civil servant for life. On the other hand, however, it was hardly possible for Greim, as mayor, to act against the existing ruling cliques, so that he simultaneously sought their support and cooperation. He brought in Schwede's former assistant Karl Schunck, who was also a close confidant of Kuhn and Hartung, as his assistant in the mayor's office and agreed to a promotion for Kuhn proposed by the councilors.[306]

Nevertheless, Greim's term in Coburg marked a certain break with the Schwede era. The Gauleiter of Pomerania and his services to the city continued to serve as a guiding principle, and he was constantly referred to, especially at public events. The tenth anniversary of the seizure of power in Coburg was also celebrated pompously in June 1939 with Schwede-Coburg. However, Schwede's actual political influence in the Vestestadt was now significantly diminished. In his politics, Greim relied heavily on his own relationships and connections to the Gau leadership and did not, like Dr. Schmidt and Rehlein, resort to the

304 See Mayor Greim's order of August 25, 1939. StadtACo A 6274.
305 See minutes of the interrogation of Alfred Sauerteig, March 22, 1957. StadtACo files, legal department, pension matter August Greim.
306 See memo from the mayor dated May 20, 1936. StadtACo A 8006.

Schwede established communication channels. This ultimately gave him a clear position of power and superior backing, enabling him to act from a position of strength in Coburg and align the well-established administrative apparatus with his agenda. At the same time, the Gau leadership, with Greim at its helm, had finally succeeded in exerting a lasting influence on the course of the city.

1.3.4.3 Political and administrative guidelines

During Greim's term in office, plans for a future powerful Coburg and an expansion of the city as a National Socialist cult and pilgrimage site reached their peak. However, the outbreak of World War II and a shift in priorities due to the realities of war brought an abrupt end to these megalomaniacal plans. Greim had in mind a further significant expansion of the urban area, for which he planned to incorporate Bertelsdorf, Dörfles, Esbach, Seidmannsdorf, Rögen, Löbelstein, Lützelbuch, Ahorn, Creidlitz, and Scheuerfeld. Although the Bavarian state government wanted to support most of his plans, and although the municipalities concerned had expressed their opposition, all negotiations were postponed until after the end of the war.[307] Plans for a monumental district forum on the Judenberg, which included a festival hall, a fairground, and a representative access road and was intended to symbolize the greatness of the "Third Reich" as a powerful counterpart to the Veste Coburg, never got beyond the conceptual stage.[308] The plans of the mayor and district leader to erect a monument to themselves by redesigning the urban space thus failed entirely.

Although Greim was described before and after 1945 by many of his colleagues in the city administration and by the population of Coburg as a moderate National Socialist and idealist, the expropriation of the city administration's property from the Jews of Coburg reached its peak during his term of office and under his direction. August Greim had made every effort to use his official authority to the fullest to ensure that the city administration shared in the "Aryanization profits," whether in relation to "Aryanized" houses and land or so-called "Jewish furniture."[309]

In July 1944, Greim had to relinquish his position as district leader to Josef Feichtmayr, who was responsible for party leadership, rallying the population to persevere in the war, and acting as a leading figure, especially at party events.[310] Even though the exact reasons for the change in office remain unclear, Greim's exhaustion was certainly a factor that could not be ignored in the decision. As early as 1942, Greim had to go on a health cure due to physical and mental exhaustion. Greim later cited differences with Gauleiter Wächtler as another reason for Feichtmayr's appointment.[311]Officially, the reason given for the personnel change was to relieve the men entrusted with leadership tasks due to the war-related expansion of their responsibilities in the party and the state. [312]In gratitude for Greim's services as district leader, he was granted the right to wear the uniform of a senior regional leader of the NSDAP.

307 See Boseckert: Eingemeindungen, p. 142.
308 See Chapter IV1.1.1.4 and Boseckert: NS-Baupolitik.
309 See Chapter IV3.2.3.2.
310 See, for example, *Coburger Nationalzeitung* of September 25, 1944. See Chapter V1.1.
311 See Hofmann: Oberfranken, p. 361.
312 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, July 11, 1944.

With SA Brigade Leader Josef Feichtmayr, a hardliner and man with a glorious party past was now appointed to represent the interests of the party alongside Greim. Feichtmayr was also not from Coburg; he was born on November 12, 1901, in Freising, and after the end of the World War, he had fought in the Freikorps Epp for the suppression of the Bavarian Soviet Republic and subsequently served in the Imperial Navy. He joined the NSDAP in April 1923 and took part in the "Hitler Putsch" in November as part of *Adolf Hitler's storm troopers*, during which he was wounded in front of the Feldherrenhalle and later received the "Blood Order of the Movement" for his actions. Like Adolf Hitler, he had to serve a prison sentence in Landsberg am Lech, which was one of the reasons why he rose to become one of Hitler's close confidants. After the NSDAP was re-established, he immediately joined the SS and worked for the party in the Bayreuth district from 1930 onwards. After various assignments, including as an educator at the Reichsführerschule, staff leader in the Reich camp for civil servants and with the inspector for education and leadership training, Feichtmayr was then seconded to the party chancellery after serving on the front as a lieutenant in a pioneer unit in early 1943, where he took on tasks in the Munich/Upper Bavaria district and headed the Starnberg district of the NSDAP.

Greim did not wait in Coburg until the city was taken by the Americans in 1945, but fled first to Bayreuth and handed over the duties of mayor to Alfred Sauerteig, who had been working as the city's personnel officer for years.[314]Greim himself joined other Coburg residents in the service of the Regensburg Volkssturm and attempted to prevent the city from surrendering without a fight.[315]After more than three years of internment, the Nuremberg Main Chamber classified him in February 1950 as a minor offender and in June 1950, without further proceedings, as a follower, whereby 300 days of special labor imposed on him were considered already fulfilled.[316] Greim then returned to his roots and from then on ran a textile business in Lichtenberg with an average of 50 to 60 employees. In addition, he founded a trade association in Coburg in 1958 and died in January 1975.

1.3.5 Profile of the mayors of Coburg

The selection of Schwede's successors ultimately made it clear that he had established a tradition for the office of mayor in which party loyalty was the decisive criterion. Not least after the position of mayor was advertised in 1937, it became apparent that candidates were primarily sought who had a high profile in party circles, a corresponding level of commitment within the NSDAP, and an unwavering commitment to National Socialism. The many

313 See ibid.; Josef Feichtmayr's curriculum vitae dated April 7, 1942, and Josef Feichtmayr's personnel questionnaire. BA R 9361-III/566717.

314 See OKW order on the defense of cities dated April 12, 1945. Reprinted in: Spiwoks, Erich; Stöber, Hans: Endkampf zwischen Mosel und Inn. XIII. SS-Armeekorps. Osnabrück 1999, p. 418.

315 In this context, accusations were made against Greim in the denazification proceedings that he had threatened to hang a group of women demonstrating with white flags and had arranged for the arrest of the cathedral preacher Dr. Johann Maier, who had appeared at the demonstration. See Criminal Investigation Department Regensburg, June 18, 1947. StAMü Denazification Tribunal Box 553, Denazification Tribunal File August Greim.

316 See ruling of the Nuremberg branch office dated February 15 and June 7, 1950. StAMü Denazification Tribunal Box 553, Denazification Tribunal File August Greim.

317 See *Neue Presse newspaper* dated January 10, 1958.

Applications that arrived in the city before August Greim took office were marked accordingly and evaluated according to strict criteria.[318] In the omnipresent conflict between the party and the state, which became particularly apparent during the appointment of the mayor and raised the question of the extent to which party loyalty or actual qualifications should be the motive for selecting a candidate, the interests of the party clearly prevailed in Coburg. Based on the tradition of the allegedly first National Socialist mayor, party loyalty became the decisive basis for legitimacy for the office. This circumstance is emphatically demonstrated not least by the fact that none of Coburg's mayors fulfilled the required qualifications for the office in terms of their education and prior knowledge; Schwede and Greim were even completely unfamiliar with the field and exceptions always had to be made.

In practice, this led to the dual role of mayor and district leader becoming a constant feature of the Vestestadt until July 1944, which also contributed to the close intertwining of party and administration becoming a defining characteristic of National Socialist Coburg. The role of the mayor as a non-partisan mediator had thus been abandoned in Coburg as early as 1931 and replaced by a party office. Due to the close intertwining of the interests of the NSDAP and the municipal administration, the mayors of Coburg were endowed with enormous political influence, greater scope for action, and creative power.[319] They could use this power, for example, to maintain party discipline in the city administration or to initiate projects that translated the demands of the NSDAP into concrete local policy. For the mayors themselves, however, this meant a considerable amount of additional bureaucratic work in practice, which led to all candidates being overburdened. At the same time, Franz Schwede remained the benchmark for the ideal of a National Socialist city leader in Coburg until the end of the war due to the mystification of his person and his role. The claim to continue Schwede's legacy was brought to his successors from outside as well as being named as their obligation by Schmidt, Rehlein, and Greim. In the spirit of Schwede, the entire existence in unrelenting loyalty
The challenge was to devote the exhibition to the Nazi movement.

2 Party

2.1 Organization and instruments of power

After the NSDAP became involved in local politics and took on the responsibility of governing the city of Coburg, it quickly became apparent that the party had little experience in local politics.

318 See application documents of various candidates with corresponding markings in StadtACo A 7940.

319 Amtmann Edmund Volk wrote: "The mayor was also the district leader of the NSDAP and, as such, was vested with a power that even the sovereign prince had not previously enjoyed." Personal report by Edmund Volk, head of security at the town hall, to Alfred Sauerteig, undated. StadtACo Coburgica I/510.

program. The Coburg National Socialists, who later proved themselves to be experts in local politics, revealed a programmatic weakness. Initially, the party's goals were primarily formulated in negative terms, as it called for the abolition of the Weimar system, for which local politics were to be aligned and instrumentalized. The great promise that the NSDAP offered in contrast to the existing system was, in Coburg too, the vaguely outlined goal of creating a
"people's community." The ideal of the "people's community," which had already been propagated during the First World War, had been radically incorporated into the core of the NSDAP's political agenda like no other party. It combined the idea of social and political unity with national resurgence, so that all social and religious differences were to be leveled by national unity, which was also intended to restore the German Reich to its rightful place in foreign policy. [320]The organization and selection of the NSDAP's instruments of rule had to be subordinated to this goal.

2.1.1 Ruling through order: party organization and planning

Hitler's appearance at the "German Day" in Coburg in 1922 had led to the realization of the importance of order. On the one hand, he claimed to have put an end to the "red terror" and restored order with the help of the SA. On the other hand, as all eyewitness accounts of the event recount, it was the internal order, i.e., the uniform and orderly appearance of the SA men, that had a significant impact in the Vestestadt. Not only did Hitler seem to have drawn conclusions from this for the uniformity of the SA, but Franz Schwede also made the idea of order a central instrument of power from the beginning of his activity in the Coburg local group of the NSDAP. This idea of order was also linked to the propagated utopia of the "people's community," which was supposed to bring about a newly ordered society. Order fulfilled the function of a propaganda strategy, a perspective for the future, and a course of action and solution strategy for the transformation of society.[321] With his outwardly propagated desire for order, Schwede therefore served an essential need of the population, which perceived the past years as ones of decline and crisis and had experienced numerous signs of disintegration. In the urban bourgeois milieu, the ability to impose order had ultimately become a central category for evaluating a political system, whereby

320 See Süß, Dietmar; Süß, Winfried: "Volksgemeinschaft" und Vernichtungskrieg. Gesellschaft im nationalsozialistischen Deutschland. In: ibid. (ed.): Das Dritte Reich. Eine Einführung. Munich 2008, pp. 79–100, here p. 82; Bajohr, Frank; Wildt, Michael: Introduction. In: ibid. (eds.): Volksgemeinschaft. Neue Forschungen zur Gesellschaft des Nationalsozialismus. Frankfurt am Main 2009, pp. 7–23; Broszat, Martin: Zur Struktur der NS-Massenbewegung. In: VfZ 31 (1983), pp. 52–76, here p. 70 and Hans-Ulrich Thamer: Nation as Volksgemeinschaft. In: Jörg-Dieter Gauger, Klaus Weigelt (eds.): Social Thought in Germany between Tradition and Innovation. Bonn 1990, pp. 112–128, here pp. 112 f.

321 Cf. Raphael, Lutz: "Ordnung" zwischen Geist und Rasse. Kulturwissenschaftliche Ordnungssemantik im Nationalsozialismus. In: Lehmann, Hartmut; Oexle, Otto Gerhard (eds.): Nationalsozialismus in den Kulturwissenschaften, vol. 2: Leitbegriffe – Deutungsmuster – Paradigmenkämpfe. Experiences and Transformation in Exile. Göttingen 2004, pp. 115–137 and Raphael, Lutz: Radical Thinking about Order and the Organization of Totalitarian Rule. Ideological Elites and Human Scientists in the Nazi Regime. In: History and Society 27 (2001), pp. 5–40.

the Weimar system, with all the changes perceived as negative and degrading, had fared poorly among the population of Coburg.

The establishment of the Coburg NSDAP was a sign of this orderly action, as one of Franz Schwede's former goals had been to deeply penetrate all strata of the population in his sphere of influence with the structures of the party.[322] As early as 1929, Coburg was at the top of the Upper Franconian party districts in terms of the organizational structure of the NSDAP, and in November 1931, it divided the local group into individual sections. An overview of the NSDAP party structure in 1935 shows that the Coburg district, with its 42 local groups, eleven of which were located in the city of Coburg itself, 54 bases[323] , 68 cells, and 341 blocks, had the highest degree of organization in Upper Franconia and was surpassed only by the district of Munich with 90 local groups in a Bavaria-wide comparison.[324] In November 1937, approximately 11.3% of the total population of the Coburg district had joined the party. In terms of the party's organizational takeover of the population, the district once again led Upper Franconia. In the city of Coburg itself, the figure was even higher at around 16%.

But even beyond the pure party structure, the apparent ordering of existing conditions became one of the NSDAP's important strategies, which was expressed in a decidedly anti-state stance. Without being able to present an actual local political program, the National Socialists' apparent order of existing conditions against the resistance of the higher state level seemed to suffice as proof of their suitability to govern. However, the National Socialists' desire for order remained a pure propaganda trick. While the social democratic Volksblatt summarized the NSDAP's policy in the city council as "a political mishmash of cheap slogans, primitive anti-Semitism, private capitalist desires, and misunderstood demands of social democracy" [326] , Franz Schwede and Werner Faber claimed to have overcome the mismanagement of the Weimar system in Coburg through their tax and financial policies and ironclad austerity, thereby contributing to the recovery of the city's finances.[327] Werner Faber postulated: "It was not the government of Upper Franconia that restored order, but solely the National Socialist majority on the city council."[328]

322 See Schwede: Kampf, p. 57.

323 Support bases were established in rural areas in particular, where there were not enough party members to form a local group.

324 See Der Reichsorganisationsleiter der NSDAP (ed.): Parteistatistik Stand 1935, vol. III. Munich 1935, p. 190.

325 The calculation is only an approximate value and is based on a statement by August Greim in his denazification proceedings that there were an average of about 5,000 party members in Coburg. See minutes of the public session of the Main Chamber in Nuremberg, February 14 and 15, 1950. StAMü Denazification Tribunal Box 553, Denazification Tribunal File August Greim. More precise figures are available for the Coburg-Mitte local group, which had over 104 party members at the end of 1932, 253 at the end of 1935, 437 at the end of 1938, 492 at the end of 1941, and finally 525 at the middle of 1942, distributed across four cells and 24 blocks. See Chronicle of the NSDAP Coburg-Mitte local group during the war. StACo NSDAP 8.

326 *Coburger Volksblatt newspaper* dated January 22, 1931.

327 See Faber: Coburg. On the financial policy of the NSDAP in Coburg, see also Albrecht: Avantgarde, pp. 148–157.

328 Faber: Coburg, p. 18.

Beyond its use as a mere postulate, the organization of urban space through planning also became apparent as a constant feature of the NSDAP's activities in the implementation of political objectives, with the party and the city administration working hand in hand. In the redesign of urban space, planning, order, and rule ultimately became intertwined. Through the construction of the Hausen power plant, extensive housing developments, the expansion of military infrastructure through the construction of new barracks, and the expansion of the road network, National Socialist ideas of order were inscribed into urban space and served to raise the party's social and symbolic profile. The NSDAP's extensive urban development projects and the infrastructure measures that were actually undertaken restructured urban space and gave it a specific meaning.[329] The Coburg National Socialists had recognized the city's potential for implementing an "ideal new city" in line with the regime's ideology, as outlined by Gottfried Feder. As "the most visible and lasting expression of a new community spirit," the "cities of a new worldview" were to be, ideally, something like 20,000 inhabitants, "grow organically out of the social structure of the population. Their plan, their buildings, their streets and squares" should serve "the new will to live, the rhythm of work and the new community."[330]

The urban development projects and infrastructure measures, and with them planning and order as instruments of rule, fulfilled a lasting integrative function, as they were of practical use in the everyday life of the population and thus documented the effectiveness of the Nazi regime. Even though the success of the measures generally fell short of the accompanying propaganda, and even though an urban development and economic plan that had been worked out over many years never made it past the planning stage and was ultimately never implemented, the projects and their staging made it possible to experience the promise of the "people's community" and the order associated with it.

The reorganization of urban space and the associated social reorganization of Coburg ultimately had an impact on all local political projects implemented in Coburg based on Nazi ideology: in the area of staging through the architectural design of the city in the spirit of a *mythical Coburg*,[331] the realization of socio-political objectives through the establishment of the Coburg labor camp and a housing welfare system [332] or the violent displacement of "Jewish elements" from urban space. [333]

329 See on National Socialist infrastructure policy: Irlinger, Mathias: Die Versorgung der „Hauptstadt der Bewegung" (Supplying the "Capital of the Movement"). Infrastructures and Urban Society in National Socialist Munich (= Munich under National Socialism. Local Government and Urban Society, Volume 5). Göttingen 2018; Van Laak, Dirk: Infrastructure and Power. In: Duceppe-Lamarre, Fançois; Engels, Jens Ivo (eds.): Environment and Power in History. Munich 2008, pp. 106–114 and Strupp, Christoph: Landmarks of the People's Community. National Socialist Urban Policy: Topics and Perspectives. In: Informationen 87 (2018), pp. 3–8.

330 Feder, Gottfried: The New City. An Attempt to Establish a New Art of Urban Planning Based on the Social Structure of the Population. Heidelberg 1939, p. 1.

331 See Chapter IV1.1.1.2.

332 See Chapter IV2.1.1.2.

333 See Chapter IV3.2.

2.1.2 Ruling through propaganda: The Coburger Nationalzeitung

One of the most important elements in the NSDAP's struggle for power was the creation of its own public sphere in Coburg, which could be deliberately influenced in line with the Nazi worldview. The Coburger *Weckruf*, which first appeared in June 1926 under the leadership of 22-year-old editor-in-chief Arthur Backert, publisher Hans Schemm, and with the active assistance of Hans Dietrich, was the third-oldest periodically published Nazi newspaper in Germany and was sold primarily on the streets of Coburg. Its circulation fluctuated between 500 and 3,500 copies, with external funding also contributing to the paper's finances.[334] The *Weckruf* was a decisive instrument of power in the struggle for opinion leadership and played a key role in the success of the NSDAP in Coburg. While it fueled doubts about the reporting of the established daily newspapers, which it accused of spreading lies and slander, the local politics section of *Der Weckruf* explained and reinforced the NSDAP's policies in the city council through propaganda. The aim of the paper was "to bind the people won over by the storm of rousing political speeches ever more strongly and firmly to the goals of the movement through sustained, uninterrupted education"[335] and to create a
To promote "education in anti-Semitism" based on the model of *Der Stürmer*.

The *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, which emerged in 1930 as Germany's first local National Socialist daily newspaper on the initiative of Franz Schwede from the *Weckruf*, successfully continued this practice. Dr. Erich Kühn, who had made a name for himself in Munich as a völkisch publicist, came into contact with Adolf Hitler at an early stage and joined the NSDAP in early 1920, took over as editor-in-chief of the newspaper after having held the same position at the *Coburger Zeitung* for four years.[337] However, the *Coburger Nationalzeitung* deliberately did not embody a pure party newspaper, but cleverly combined propaganda and local reporting, thus deliberately making itself a serious competitor in the Coburg newspaper industry. As Schwede described in 1936, he is said to have obtained Hitler's personal approval for the founding of the *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, as Hitler wanted to venture the experiment of a local National Socialist daily newspaper that could completely replace the existing daily newspapers for Coburg with its already established party organization.

As early as October 1931, the NSDAP set about monopolizing the dissemination of information by establishing a special position for the *Coburger Nationalzeitung*. The city council published all official announcements exclusively in the Nazi organ. This put all other local daily newspapers at a massive disadvantage and

334 See Gauverlag Bayerische Ostmark to the head of the main archive of the NSDAO, March 3, 1936. BA NS 26/973. Even ten years after its founding, the identity of those who co-financed the *Weckruf* remained unknown. In the anniversary edition of the *Bayerische Ostmark* in 1936, Arthur Backerts merely refers to "good friends" who had made monetary donations to Schwede. See *Bayerische Ostmark*, March 21/22, 1936.

335 See ibid.

336 See ibid.

337 Kühn, who moved to Berlin as editor-in-chief of the Deutsche Wochenschau, was succeeded from December 4, 1933, to October 15, 1934, by Kurt Pöhnisch, until September 18, 1935, again by Arthur Backer, until January 10, 1937, by Andreas Albrecht, and finally by Dr. Heinrich Wall. See Dr. Heinrich Wall to the Main Archive of the NSDAP, June 16, 1937. BA NS 26/973.

338 See *Bayerische Ostmark*, March 21/22, 1936.

on the other hand, denied all non-readers of *the Nationalzeitung* access to important official information. The other Coburg daily newspapers protested publicly, but to no avail. [339]Ultimately, the newspaper managed to become the sole source of journalistic information in the city. After a temporary closure in March 1933, the social democratic *Coburger Volksblatt* had to cease publication in May 1933 when the editorial offices at Schenkgasse 17 were occupied by the SA.[340] In 1935, the *Coburger Zeitung* also went under after its circulation figures had fallen rapidly. The *Coburger Tageblatt*, which had been the most successful in standing up to the *Nationalzeitung*, was expropriated in 1936 and forcibly merged with the *Co-burger Nationalzeitung* in 1940.

The inflammatory articles in the *Nationalzeitung* were met with numerous complaints, lawsuits, and injunctions, which caused financial difficulties for the party newspaper but did not stop the propaganda. The 14-day ban on publication imposed on August 13, 1931, as a result of a polemical article against district administrator Fritsch, was initiated by the government of Upper Franconia but did little to change this situation.[342] The rapid growth in the newspaper's circulation testifies to the effectiveness of its journalistic agitation, combined with its official character as the only public gazette for all authorities and administrative bodies. In 1936, Arthur Backert rightly summed up: "If, long before January 30, 1933, the vast majority of the population in the city and countryside of Coburg was loyal to Adolf Hitler and his movement, then the Coburger National-Zeitung can chalk this fact up as a success of its work."

In 1933, the heavily indebted newspaper moved into newly renovated editorial and printing rooms at Hindenburgstraße 5, for which numerous Coburg craftsmen had provided their services free of charge. In April 1934, the newspaper reached a circulation of approximately
9,100 copies, but this figure fell again to 8,257 by 1936.[344] It was not until 1933 that the finances of *the Coburger Nationalzeitung* were consolidated. From November 1929 onwards, the newspaper had been financed by the *Großdeutscher Verlag G Druckerei GmbH Coburg* through the recruitment of members and the collection of shares under the cooperative's board members Ernst Kuhn, the then district leader Otto Schmidt, and the mayor of Neustadt, Friedrich Schubart. On April 1, 1934, the *Coburger Nationalzeitung* finally became part of the *Gauverlag Bayerische Ostmark GmbH Bayreuth*, after which it bore the title *Bayerische Ostmark* with the subtitle *Coburger Nationalzeitung*. However, the Coburg edition continued to be edited and produced in the city itself.

Precisely because of the decisive role of propaganda and staging in securing, maintaining, and expanding the rule of the NSDAP, which was further enhanced in Coburg by its role and self-identification as Germany's first Nazi city

339 See *Coburger Volksblatt* of October 14, 1931.
340 See restitution application by August Neumann dated October 30, 1947. StANü Reparations Authority III a 847.
341 See Paula Colbatzky's application for reimbursement. StANü Reparations Authority III a 5238.
342 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung* of August 12 and 13, 1931. Following a complaint by Werner Faber, the ban was lifted again on August 20.
343 *Bayerische Ostmark*, March 21/22, 1936.
344 See circulation figures for the *Coburger Nationalzeitung* until 1936. BA NS 26/973.
345 See *Bayerische Ostmark*, March 21/22, 1936.

the *Coburger Nationalzeitung* was very important as an instrument of power. It carried enormous weight in the communication and negotiation processes during the transition from bourgeois to National Socialist society and in the consolidation and strengthening of the latter, and was decisive in the formation of patterns of meaning and order. The lies and hostility spread by the *Coburger Nationalzeitung* resonated in urban areas, even when they had to be retracted. As a daily newspaper, it was able to penetrate directly into the private sphere of the Volksgenossen (members of the German people), as did the radio broadcasts that later brought the Volksempfänger (people's receiver) into the living rooms of many Germans, thereby indoctrinating them in the long term. In conjunction with the staged festivals and celebrations, the large propaganda events and marches of the NSDAP with their emotional and community-building character, it completed the after-effects of National Socialist staging on a small scale.

2.1.3 Ruling through violence: The Coburg SA and SS

Another lesson learned from Hitler's appearance at the "German Day" in 1922 was the effectiveness of absolute ruthlessness in combating political opponents and the certainty of having the support of the state and municipal police as long as one was united in the fight against the common political enemy. The pervasive rhetoric of struggle and victory, widespread in National Socialist circles, was to become a defining element of the party's public image. It conveyed the message that, unlike all other parties, the NSDAP would act ruthlessly in the fight against its political opponents and would stop at nothing to achieve its goals. The activism inherent in the ideal of the "people's community," of constantly serving the community, could therefore also lead to a broad mobilization of violence, which had become institutionalized in the National Socialist fighting groups SA and SS.

The SA, founded by Hermann Behringer parallel to the founding of the NSDAP, and the SS, formed in 1925 or 1926, quickly attracted men who were particularly attracted to the ruthlessness of the NSDAP's struggle, which was surrounded by a religious aura. The labor service established in Coburg in 1932 and the associated labor service camp were also used primarily by SS leader Mazuw, who was appointed deputy camp commander, to recruit new, combat-ready young men who were indoctrinated during their stay in the camp and who often joined the SA or SS after their release. In hall battles and street fights, many men now formed a space for experience and encounter that bound them integratively to the regime and, beyond that, contributed to *community building through violence*[348]. The men's association lived within the party

346 See Chapter IV1.1.2.2.

347 Almost all documents relating to the Coburg SA and SS were destroyed before the Americans arrived in Coburg, so that no comprehensive inventory could be used to analyze the combat associations.

348 See Reichardt, Sven: Faschistische Kampfbünde. Gewalt und Gemeinschaft im italienischen Squadrismus und in der deutschen SA (= Industrielle Welt, Volume 63). Cologne 2002, and the same author: Vergemeinschaftung durch Gewalt. Der SA-Mördersturms 33" in Berlin-Charlottenburg. In: Hördler, Stefan (ed.): SA-Terror als Herrschaftssicherung. "Köpenicker Blutwoche" und öffentliche Gewalt im Nationalsozialismus, Berlin 2013, pp. 110–129.

was primarily developed on a daily basis in the National Socialist combat organizations, after more than half of the party members belonged to them before 1933. According to the principles of "obedience, discipline, camaraderie, and loyalty to the Führer" [349] , the combat organizations offered many young and disillusioned men, soldiers, or unemployed people structure and order in an uncertain world. Service in the SA and SS represented a constant and an element of continuity in an everyday life often characterized by uncertainty, offered an action-oriented identification with the Nazi movement, and helped in particular to overcome identity uncertainties.[350] The significance of the leagues for the Coburg system of rule lay, as Hitler had demonstrated in 1922, in the simultaneity of their orderly and destructive agitation.[351]

The Coburg SA standards R 43 and 95 had since been placed in a special tradition, as the appearance of the SA in Coburg in 1922 had established a pronounced homage to the combat organization. [352] The replacement of the city coat of arms with an SA dagger and the renaming of *Mohrenstraße* to *Straße der SA* were elements of symbolic representation.[353] The standard bearer and tax officer Fritz von Baczko[354] and his adjutant, the merchant Herbert Grempel[355], were instrumental in establishing the Coburg SA. From 1933 onwards, the teacher and senior leader August Gerspacher[356] served as standard bearer. All three played a decisive role in instilling a particular brutality in the Coburg SA and developing it into an instrument of terror. August Gerspacher [357], born on March 9, 1884, in Schlechtnau, had trained not only as a teacher but also as an artist and graphic designer. Until 1914, he had attended the School of Applied Arts in Karlsruhe and the commercial teacher training department in Karlsruhe, and had been enrolled as a student at the Royal Academy in Munich for one year. He had received a travel grant from the Rast Foundation to attend the Munich Art Academy, with the obligation to work at the Rast Trade School for at least four years after completing his studies. Without passing his final exam, Gerspacher was ultimately hired on a permanent basis at the trade school, where he remained even after his military service.[358]Initially active in the Bavarian and Reich League, Gerspacher joined the NSDAP at the beginning of 1929 and the SA in the same year, where he rose to the rank of Standartenführer and Oberführer by 1933. He led the Coburg SA until December 1936. [359]In 1929, Gerspacher also ran for the

349 *Bayerische Ostmark* of December 14, 1936.
350 For the profiles of some SA and SS men, see Chapter III2.2.2.
351 See Reichardt: Vergemeinschaftung, p. 20.
352 For the structure of the Coburg SA in 1931, see the organizational chart dated December 23, 1931. StACo NSDAP 1.
353 See Chapter IV1.1.1.3.
354 For Baczko, see Chapter III2.2.1.2.
355 Herbert Grempel was born on July 15, 1893. He joined the NSDAP and the SA in 1925. He was later awarded both the "Coburg Medal of Honor" and the "Golden Party Badge." The merchant was co-owner of the Grempel & Co. wicker furniture factory at Grafengasse 4. In 1935, Grempel was appointed to the city council. See interrogation of Herbert Grempel, February 12, 1948. StACo StAnw 78; city address book from 1931; the mayor to the representative of the NSDAP, Dr. Müller, September 26, 1935. StadtACo A 6430.
356 August Gerspacher continued to lead the Coburg branch of the SA after December 1936.
357 August Gerspacher's personnel file was also destroyed in 1945, so that only information from his pension file is available.
358 See municipal council decision of May 8, 1914. City Archives, Legal Department files, pension matter August Gerspacher.
359 See personnel file August Gerspacher. BA R 9361-III/566972.

NSDAP into the Coburg City Council and quickly became one of the most important men behind Schwede. He was known for his brutality, which he emphasized by constantly carrying a dog whip that he used against political opponents. He also rigorously exploited his position as a teacher at the Coburg Trade and Commerce School for the National Socialist indoctrination of his students. Gerspacher always appeared in class wearing his SA uniform, demonstrably incorporated the goals of the NSDAP into the curriculum, and always discussed local political disputes with his students in line with the party's agenda. He justified this by saying that it was his duty to make students aware of corruption and damage to the "people's community." He also repeatedly became violent towards students whom he suspected of being informants for the Social Democrats, which led to him receiving a penalty notice in 1930.[360] Accordingly, Gerspacher rigorously used his position in the party, especially since 1929, to intimidate political opponents and helped to develop the SA in Coburg into an instrument of violence.[361] He actively exploited his political power against his personal opponents, for example to professionally disadvantage his colleague, lodge member Dr. Eugen Bornhauser, and made it his personal mission to punish his fellow citizens in Coburg. [362]

From December 1936 until the end of the war, Obersturm-bannführer Erich Langguth served as the standard bearer. Born on September 1, 1897, in Dresden and residing in Oeslau, Langguth, a construction engineer, also joined the ranks of the particularly distinguished "old fighters" by joining the party in 1923 and was one of the longest-serving SA leaders in the Bavarian Ostmark. The leadership of the Coburg SA was thus consistently in the hands of the "men of the first hour," who, as representatives of the middle class among the masses of SA men, many of whom were workers and unemployed, usually held higher positions and were somewhat older. In 1937, the Coburg SA also had the SA Marinesturm 14/20 under Sturmführer Fritz Trotz and the SA-Reitersturm 1/77 under Sturmhauptführer Maximilian Rüger.[363] Like the party organization, the structure of the SA, from the Standarte down to the individual Scharen and Rotten, was highly hierarchical. The Sturmbanne was to be subdivided into individual SA Sturms, consisting of about one to two hundred men, in such a way that they consisted of "friends, work colleagues, sports comrades" who "live close to each other (...), should preferably work together and who, when attacked, are best suited to each other in times of need and defense."[364] , so that the internal cohesion of the formation was guaranteed. Through the "Gleichschaltung" (enforced conformity) of 1933, former soldiers' associations such as the *Stahlhelm* were also incorporated into the formation as SA reserves.

The Coburg SS was subordinate to SS-Standarte 41, which was established in 1929 and was initially based in Coburg and later in Bayreuth. The Coburg Sturmbann 1/41 was led by

360 See Headmaster Dürr of the Coburg Trade and Commerce School to the Trade and Commerce School Board, October 24, 1929. StadtACo Legal Office files, pension matter August Gerspacher and minutes of the city council meeting of March 28, 1930. StadtACo A 8073.

361 See Chapter IV3.1.

362 See ruling of the Ansbach Main Chamber of February 19, 1949. StACo Denazification Chamber Coburg City G 65.

363 See address book of the city of Coburg from 1937.

364 Franz Pfeffer von Salomon in June 1927, reprinted in Bennecke, Heinrich: Hitler und die SA. Munich 1962, pp. 248–250.

Until the organization was unified, August Rittweger and later Emil Mazuw were in charge. The latter influenced the expansion and profiling of the Coburg SS and took over the leadership of the 41st SS Standarte Coburg after 1933.[365]After 1933, Obersturmführer Franz Dehler was also responsible for Coburg Sturmbann III, while Sturmhauptführer Freytag was appointed leader of the Coburg Sturm and Obersturm-bannführer Fischer from Kronach was appointed Sturmbannführer. In January 1938, the Coburg SS-Sturm 11/41 was assigned to the SS-Standarte 56 based in Bamberg and was henceforth upgraded to SS-Sturmbann under the leadership of SS-Sturmbannführer Kitzinger under the designation 1/56.[366] The high racial and ideological criteria required for SS membership further enhanced the sworn character of the "black guard" organization, so that SS men saw themselves as part of a new "ideological elite," which apparently also gave them the right to self-empowerment. Since the SS took over the Bavarian police, established the Secret State Police (Gestapo), set up the SS Security Service (SD), and placed the concentration camp system under SS leadership, the formation became one of the most important pillars of the Nazi regime, especially after 1935. However, as an overall formation, it was much less visible on the ground than the SA. Within the Coburg area of control, the early "Gleichschaltung" (enforced conformity) of the municipal police, their advanced level of organization, and the close personal ties between Franz Schwede and Emil Mazuw as well as Fritz von Baczko made the two combat organizations decisive instruments of power in an area that had been arbitrary and unstructured before 1933.and the close personal ties between Franz Schwede and Emil Mazuw as well as Fritz von Baczko, decisive instruments of power in the arbitrary and unstructured harassment of political opponents and Coburg Jews that had prevailed before 1933. In 1933, the SA and SS were also soon entrusted with police duties. The establishment of the emergency police in March 1933, consisting of SA and SS men as a municipal institution, marked the preliminary climax of this development, after young and extremely violent men who were available due to their service for the city or unemployment were assigned to house searches, arrests, and interrogations without training. The escalation of violence orchestrated by the combat organizations in the Coburg "Prügelstube" (beating room) and in the district office, where SA and SS men ruthlessly indulged their propensity for violence, was deliberately and calculatedly used by the local party leadership as an instrument of power.[368] Beyond that, the combat organizations dominated the urban space in 1933, when Franz Schwede, for example, assigned the SA and SS to set up a surveillance service for Marxists, Social Democrats, and Communists in October 1933. The men were supposed to carry out this task on a voluntary basis, but if they were able to uncover an illegal meeting and convict individuals, they received an appropriate reward, excluding the Legal action was threatened. [369]

365 See interrogation of Emil Mazuw on August 17, 1948. StACo StAnw 78; indictment by Chief Public Prosecutor Coburg, July 15, 1950. StACo StAnw 80 and Schulz, Andreas; Zinke, Dieter: Die Generäle der Waffen-SS und der Polizei. The military careers of generals, as well as doctors, veterinarians, quartermasters, judges, and ministerial officials with the rank of general. Volume 3. Bissendorf 2008, pp. 148–154.

366 See *Coburger Tageblatt*, January 18, 1938.

367 See *Bayerische Ostmark*, May 19, 1939. For more on the Allgemeine SS, see, among others: Hein, Bastian: Elite für Volk und Führer? Die Allgemeine SS und ihre Mitglieder 1925–1945 (= Sources and Representations of Contemporary History, Volume 92). Munich 2012.

368 See Chapter IV3.1.2.

369 See report of the police department dated October 24, 1933. StadtACo A 8376.

As mobilized networks, the Nazi combat organizations thus made a very important contribution to the inscription of new "people's community" hierarchies in urban space and thereby to the process of communitization. Despite the SA's loss of power after the "Röhm Putsch" in 1934, the terror for which it was responsible was to continue to have an impact in the years to come. Its members continued to be deployed precisely when it was necessary to advance total control of urban space through radical exclusionary measures. The violence practiced and ritualized in 1933 was now directed primarily against the Jewish population, for example in the boycott of Jewish businesses and finally in November 1938 in the Reichspogromnacht.[370]Furthermore, the combat units had an integrative and stabilizing effect within Nazi society. In the service of the party, the units continued to open up opportunities for their members, which could consist, for example, of joint excursions or trips to the Reich Party Congresses beyond the radius of their home town, something that had previously been denied to them. In addition, they became part of the National Socialist spectacle at marches and party events and contributed to the steady militarization of the population.

2.2 Of "old fighters" and "March fallen": Party members and their self-image

Mere membership in the NSDAP says little about the behavior of individuals during the "Third Reich." What is revealing, however, is a look at how individuals helped shape the Nazi regime and thus Coburg between 1929 and 1945. Particularly with regard to the level of action, a range of behaviors emerged in everyday life in Nazi Coburg, "from participation to turning away, willingness to reluctance, adaptability to enthusiasm, distancing oneself to 'working against the Führer.'"[372] The spectrum of party membership thus ranged from individuals such as Christian Reichenbecher, who were forced to join the SA reserve and then exploited as figureheads of converted Social Democrats[373], to radical thugs, activists, and agitators. In the following, individual actors will be highlighted as significant examples who can serve as representatives of various groups within the NSDAP. These groups by no means cover the entire spectrum of party members, but they were of particular relevance to Coburg and its specific local form of Nazi rule. For a personalized view of the party's work, the men in the second row who played a key role in implementing the communitization process in Coburg will be presented here.

370 See chapters IV3.1.4 and IV3.2.1.

371 See diary of the Neuses local Nazi group. StadtACo I 0229 (2). Due to a lack of sources, it is difficult to say anything about the further development of the SS in Coburg.

372 Wildt, Michael: "Volksgemeinschaft" (People's Community). In: Docupedia-Zeitgeschichte, June 3, 2014. URL: http://docupedia.de/zg/wildt_volksgemeinschaft_v1_de_2014 (last accessed August 25, 2020).

373 See chapter IV3.1.3.

2.2.1 Schwede's entourage

Due to the city's special significance for the party, Coburg's National Socialists were considered extremely loyal party members, so that living in Coburg was usually a decisive factor in job applications during the Third Reich. For many Coburg residents or NSDAP members who were active in Coburg, the city was therefore only the first stop in their careers within the Nazi regime. This became apparent when Franz Schwede sent the Gauleiter and acting Bavarian Minister of the Interior, Adolf Wagner, a list of particularly useful party members from Coburg at the end of March 1933 who were suitable for deployment in hot spots.[374] This was especially true of the men whom Franz Schwede gathered around him as his entourage, thereby creating a system of mutual dependence.[375] They formed the core of the early Nazi regime in Coburg. Schwede's confidants swore allegiance and loyalty to him as a continuation of their military comradeship, and in return Schwede provided them with jobs, prestige, and power, granting them enormous creative freedom and considerable scope for action in his sphere of influence in Coburg and Pomerania. They were able to influence Schwede and supported his power. Not least because their careers in the Nazi state were closely linked to Schwede himself, their unrestricted and unconditional allegiance was a defining feature of their actions. Although most of Schwede's confidants left Coburg after the consolidation of the "Third Reich," they played a part in the formation of the Nazi system of rule in Coburg and, through the networks they had built up here, continued to exert influence on the Vestestadt even after their departure.

2.2.1.1 Werner Faber

Born on August 16, 1893, in Ummerstadt, Thuringia, Werner Faber attended the Casimirianum Gymnasium in Coburg and then studied law and political science for three semesters before joining the army as a volunteer in August 1914. There he served in the 2nd Thuringian Infantry Regiment No. 32 and was awarded the Iron Crosses of the First and Second Class. After being held as a prisoner of war in France, he resumed his studies, which he completed in Geneva, Berlin, Munich, and Erlangen, and passed the examination for the higher judicial and administrative service in 1923. He then worked as a lawyer in Neustadt near Coburg until 1925, when he finally opened a practice in Coburg.[376] From 1922 to 1924, Faber was active in *the Wiking League* and initially aligned himself politically with the DNVP, then, from February 1928, with the NSDAP, joining the SA in 1930. Faber served the party as a district and later as a regional speaker. As a legal and administrative expert who was also very familiar with the situation in Coburg, he was the ideal choice for the second-in-command behind Schwede, and so Faber served as deputy faction leader from June 1929.

374 See Franz Schwede to Adolf Wagner, March 30, 1933. BayHStA MInn 83342.

375 Schwede formed a clique around himself that was comparable to the Gau cliques of the Gauleiters. Cf. Hüttenberger, Peter: Die Gauleiter. Studie zum Wandel des Machtgefüges in der NSDAP (= Schriftenreihe der VfZ, Band 19). Stuttgart 1969, pp. 75–80. See also the critique by: Nolzen, Armin: Die NS-Gaue – Gauverwaltung und Gau-Porträts. In: John, Jürgen et al. (eds.): Die NS-Gaue. Regionale Mittelinstanzen im zentralisierten „Führerstaat" (= Schriftenreiche der VfZ, special issue). Munich 2007, pp. 199–217.

376 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, October 17, 1931.

leader of the NSDAP appeared in the city council and was elected professional, legally knowledgeable second mayor in October 1931.

In the Coburg city council, Faber was assigned the role of agitator after 1929, while Schwede, in preparation for his rise to mayor, increasingly sought to present himself as a serious local politician. Faber was ultimately the NSDAP's main agitator in public, leading the fight to remove Mayor Unverfähr and other political opponents of the party from power and gaining a reputation for particular brutality in both word and deed. The fact that the mood within the Coburg city council became more tense, conflicts degenerated into physical altercations, and manifested themselves in personal enmities was due in no small part to Faber's influence. Faber also initiated several perjury proceedings against Social Democrats, but these were dismissed by the courts. While Schwede was frequently away on business due to his many additional posts and his work as a speaker, Faber took his place in Coburg as his deputy. Faber's responsibilities as Coburg's finance director included drawing up the budget and financial policy. As a result, he was primarily responsible for the city's financial collapse and the withdrawal of its financial sovereignty before 1933. Faber's financial policy is representative of the local politics of the Coburg NSDAP before 1933, which had little interest in pursuing serious politics within the existing system and instead focused exclusively on propaganda and a glossed-over public image, regardless of the difficult financial legacy he left behind. Through his anti-government radicalism in the political struggle from his office, he ultimately established a tradition of local politics in Coburg.

Werner Faber also played a decisive role in the outbreak of violence in Coburg in March 1933, acting as commander and coordinator of torture practices without resorting to violence himself. The fact that Faber procured dog whips and rubber cables for the SS in the "torture chamber" was a lasting testament to his deliberate promotion of politically motivated violence. He himself was responsible for issuing "protective custody orders" and conducting sham interrogations.

Ultimately, however, Coburg remained only a springboard for Werner Faber's further career. In May 1933, he was elected mayor of Wittenberg for a term of 12 years. [378] But in 1934, he followed Schwede to Pomerania, where he served as mayor of Stettin until the end of the war. In 1937, Schwede also put him in charge of the Office for Municipal Policy in the Gau Pommern, initially on a temporary basis and then permanently from 1943. He also served as chairman of the German Municipal Council in Pomerania.

In the post-war period, after being interned until February 1948, Faber was sentenced to one year in prison by the Bielefeld Court of Justice on July 12, 1948, which had already been served by his internment. On February 8, 1949, the Supreme Court of Justice in Hamm confirmed the sentence. [380]

377 See personnel file Werner Faber. BA R 9361-II/220595 and R 9361-III/566696.
378 See District President of Merseburg, May 15, 1933. StadtACo A 8099.
379 See personnel file of Werner Faber. BA R 9361-II/220595 and R 9361-III/566696.
380 See investigation report by the state police, undated. StACo StAnw 900.

2.2.1.2 Fritz von Baczko

Fritz von Baczko was born on March 7, 1877, in Merzwiese in the Prussian district of Crossen, the son of a railway official. Between 1897 and 1900, he attended the cadet school in Lichterfelde, which he left with the rank of second lieutenant. He was then transferred to the garrison administration, where he was stationed in German South West Africa from 1905 to 1907, working as a garrison administration inspector, and was transferred to Coburg at the start of the war in 1914. Here, on the orders of the quartermaster's office in Kassel, he set up and administered the civilian prison camp in Hassberge and the officers' prison camp in Bad Colberg near Ummerstadt, as well as various military hospitals. In the process, he rose to the rank of senior garrison administration inspector. The end of the war initially represented a major setback in von Baczko's career, as his advancement came to an end with the dissolution of the garrison administration. When he was transferred to the Reich Finance Administration in the Coburg tax office, von Baczko was demoted to the position of senior inspector, which he perceived as a lasting degradation that would have a lasting impact on him.[381]Von Baczko now also became politically active, joining the Escherich civil defense force and, in 1924, becoming a member of the *German People's Protection and Defense League* and the *Bavaria and Reich League*. During the period when the NSDAP was banned, he was leader of the Coburg local group of *the National Socialist Freedom Party*. In 1925, he joined the NSDAP and shortly thereafter the SA, where he found new opportunities for activity and advancement. Within the SA, Baczko attempted to compensate for his lack of service on the front lines during the World War by displaying particular radicalism, which quickly earned him a leadership position.[382]He was promoted to Standartenführer and in 1932 was entrusted with the areas from Bamberg to Hof, including Kulmbach and Coburg. After 1933, he rose to Oberführer and was appointed Special Commissioner for the SA for the district office of Coburg and later also Lichtenfels and Staffelstein. At the age of 57, he attended the Reich Leadership School in 1934. Due to his involvement in the SA, von Baczko finally had to take leave from the Reich Finance Administration. Although he no longer worked at the tax office, he was nevertheless promoted to senior tax inspector in February 1934 as an "old fighter."

In 1933, Baczko was finally appointed as one of 133 Bavarian SA special commissioners who were called in to monitor the administration's implementation of National Socialist laws in the course of "Gleichschaltung" (enforced conformity).[384] As a special commissioner of the SA at the Coburg district office, he served as a supervisory body for the acting district administrator Dr. Heydenreich, for which purpose he set himself up in the district office with SA men. Through his rigorous demeanor and his self-confident intervention in the sphere of authority of the office head Heydenreich, von Baczko ultimately contributed to the latter's

381 See minutes of the public hearing at the Coburg Regional Court on April 12, 1948; statement of claim by the public prosecutor dated February 2, 1950, and letter from attorney Dr. Kunze to the Main Chamber in Nuremberg, March 8, 1950. StAMü Denazification Tribunal Box 53, Denazification Tribunal File Fritz von Baczko.

382 His obituary in the *Bayerische Ostmark* once again made it clear how much the lack of frontline service between 1914 and 1918 had to be justified. Despite only providing a brief overview of von Baczko's life, the obituary went into detail about how he had volunteered for frontline service several times, but a serious tropical illness and his indispensable skills as an experienced civil servant in the garrison prevented him from leaving Coburg. See *Bayerische Ostmark*, February 6, 1935.

383 See ibid.

384 On the role of special commissioners in Upper Franconia, cf. Hoffmann: Oberfranken, p. 290 f.

voluntarily resigned from his post in March 1933. Von Baczko headed the district office on an interim basis for a few weeks before Franz Dehler took up his post. As special commissioner, von Baczko was also responsible for the "Gleichschaltung" enforced conformity of the municipalities in the Coburg district. He also exercised his power to the utmost in the "protective custody" of political prisoners in March 1933, who were to be interrogated at the district office. To this end, the SA special commissioner established a torture practice disguised as interrogation in the district office with the help of several SA men. Although he did not participate himself, he set no limits on the brutality of his subordinates. Compared to the mistreatment of "protective custody prisoners" by the SS in Coburg Town Hall, von Baczko had even less room for maneuver, so he was more concerned with maintaining the appearance of legality. In the district office, interrogations therefore took place in the evening and at night after office hours.

Franz Schwede also offered his loyal comrade-in-arms von Baczko the opportunity to come with him to Pomerania and take up the post of district administrator there, which he presumably declined due to his poor health. On February 5, 1935, von Baczko died of tongue cancer. Baczko's death was commemorated in Coburg with a large public funeral service, which was intended to underscore the SA man's importance to the city and the movement. Baczko was stylized as the prototype of a true National Socialist and, through his struggle alongside Schwede, as a role model. Among those attending his funeral were Gauleiter Schemm and Schwede-Coburg, Mayor Dr. Schmidt, and SA-Oberführer Arthur Rakobrandt. Later, the city would honor him by naming a street after him.

Posthumously, in February 1948, the Bavarian State Ministry for Special Tasks ordered a denazification trial for von Baczko, which ended in November 1948 with his classification as a principal offender in Group I. The appeals chamber of the Bamberg branch overturned the ruling of the main chamber in Coburg, however, and transferred the proceedings to the main chamber in Nuremberg.[390] The latter ruled that von Baczko would have been classified as a Group II offender during his lifetime and ordered the confiscation of 20% of his estate. [391]

2.2.1.3 Arno Fischer

Born in Neustadt near Coburg in 1898, Arno Fischer was able to rise to become one of Schwede's closest confidants, partly due to their shared professional field. According to

385 See ibid., p. 323 f.
386 See Chapter IV3.1.2.2.
387 See *Bayerische Ostmark*, February 11, 1935.
388 See Chapter IV1.1.1.3.
389 See ruling of the Coburg Main Chamber, November 3, 1948. StAMü Denazification Chamber Box 53, Denazification Chamber File Fritz von Baczko.
390 The reason for the annulment was the assessment of the Bamberg Appeals Chamber that oral proceedings would have been necessary for classification in Group I, which is why the appeal of Baczko's widow was upheld.
391 See minutes of the public session of the Main Chamber in Nuremberg on March 10, 1950. StAMü Denazification Chamber Box 53, Denazification Chamber file Fritz von Baczko. Baczko's widow, Alma von Baczko, then requested that her husband's pension withdrawal be overturned on grounds of clemency. She was granted this request by resolution of
On February 26, 1951, she was granted a widow's pension on the basis of initially 1/3 (from October 1, 1950), then 50% (from July 1, 1951), and finally 70% (from March 7, 1953) of the deceased's retirement pension.

After attending trade school, Fischer completed an apprenticeship in mechanical engineering and, after serving as a soldier in the last two years of the war and working in various mechanical engineering workshops, he founded a small metalworking company in Coburg, which he later expanded into a driving school. Fischer was considered an autodidact with a tendency to overestimate himself and was constantly working on a series of inventions, which, however, went largely unnoticed. This, together with his lack of success as an entrepreneur, formed the basis for an unfulfilled desire for recognition, which ultimately also motivated him politically. After initially becoming involved in the DNVP, his contact with Schwede brought him into the inner circle of the city's Nazi supporters. He joined the NSDAP in May 1930 and rose to the rank of troop leader in the SA in Coburg. The denazification tribunal summed up his political motivation as follows: "He and Schwede were united by a shared aversion to those who felt misunderstood and disadvantaged and by the desire to overthrow the bourgeois legal and social order, which, in their opinion, denied them the advancement they deserved."[392]

His aspirations ultimately led to success in many ways, as Fischer began a meteoric career with the dawn of the "Third Reich," which was based less on professional knowledge, zeal, and skill than on Fischer's connection to Schwede and the networks controlled from Coburg and Pomerania. In March 1933, Fischer was appointed deputy SA special commissioner in the district office, where he channeled all his desire for recognition, which had earned him the nickname "Pimperle Wich-tig" in the city, into a cruel ritual of violence during the interrogation of prisoners during the first wave of arrests of political opponents.

In 1933, Schwede appointed Fischer, who was now also serving as a city councilor, as building inspector for the municipal utilities in Coburg, prompting Fischer to give up his private business.[393] In this role, Fischer was tasked with, among other things, the construction of the Hausen power plant, which brought him into contact with the problems of hydropower utilization for the first time.[394] Thanks to the work of Dr. Franz Lawaczeck and the technical work and construction planning of Helmuth Fentzloff, he was able to sell the power plant as his and Schwede's success.[395] Fischer finally followed Schwede to Pomerania in 1934, where he was appointed senior building officer in the provincial administration of Pomerania and head of the office for technology in the district administration, district administrator of the Nazi German Technology Association, and member of the district labor chamber. Fischer's prestigious project in Pomerania consisted of the construction of a hydroelectric power plant in Rostin on the Persante River, for which Schwede provided him with a large number of employees. Helmuth Fentzloff, whose expertise was indispensable to Fischer, was also employed in Pomerania for this purpose. In their attempt to win companies over for their construction project, Fischer and Schwede exerted extreme pressure and made it clear that rejection of their project would be tantamount to rejection of National Socialist ideology and German reconstruction efforts. In addition, Fischer built the power plant without the necessary budget approval or cost estimates, solely according to his own will. The Rostin power plant, which was based on designs that had already been used in the USA in 1907, was nevertheless sold by the NSDAP as the first underwater

392 See the ruling of the Munich Denazification Court of November 12, 1948. StACo StAnw 79.
393 See Chapter IV3.1.2.2.
394 See order by Franz Schwedes, June 8, 1933. StadtACo A 6387.
395 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, March 21, 1934.

power plant in the world, and Schwede himself presented himself as a co-inventor. Although the patentability of the corresponding design was not clear, Fischer had it patented in a lengthy process.

After Fischer's success in Pomerania, he was able to move to the state government in Munich in early 1937 thanks to the close ties that existed between Schwede, Bavarian Interior Minister Adolf Wagner, and himself, not least through their joint project in Hausen. In 1937, Fischer was appointed by Wagner, the Minister of the Interior and Gauleiter of Munich, to the Supreme Building Authority of the Bavarian Ministry of the Interior and was eventually appointed head of the group for hydraulic engineering, hydropower utilization, and energy supply in the State Ministry of the Interior and, one year later, to the position of Ministerialrat (senior civil servant). Within a few years, Fischer had risen from owner of a car repair shop to Ministerial Director and Head of the Supreme Building Authority in the Bavarian Ministry of the Interior. In 1939, he was appointed head of the ministerial construction department. Fischer had promised that his construction method would enable hydroelectric power plants to be built in a shorter time and with savings in materials and costs, and in his position he was given extensive powers to build power plants on Bavarian rivers. Although his power plant concept, known as the "Arno Fischer construction method" or "Schwede-Coburg-Fischer power plant system," was actually less economical than others, he rigorously implemented it in Bavaria thanks to strong political support from the NSDAP. Fischer built a total of 15 such plants on the Iller and Lech rivers and had permission to build several more, even though his construction method was heavily criticized by experts and he withheld all operating data and experience from his existing power plants. After Fischer also became chairman of the board of the Rhein-Main-Donau-Kanal-Gesellschaft and, in 1940, a member of the supervisory board of Bayernwerk AG, he exerted considerable influence on Bavarian energy policy.

In this position, Fischer acted simultaneously as a government official and a freelance engineer, for which he received separate remuneration and license fees and also used his employees for his private interests. Together with Schwede and Wagner, he had thus created a system in which all three benefited financially from his work. For the license fees, which flowed to Schwede from Fischer's ventures and are estimated at over RM 400,000, Schwede founded the *Technische Forschungs- und Verwertungsgesellschaft GmbH* in Stettin in 1939, with Schwede holding half of the shares and Fischer and Wagner each holding a quarter. In addition, Fischer founded *Arno-Fischer-Forschungsstätte GmbH* in 1940 to evaluate underwater turbines and channel-free underwater power plants, which was recognized as a non-profit company. According to Fischer, Franz Schwede and Gauleiter Wagner each held a quarter of the shares in the GmbH. It received large sums in license fees and research cost contributions.

However, the obvious mixing of Fischer's official and private interests, which had already been discussed before his appointment in Bavaria, soon led to accusations from the Bavarian government, which were simultaneously fueled by the conflict between Reich Governor von Epp and Gauleiter and Minister Wagner. Although Fischer had been appointed Ministerial Director in April 1941, Hitler set up an investigative committee to look into Fischer's affairs, whereupon he was initially suspended and finally dismissed from civil service in June 1942. Until the end of the war, Fischer worked on his new estates in Hals an der Itz and in his experimental

Oberilzmühle research institute, which he had acquired with the help of funds from the Arno Fischer Research Society and where concentration camp prisoners were assigned to work for him.

After the war, Fischer was initially interned in Ludwigsburg and arrested in 1947 for embezzlement. He then fled to France, where he was hoped to provide important information for the development of hydroelectric power plants. In order to escape the sentence imposed on him in a denazification trial in Munich as the main culprit, with six years in a labor camp and confiscation of his assets, he initially remained in France and returned to Germany via Spain in the mid-1950s. Here, the Munich Main Chamber had now largely waived his sentences. Proceedings against Fischer at the Coburg Regional Court concerning his involvement in the abuses of 1933 were discontinued. Attempts to hold him liable for possible involvement in the shooting of four concentration camp prisoners who were working on the construction of an underwater power plant on the Ilz River in 1944 were also unsuccessful.

2.2.1.4 Emil Gottlieb Mazuw

Emil Gottlieb Mazuw's life story also bears several parallels to that of Franz Schwede. He was born on September 21, 1900, in Essen an der Ruhr, where he attended secondary school after elementary school and completed an apprenticeship in mechanical engineering. In 1918, Mazuw joined the Imperial Navy as a four-year volunteer. It was there that he would eventually meet Franz Schwede. After ten weeks of infantry training, Mazuw was assigned to the Fürst Bismarck, a training ship of the First Naval Inspection. Following a tour of duty on board the small cruiser Dresden II, he was taken prisoner by the British after the German fleet scuttled itself in Scapa Flow. After returning to Essen and the outbreak of the "Kapp Putsch," Mazuw initially returned to the navy, but then worked as a locksmith and mechanical engineer until 1925. During a seven-year period, during which he was mostly unemployed, he joined the NSDAP and SA in Essen in April 1928. In 1927, Schwede had arranged a short-term position for him as an assistant engineer at the municipal works and familiarized him more closely with Nazi ideology in Coburg, whereupon he joined the party after returning to his homeland. In 1930, Schwede finally brought his naval comrade Mazuw back to Coburg, introduced him to the circles of the NSDAP, and gave him the opportunity to make a name for himself professionally and in the party, not least through his support. Mazuw obtained his driver's license here in 1930 and worked first for Omnibus Fischer and then as a driver for the municipal works. In Coburg in 1930, Mazuw also switched from the SA to the SS and was put in charge of the Coburg SS-Sturm 63, and from the spring of 1932 onwards, first of the SS-Sturmbann I/41 and then of the 41st SS-Standarte Oberfranken[396].

Mazuw's outstanding qualities, which made him particularly attractive to Schwede as part of his entourage, were his leadership skills, combined with a notorious brutality that had earned him several criminal convictions for property damage and assault in the years leading up to 1933. An assessment of him as an SS man stated: "Convinced National Socialist. The type of old front-line fighter. In his

396 See the judgment of the Munich Appeals Chamber of March 10, 1950. StACo StAnw 79; decision of the vacation criminal division of the Coburg Regional Court of July 23, 1957. StACo StAnw 81.

397 See interrogation of Emil Mazuw on August 17, 1948. StACo StAnw 78; indictment by Chief Public Prosecutor Coburg, July 15, 1950. StACo StAnw 80 and Schulz, Zinke: Generäle, pp. 148–154.

Highly respected and popular among men. Ruthless toward himself, he cracks down on abuses in his formations with iron severity. His lifestyle and demeanor are those of an exemplary SS leader and National Socialist."[398] Mazuw owed his professional and personal advancement and rapid gain in prestige and power to Schwede's assistance in Coburg, and since Schwede had built up a close-knit network based on the principle of loyal camaraderie, Mazuw also became a loyal comrade-in-arms and tool of Schwede. In return, Schwede gave Mazuw a great deal of creative power. Within the Coburg labor service, Mazuw was already employed as deputy camp leader, where he practiced disciplining and indoctrinating the easily influenced and manipulable unemployed youth. After 1933, Mazuw finally held the office of full-time SS leader and was appointed head of the emergency police force established in Coburg, for which he moved into his own office in the town hall. In a short time, Mazuw had risen from being an unemployed factory worker to one of the most powerful positions in the city. Mazuw now used this new power against the backdrop of the special institutional situation in Coburg by introducing brutal and perfidious torture practices against enemies of the NSDAP. Although Mazuw no longer participated in the abuse himself, he can be regarded, alongside Schwede and Faber, as the initiator and instructor of the unprecedented use of violence in the city.

The experience of exercising almost unlimited power and arbitrariness against those excluded from the "people's community" as "outsiders" was to have a formative influence on Emil Mazuw and fuel his willingness to participate in ideologically motivated crimes for the apparent good of the people. The strategy of using violence and expanded power to compensate for one's own need for recognition, in Mazuw's case fueled by his job as a driver and his status as a newcomer, had been completely successful in Mazuw's case.

After Schwede's departure from Coburg, Mazuw's career remained closely intertwined with that of Franz Schwede. In November 1933, Mazuw was initially tasked with leading SS Section XXVIII Regensburg.[400] However, together with Schwede, he moved to Stettin in September 1934, where he took over SS Section XIII, later SS Upper Section North, and was appointed to the Prussian Provincial Council of Pomerania in January 1935. Mazuw also expanded his sphere of influence by accumulating offices and became a member of the Reichstag, the Pomeranian Chamber of Labor of the DAF, and the Pomeranian State Farmers' Council in 1936, and at the beginning of 1937, he became second assessor of the Pomeranian Gau Court of the NSDAP. In 1940, he added the posts of governor of the Provincial Association of Pomerania, head of the Pomeranian State Insurance Institution, and chairman of the administrative board of the Pomeranian Fire Insurance Society and Life Insurance Institution. By August 1938, his meteoric career in the SS had taken him to the position of Higher SS and Police Leader North and, from February 1940, to that of Leader of the SS Upper Section Baltic Sea. From April 1940, he finally called himself "Senior SS and Police Leader to the Chief President of Pomerania, the Reich Governor in Mecklenburg, and the Chief President of Brandenburg in the

398 Assessment of the leaders of SS Section XIII, April 1, 1935. BA R 9361-III/542660.
399 See Chapter IV3.1.2.2.
400 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung* of November 23, 1933.

Wehrkreis II, or HSSPF Ostsee for short. At the same time, he was accepted into the Waffen-SS as a reserve leader in June 1940 and assigned to *the Leibstandarte-SS Adolf Hitler*.

Mazuw was particularly involved in the crimes of the Nazi regime through his participation in the evacuation of sanatoriums and nursing homes in Pomerania in the course of the National Socialist murders of patients, in which approximately 1,400 patients from the Pomeranian institutions in Pomerellen and 2,000 patients from the Konradstein institution were murdered.[401] In addition, Mazuw witnessed Heinrich Himmler's Poznan speech in the Golden Hall of the Poznan Town Hall, where he discussed the "extermination of the Jewish people" in front of SS Obergruppenführers and Gruppenführers. After the war, Mazuw was to state for the record that "special treatment" by the SS was always equivalent to killing. For his services, Mazuw was awarded the "Golden Badge of Honor of the NSDAP," the "Coburg Badge of Honor," the "Skull Ring of the SS," the "Badge of Honor of the Reichsführer-SS," the "Badge of Honor of the SS," and the War Merit Crosses I. and
II. with swords, among other things.

After 1945, Mazuw was sentenced to eight years' imprisonment by the Benefeld-Bomblitz court following his internment. He was also tried before the Coburg Regional Court for the abuse in the "beating room."

2.2.2 Violent thugs

Since violence was the central tactic of the NSDAP, it required a core group of loyal party members who could be deployed arbitrarily and flexibly by party leaders to intimidate and harass political opponents. Local Nazi officials deliberately encouraged and exploited the propensity for violence that had built up at the grassroots level, especially since the Coburg SA, for example, had been known for its particular brutality since its founding.

Representatives of the group of violent thugs were often around ten years younger on average than the leadership of the NSDAP, had entered the labor market during the crisis following World War I, and suffered greatly from the prevailing uncertainty about their livelihoods. They were mostly typical lower middle-class Protestants and some were members of the war youth generation, who had not experienced the war themselves but had internalized and heroized the ideal of the front-line soldier.[404]Their violent behavior sometimes served to make up for their lack of war experience on a small scale, but mostly it served to reassure themselves and channel their identitarian insecurities. The National Socialist combat leagues, with their marches, their cult of camaraderie, and their orderly organization, exerted a special attraction on them, so that the Nazi ideology conveyed therein could become an identity-forming component and constant. The uniforms associated with service in the SA or SS and the distribution of nicknames among themselves represented a kind of rite of passage to attain a new role and identity.

401 See Klee: Euthanasia, pp. 95–98; Bernhard: "Euthanasia," pp. 773–788 and ibid. Institutional Psychiatry.
402 See Emil Mazuw's personnel file of the NSDAP, SA, and SS. BA R 9361-II/696638; R 9361-III/129366; R 9361-III/542660 and Schulz, Zinke: Generäle, pp. 148–154.
403 See Chapter VI. Transcripts of the proceedings against Mazuw are included in the files of the Coburg public prosecutor's office.
404 See Herbert, Ulrich: Best. Biographical Studies on Radicalism, Worldview, and Reason 1903–1989. Bonn 1996, pp. 53–60.

which made them part of a conspiratorial group that was supposed to set them apart from the outside world and also from their often impoverished former selves. [405] Due to the crimes they committed, their fate was linked to the success of the Nazi regime from the very beginning. This was reinforced by the fact that their radical commitment to the party was compensated by career opportunities and social advancement that would have been virtually impossible elsewhere.

2.2.2.1 August Rittweger

August Rittweger, born on September 8, 1901, in Coburg, had learned the locksmith's trade and, after a short period of service in the navy, was assigned to the border guard. He then worked in a mine in the Ruhr area and, back in Coburg, was mostly engaged in emergency work. Rittweger joined the NSDAP in June 1929, as well as the SA and SS in 1931. Within the SS, Rittweger rose to become leader of Sturmbann 1/41 Coburg by the end of 1932. Franz Schwede ultimately ensured that Rittweger was taken on by the municipal building yard, where he was able to secure his professional livelihood. In his dual role as a municipal employee and violent SS leader, Schwede considered him predestined to serve in the Coburg auxiliary police. In his role as an auxiliary police officer, Rittweger felt he was on a par with a police officer, even though he had neither been trained as such nor was he officially recognized as such. He received no additional remuneration for his guard and interrogation duties at the town hall, but performed them as a municipal employee. [407] Rittweger ultimately emerged as the leading instructor of the torturers in Coburg's "torture chamber," where Werner Faber gave him free rein to carry out the abuse. His instructions and his behavior in this regard were characterized by a very particular sadism, which aimed at the complete humiliation of his victims, for example by ordering mock executions.

In 1933, Rittweger was fined 150 RM for trespassing, as he repeatedly overstepped the mark during arrests and house searches he carried out on his own authority at the homes of Jewish citizens of Coburg, such as Dr. Alkan. In addition, Rittweger had extorted money from the Jewish victims of the "beating room," which he had spent on drinking binges with other SS men. Despite the absolute lawlessness within the torture chambers, this was unacceptable behavior for the party and SS leadership. Presumably in this context, Rittweger was expelled from the SS in 1933 after he no longer met the high standards of the organization. However he remained in municipal service and was employed here in 1937 as a locksmith at the Coburg gasworks.

As a participant in World War II, Rittweger was wounded four times, lost his right eye, and was taken prisoner by the Soviets. In the denazification proceedings at the Regensburg internment camp, where he was held from March 1946, he was found to be primarily guilty and sentenced to ten years' imprisonment without credit for time served.

405 See the judgment of the Coburg Regional Court of September 17, 1951. StACo StAnw Coburg 907 and Reichardt: Vergemeinschaftung, p. 123.

406 See ibid. and Reichardt: Kampfbünde. Reinhold Ender would also fall into this category. See Chapter IV3.1.

407 Minutes of the public hearing at Coburg Regional Court on April 12, 1948. StACo Regional Court 315.

408 See Christian Reichenbecher to the Coburg City Denazification Court, October 17, 1946. StACo Denazification Court Coburg City R56 and interrogation of Rittweger, April 13, 1949. StACo Public Prosecutor's Office 315.

and sentenced to confiscation of all his assets. [409]An appeal in 1950 confirmed his classification in Group I, but reduced his prison sentence to eight years, taking into account his political imprisonment.[410] Later, Rittweger, together with Schwede, Fa-ber, Mazuw, and many others, was also tried in the "Prügelstuben trials" at the Coburg Regional Court. Here, Rittweger denied any involvement in the abuses of 1933.[411]

Ultimately, August Rittweger, like Reinhold Ender, who will be discussed further below, [412]is representative of the large group of SS and SA thugs who gave free rein to their brutality and violence in the Coburg "Prügelstube" and in the district office, contributing to the establishment of a zone of violence within the city. Due to their radical actions, which also had an impact beyond the "beating room," they paved the way for increased persecution in the city of Coburg, which became entrenched in a culture of violence even after 1933.

2.2.2.2 Hugo Roth

Another notorious thug who helped turn the city streets into a violent arena in the period before and after 1933 was Hugo Roth, born on November 14, 1891, in Milz near Hildburghausen. He joined the NSDAP in December 1927 and the SA in 1928, and was later awarded the SA Honorary Dagger and the "Golden Badge of Honor of the Party" as a distinguished "old party comrade." The father of eight children was one of the most active activists of the "Kampfzeit" struggle period, denouncing resistant behavior or critical remarks and becoming known for his excessive willingness to use violence. Roth often acted as a self-appointed guardian of order, patrolling Steinweg several times after 1933 with a rubber truncheon. Through his commitment to the NSDAP, Roth eventually rose from being an unemployed brewer to a street sweeper, a cashier, and finally a machinist and civil servant at the municipal utilities. Despite, or perhaps because of, this rapid rise, Roth retained his propensity for brutality and was one of the main perpetrators of the abuses committed in Coburg during the Reichspogromnacht in 1938.

In September 1948, the Coburg Denazification Court classified Roth as belonging to Group II of the accused and sentenced him to two years in a labor camp. It also sentenced him to eight months in prison for the use of violence in November 1938. An appeal confirmed the verdict.

409 See minutes of the meeting of the Regensburg Internment Camp Denazification Court, May 26, 1948. StACo Denazification Court Coburg City R 165.

410 See ruling of the Munich Appeals Chamber, Nuremberg External Senate, August 21, 1950. StACo Coburg City Tribunal R 165.

411 See Chapter VI.

412 See Chapter III3.2.3.

413 When the expulsion of KPD leader Hagelgans led to a counter-demonstration in 1933, at which anti-fascist songs were sung and several hundred people gathered, Roth helped to transport the individual participants. See judgment of the Coburg District Court of June 30, 1933. StACo Spruchkammer Coburg Stadt R 223. See further examples in the minutes of the meeting of the Coburg City Spruchkammer on September 29, 1948. StACo Spruchkammer Coburg Stadt R 223.

414 See Chapter IV3.1.4.

415 See ruling of the Munich Appeals Chamber, Nuremberg External Senate, April 28, 1950. StACo Denazification Chamber Coburg City R 223.

2.2.2.3 Alfred Riechers

Alfred Riechers also played a special role within the Coburg area of influence. He was born in Coburg on March 2, 1895, the son of Marie and Georg Riechers, who had played a decisive role in establishing and expanding the Coburg local group of the NSDAP. He belonged to the group of violent thugs as well as those who, at the beginning of the 1930s, economically ruined, recognized in their commitment to the NSDAP a sense of purpose and opportunities for advancement, and thus developed a particular radicalism.

During World War I, Riechers served as a radio engineer and pilot in the Oriental Army. After the war, he took up a position at the Coburg power station, later founded a laboratory in Coburg, and eventually became self-employed. Due to his parents' role in founding the Coburg local group of the NSDAP, he also became very active here and played a decisive role in maintaining radio contact between Munich and Berlin from Callenberg, particularly in 1923 during the Hitler Putsch and the expected march on Berlin. In Coburg, Alfred Riechers was also involved in founding the *Coburg Radio Association*, the *study group for electrical engineering and radio telegraphy*, and in 1926 he undertook a Danube folding boat expedition with the association, during which he presumably came into contact with an Islamist sect that had connections to the Bund *Das erwachende Ungarn* (The *Awakening Hungary*), an anti-Semitic, racist, and right-wing extremist association. In Coburg, Riecher's romantic relationship ultimately resulted in a child, whom he allegedly took from the mother on behalf of the sect, took away, and who then disappeared without a trace. For this, the electrical engineer was sentenced to five years in prison in 1928 for child abduction. He had already been in pretrial detention since August 1927. During the same trial, it also came to light that he had provided cyanide to a 16-year-old girl with whom he had a relationship so that she could commit suicide. In July 1928, the appeals court reduced the prison sentence to three years.

With the National Socialists' rise to power, the tide turned decisively against Riechers once again. After 1933, when Riechers had also joined the SS and headed the political intelligence service for the Gau Bayerische Ostmark, he worked on behalf of the party in Munich and Berlin in the SD headquarters in the radio service and was also deployed for the SD in Saarbrücken and Oppeln, where he repeatedly ran into disciplinary problems.[417] In Coburg itself, Riechers allegedly participated in the abuse and interrogation of political opponents in March 1933 in the Coburg "Prügelstube" (beating room), as well as in the boycott of Jewish businesses and the vilification of those who continued to shop in Jewish stores. The victims of Riechers' radical and brutal actions often complained that they were being mistreated by a person with such a dubious past, who had now come to power through the NSDAP. [418]Throughout the war, Riechers ultimately served as

416 See *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten* of October 25, 1925; *Coburger Tageblatt* of February 1, 1928; *Coburger Zeitung* of July 13, 1928; and Alfred Riechers' curriculum vitae of September 5, 1933. BA R 9361-III/550348.

417 See Alfred Riechers' denazification file. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg City R 145; Chief of Staff to the Chief of the Security Main Office, May 10, 1935, and the Reichsführer SS to SS-Sturmbannführer Alfred Riechers, September 6, 1937. BA R 9361-III/550348.

418 See transcript of the complaint by Kgl. pr. H. d. R. Rümmele to the government of Upper Franconia, Chamber of the Interior, September 17, 1933. StadtACo A 11937 and judgment of the Coburg Regional Court of September 17, 1951. StACo StAnw 80.

Member of the board of Ringhoffer-Tatra-Werke AG in Nesselsdorf in the Eastern Sudetenland. Alfred Riechers was classified as Group II of the burdened by the Coburg Main Chamber in its ruling of December 19, 1948.

2.2.3 Representatives of extremism of the center

In addition to the mostly younger, violent thugs, a form of middle-class extremism emerged among the middle class threatened with decline, which was also affected by a strong sense of existential and identity insecurity, exacerbated above all by economic failure. This group's own economic decline made them susceptible to propaganda against the labor movement and the alleged Jewish-international finance capital. The sense of order associated with Coburg's role as a model city and pioneer also seemed to have borne fruit here in terms of their own identity, which was established not least in a practice of anticipatory obedience. The economic upswing set in motion by the Nazi regime and the position of power acquired through party activity in the wake of the boycott of Jews fueled their willingness to work toward the desired "people's community." For many members of this group, ideological fanaticism and the opportunity for personal enrichment went hand in hand.

This group consisted primarily of a number of independent merchants who became part of the close-knit clique of the "old guard" and had a decisive influence on local politics in Coburg. The timber merchant Georg Linke, who had sat on the Coburg city council in the three-man faction with Schwede since 1924 and rose to become the NSKK standard-bearer of Coburg, as well as the merchants Franz Reuther, Karl Hartung, and Ernst Kuhn, who were appointed city councilors, and the merchant's widow Marie Riechers, ultimately belonged to the radical wing of the NSDAP.

2.2.3.1 Karl Hartung

Karl Hartung was born on May 25, 1892, in Lauscha, Thuringia. He later worked for the Hausknecht company and then as a buyer for the Arnold Neustadt company. Hartung eventually opened a haberdashery and textile store in Coburg, as well as a specialty hosiery store, which soon became known as Strumpf-Hartung. In 1929, Hartung joined the NSDAP and from the outset advocated a decidedly anti-Semitic economic policy. [420]As a merchant, Hartung had suffered greatly from the consequences of the economic crisis and lived in rather poor circumstances. At the end of 1932, he had capital of just RM 466.06 and a profit of RM 940.[421] Like many other Coburg merchants and party members, he later justified his poor economic position with his commitment to the party and the disadvantages he allegedly suffered as a result. This view fostered a lasting sense of entitlement to compensation for this circumstance after 1933, which, particularly in the context of anti-Semitic economic policy, was also intended to justify enrichment through stolen goods.

419 See ruling of the Coburg Main Chamber of December 19, 1948. StACo Spruchkammer Coburg Stadt R 145.

420 See registration form Karl Hartung. StACo Denazification Chamber Coburg City H 74.

421 See the public prosecutor's closing statement. StACo Denazification Court Coburg City H 74.

In fact, Hartung's reputation and capital began to rise significantly when the Nazis came to power in 1933. He rose to become one of the party's leading figures, joined the Coburg City Council as a replacement member in 1933, and was given the honorary position of housing commissioner between 1933 and 1937.[422] At the same time, he took a seat on the advisory board of the Coburg Chamber of Industry and Commerce. In 1935, Dr. Schmidt appointed him to the council of aldermen and also to the city's administrative advisory board. In 1934, Hartung acquired the property at Spitalgasse 12 from the liquidation estate of the company K. M. Fechheimer & Co.[423] He moved his business there, which had previously been located at Löwenstraße 18, Steinweg 57, and Herrngasse 3. Based on the above reasoning, his position within the party, and his status as an "old fighter," Hartung successfully applied for a tax exemption from the tax office in 1933.[424] In the following years, he repeatedly approached the tax authorities with similar claims, involving the Führer's office in his efforts. [425]

Not only tax breaks, but also an economic policy promoted by Hartung, primarily as chairman of *the Kampfbund des gewerblichen Mittelstandes* (*Fighting League of Small and Medium-Sized Businesses*) and later the NS-HAGO (*National Socialist Crafts, Trade, and Business Organizations*), ultimately led to his rise. By striving to eliminate and suppress his Jewish competitors first, and after 1939, in the wake of war-related restrictions, his other competitors as well, he was able to expand his business and personal fortune enormously.[426] In addition, Hartung acquired several warehouses from Aryanized textile businesses, as well as from the murdered textile merchant Siegfried Kohn, at below market price. By 1945, Hartung had increased his capital to RM 132,632.98 and his profits for the 1944 financial year to RM 50,700, despite rationing restrictions. [427] Even during the war and the associated restrictions on the free economy, Hartung was able to gain a special position for himself by making use of his party networks. In his wool and haberdashery business, Hartung continued to offer flashlights with batteries as a lucrative business, which he was prohibited from doing after 1939. Once again, he was able to claim an exemption for himself by pointing to his commitment and importance.

It was not only his own desire to gain advantage, but also his deep conviction that, as a Coburg National Socialist, he was bound by a certain obligation, and a deep-seated anti-Semitism that seemed to have driven Hartung in his rigorous approach. Partisan zeal in the form of anticipatory obedience, the conviction of the right to personal enrichment, and a tendency toward ruthlessness were all mixed together in Karl Hartung.

422 See Mayor Schwede's decree of September 7, 1933. StadtACo A 6441.

423 See Chapter IV3.2.2.1

424 In 1935, Hartung was granted a tax exemption in the amount of RM 1,700.

425 See Chancellor's Office Social Welfare Office, to Karl Hartung, October 25, 1937. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg City H 74. In 1936, he received a negative decision because his economic situation had improved considerably. Only a review of the reduction of advance payments for the 1936 tax year was promised. The extent to which he was granted tax exemptions in 1938 could not be conclusively determined from the files.

426 See chapters IV3.2.1.3 and V2.3.4.

427 See the public prosecutor's closing statement. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg City H 74.

428 See Mayor Greim to the Berlin Retail Trade Economic Group, February 22, 1941. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg City H 74.

and turned him into a brutal persecutor. With an enormous creative drive and secure creative power, he played a decisive role in committing the Coburg business world to an anti-Semitic course and exposing those who did not submit to his standards. He used his scope for action to initiate measures that went far beyond the exclusion measures that had actually been ordered. As justification for his actions and his demand for comparable activism from those around him, he stated: "Coburg always marches at the forefront, and in this case we must show even more clearly that we are here."[429]

Hartung not only put massive pressure on the Coburg business community, but also on people outside his area of responsibility, such as doctors, to stop treating Jewish patients, and he rigorously removed people who were politically unwelcome. For example, he arranged for Gottlieb Frommann to be removed from his position as head of the interior design and music department because he was a former member of a lodge. As in this case, he benefited from his close friendship with August Heublein from the Bayreuth district group of the retail trade association, who always supported him politically.[431] In the post-war period, an official of the Coburg city administration finally passed judgment on Karl Hartung: "During the repeated official meetings, he emphasized the unconditional implementation of National Socialist principles. He often demanded more than the orders required, so that new ideas for further measures could be generated in this way. Coburg should, true to its tradition, lead by example with good and serious conduct."

This basic attitude ultimately led to conflict and confrontation with Mayor Dr. Schmidt, who had agreed with Hartung and Kuhn's radical approach to the economic exclusion of Coburg's Jewish citizens, but ultimately wanted to retain control over the distribution of the "Aryanization profits." After Dr. Schmidt assigned the Conitzer & Söhne department store to Hartung's competitor Döring, the merchant accused the mayor of not being a true National Socialist·The disputes ended not only in Hartung's voluntary resignation from the council, but also in proceedings against Hartung before the district court of the NSDAP. The merchant was found guilty and was barred from holding party office for two years. It was not until Mayor Greim took office that Hartung regained his influence on Coburg's economic life, as Greim once again secured him a position in the retail trade group.

429 Circular letter from the Retail Trade Economic Group to its members, September 26, 1942. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg City H 74.

430 See Karl Hartung to the Upper Franconia district group of the Retail Trade Economic Group, January 25, 1939. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg City H 74.

431 In the Frommann case, for example, Heublein replied: "Under no circumstances will we allow a specialist group to damage the good relationship between the party and the economic group that exists in Coburg thanks to your cooperation." Retail Trade Economic Group Bamberg to Karl Hartung, January 27, 1939. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg City H 74.

432 Interrogation transcript of Dr. Rudolf Schulze-Döbold of the Coburg City Denazification Tribunal dated April 5, 1948. StAMü Denazification Tribunal Box 986, Denazification Tribunal file Ernst Kuhn.

433 See Dr. Müller to Mayor Dr. Schmidt, January 22, 1937. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg City H 74.

434 See Karl Hartung denazification file. StACo Coburg City Denazification Tribunal H 74.

After the end of the war, Karl Hartung was sentenced by the Coburg Chamber with a ruling dated On November 15, 1948, he was classified as a Group II offender and sentenced to two years in a labor camp and a 50 percent confiscation of his assets. He also lost his pension entitlement. The Bamberg Appeals Chamber overturned the ruling on May 6, 1949, and reclassified Hartung as a minor offender, who was ultimately declared a follower in subsequent proceedings by the Nuremberg Main Chamber after serving a six-month probationary period.

2.2.3.2 Ernst Kuhn

A similar motivation to Hartung's also spurred on the political involvement of his confidant and comrade-in-arms Ernst Kuhn. Born on December 19, 1894, in Coburg, Kuhn attended commercial college and initially worked for the Schuhmann Coburg company and then in his father Fritz Kuhn's wicker and cane furniture factory at Leopoldstraße 17, of which he became co-owner after his military service in 1920. Kuhn was already involved in the "German Day" of 1922, joined the NSDAP and SA in 1923 and again in 1925, after previously having been involved in *the Deutschvölkischer Schutz- und Trutzbund* (German People's Protection and Defense League). In the SA, he took over the leadership of the Hundertschaft and joined the Coburg City Council in 1929. He ultimately became a confidant of Schwede, participating in meetings between Schwede and Fiehler as well as in the sessions of the Bavarian Municipal Council, thus becoming closely involved in the NSDAP's local political activities. At the same time, Kuhn was involved in the design of the propaganda newspaper as a member of the board of the Weckruf cooperative. Especially during the seizure of power, Kuhn had been very confrontational towards political opponents, had participated in house searches, and had been keen to emphasize the dominance of the NSDAP to the outside world.

After the Nazis seized power, Kuhn served as head of the Coburg East local group and held a powerful position within the group of "old fighters," which was reflected not least in his awards, including the "Coburg Medal of Honor" in 1934, the "Golden Party Badge," and service awards in bronze, silver, and gold. As local group leader, Kuhn also endeavored to uphold National Socialist discipline in his area of responsibility and ensured, for example, that fellow citizens who appeared to be work-shy were sent to the Dachau concentration camp.[438] In his role as city councilor, Kuhn arbitrarily participated in the process of "Gleichschaltung" (enforced conformity) and the elimination of political opponents of the NSDAP by continuously reporting to the police office to denounce individual workers, initiating house searches, and accompanying them in a gross violation of his authority. The extent of Kuhn's efforts to achieve "Gleichschaltung" is demonstrated by the fact that he reported a former SPD member for wearing a pin of the German Building Workers' Union, which was not one of the prohibited political insignia. [439]

435 See the ruling of the Coburg Denazification Court of November 15, 1948, and the ruling of the Bamberg Appeals Court of May 6, 1949. StACo Denazification Court Coburg City H 74.
436 See Ernst Kuhn's curriculum vitae dated November 23, 1935, and May 10, 1937. BA R 9361-III/573847; Ernst Kuhn's personnel file. R 9361-III/568527.
437 See various police reports from 1933 at StadtACo A 7870.
438 See minutes of the interrogation of Karl Puff, November 29, 1948. StAMü Denazification Tribunal Box 986, Denazification Tribunal file Ernst Kuhn.
439 See police department memos dated March 14, August 8, December 2, and December 18, 1933. StadtACo A 7870.

In 1934, Franz Schwede brought Ernst Kuhn into the city administration, where he took over the newly established labor propaganda office and was supposed to have a decisive influence on Coburg's economic life in line with the regime's agenda and contribute to reducing unemployment.[440] In February 1935, Kuhn was finally accepted as a civil servant in the city administration, which credited him with eight years of service for his party activities. [441] Since Kuhn had found himself in a difficult financial position and had been largely unsuccessful as a businessman, his party membership ultimately secured his professional future.[442] Even after 1935, Kuhn was appointed to the city council and the administrative advisory board, which required a special exemption because he was also a city official. Within the SA, Kuhn rose to the rank of Obersturmführer. [443]

Combined with his position in the city administration, Kuhn achieved a dominant position within Coburg's economic life. Through his position on the municipal savings bank committee, he was initially involved in the "Gleichschaltung" (enforced conformity) of the savings bank and was able to obtain a special loan for his father's company. From 1936 onwards, Kuhn also sat on the supervisory board of Großmann AG and was a member of the board of the basket industry association. Ultimately, Ernst Kuhn was a person who stood at the center of the economic exclusion policy of Nazi Coburg and a group of "old fighters" who belonged to a radical wing of the party and claimed to be able to continue the legacy of Franz Schwede in the Vestestadt. These included Georg Linke, Karl Hartung, Franz Reuther, and Karl Schunck, among others.

The aforementioned dispute over the appointment of Mayor Haidn was initially supposed to spell the end for Ernst Kuhn within the party, after he had agreed to Haidn's appointment in a consultation between the party representative and the Coburg councilors, but then secretly prevented his appointment to Coburg by collecting signatures from all city councilors against the plan and meeting with the candidate himself. [445]Because of his rebellion against the will of the Gau leadership, the special representative of the Deputy Führer, Robert Oexle, initiated proceedings against him. Following a decision by Gauleiter Wächtler, Kuhn was finally dismissed as councilor and local group leader in October 1938, which Kuhn considered an affront to his honor as a civil servant. [446]He then turned to the Deputy Führer Hess to take action against his removal from office after the introduction of

440 See Chapter IV2.1.2.2.

441 See the decision of the Administrative and Police Senate of February 11, 1935. StadtACo A 6332.

442 In his service with the city administration, Kuhn also constantly sought to obtain special allowances and expense reimbursements for himself. However, the government of Upper and Middle Franconia objected to this. The city administration therefore granted Kuhn such funds itself in the form of a special subsidy. See the government of Upper and Middle Franconia to the mayor of Coburg, April 27, 1936, and memo from the mayor dated May 20, 1936. StadtACo A 8006.

443 See minutes of the meeting of the Main Chamber in Nuremberg on October 18 and 19, 1949. StAMü Spruchkammer Karton 986, Spruchkammerakte Ernst Kuhn.

444 For Franz Reuther, see Chapter IV3.2.1.3, and for Karl Schunck, see Chapter III3.2.3. In this context, Theodor Birkner was also mentioned repeatedly, who was initially employed as secretary to Werner Faber and later in the youth welfare office under Schunck.

445 See The Government of Upper and Middle Franconia to Mayor Rehlein, October 10, 1938. StA-Mü Denazification Tribunal Box 986, Denazification Tribunal File Ernst Kuhn.

446 See Gauleitung Bayerische Ostmark, September 21, 1938. StABa K3, Government of Upper Franconia, submission 1975 195.

However, according to the German Municipal Code, he no longer had the right to appeal, so he was unable to do anything. [447]

However, Kuhn continued to hold a strong position in the economic sphere, relying on his connection to Karl Hartung. With the outbreak of war, Kuhn was appointed head of the Economic Office, which gave him extraordinary power against the backdrop of war-related distribution conflicts on the "home front." Here, Kuhn continued to be openly anti-Semitic and sought to gain advantages for his confidants and business associates who were loyal to him.[448] Kuhn was temporarily assigned to the Eastern Administration in 1941 and 1942, but soon returned to Coburg due to health problems. [449] In April 1944, Kuhn was appointed head of the NSDAP in his capacity as district office manager. [450]

After the end of the war, Ernst Kuhn was interned until August 1948 and finally classified by the Nuremberg branch of the Munich Main Chamber in Group III of those with minor culpability and, by ruling of the Nuremberg Main Chamber on August 7, 1950, as a follower. [451]

2.2.3.3 Marie Riechers

Marie Riechers was born on October 4, 1872, as the daughter of a ducal official in Coburg, where she attended a girls' school. Of her three children, she lost a son in World War I. During the war, she herself was employed as the director of the military hospital in the Hofgarten. Even before the party was banned, Marie Riechers, together with her husband Georg Riechers, a merchant and owner of a cigar shop, and her son Alfred, had been instrumental in founding and building up the party in Coburg and was later celebrated as "the first woman in the Coburg district to promote the Führer's ideas."[452]According to Schwede's account, the Riechers family home at Theatergasse 3, which served as a kind of party headquarters for many years, was the only house in Coburg decorated with the swastika flag on "German Day" in 1922.[453] In retrospect, Riechers describes, in line with Nazi propaganda, how her life had regained meaning after Hitler's appearance in Coburg, as she now saw that new courage was entering the hearts of men and sons and that the future seemed secure.[454] After Georg Riechers' death in 1924, Marie continued to run the business on her own and intensified her party activities, joining the NSDAP in 1925 and the

447 See Ernst Kuhn to Wilhelm Rehlein. StAMü Denazification Commission Box 986, Denazification Commission File Ernst Kuhn.

448 See Chapter V1.2.

449 During the war, Kuhn was responsible for bringing his superior at the Eastern Administration in Krössinsee, Karl Bauer, before the People's Court for critical statements about the conduct of the war. See minutes of the interrogation of Karl Bauer, July 13, 1948. StAMü Denazification Tribunal Box 986, Denazification Tribunal File Ernst Kuhn.

450 See Gauleitung Bayreuth to Ernst Kuhn. StAMü Spruchkammer Karton 986, Spruchkammerakte Ernst Kuhn.

451 See ruling of the Main Chamber in Nuremberg dated October 20, 1949, and ruling of the Main Chamber in Munich, Nuremberg branch, dated August 7, 1950. StAMü Spruchkammer Karton 986, Spruchkammer-akte Ernst Kuhn.

452 C*oburger Nationalzeitung*, October 3/4, 1942.

453 See Schwede: Kampf, p. 43.

454 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, October 15, 1932.

She joined the National Socialist Women's League and worked for the *Coburg National Newspaper*. In 1933, she rose to become district office manager of the National Socialist Women's League in Coburg. Her house remained an important site for the NSDAP, as central party work continued to be carried out there, Marie Riechers provided for fellow party members who had no homes, and made the rooms available as the headquarters of the National Socialist Women's League, which she headed. Marie Riechers was proud to have mastered her life "in faith in our glorious leader and fatherland" and was awarded the "Golden Ehrenzeichen der Partei" (Golden Service Medal of the National Socialist German Workers' Party), the "Gauehrenzeichen Bayreuth" (Bayreuth District Medal of Honor), and the "Service Award of the NSDAP" in bronze, silver, and gold. [456] After she had to file for bankruptcy for her business in 1932, she wanted to attribute this primarily to her loyal commitment to the NSDAP. Based on this experience, she joined the ranks of those who, after their own economic failure, participated in pronounced anti-Semitic agitation. The boycott of Jewish businesses in Coburg, which was particularly intense and persistent, was largely driven and organized by "Mother Riechers," as she was known within the party.[457] After 1939, true to the female services on the "home front," she became active in caring for soldiers and the wounded, helping at the train station, and teaching sewing classes.

2.2.4 Middle-class intermediaries

With the increasing power of Schwede and the NSDAP, it had become clear to many bourgeois citizens that they had underestimated the National Socialists' quest for power and that the coexistence of the DNVP alongside the NSDAP would not be accepted. At the 600th anniversary celebration of Coburg's self-government in 1931, for example, a resolution by the NSDAP to add "Heil Seldte!" and "Heil Hugenberg!" to the NSDAP's resolution "Heil Hitler!", thus aligning the policies of the National Liberals, German Nationalists, and *Stahlhelmer* with those of the NSDAP, further efforts at "Gleichschaltung" soon demanded a clear statement.[459] In 1932, the conflict between the DNVP and the NSDAP in particular finally escalated when the influence of the German Nationalists was to be increasingly suppressed.

In Coburg's Nazi regime, particular relevance was attached to a number of middlemen who helped to rid the NSDAP of its reputation as a party of extremists and to establish it as a mainstream party. "seizure of power," "Gleichschaltung" (enforced conformity), and consolidation of the "Third Reich." Through their personal conduct and commitment, they set an example of how bourgeois ideals and a bourgeois lifestyle could be reconciled with the ideas of the NSDAP. Their efforts ultimately succeeded in convincing even the upper middle classes of the idea of the "people's community" and its dynamics, thereby making National Socialism acceptable to them. [460] The teacher

455 See *Bayerische Ostmark* from March 21/22, 1936.
456 Curriculum vitae of Marie Riechers. BA NS 44/7 and *Coburger Nationalzeitung* of October 3/4, 1942.
457 See chapter IV3.2.1.1.
458 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, October 3/4, 1942.
459 See *Coburger Zeitung*, June 15, 1931.
460 The infiltration of the bourgeois milieu by National Socialism also had a decisive influence on the implementation of National Socialist ideas in neighboring Gotha and Erfurt to varying degrees. See Mattheisen: Bürgertum, pp. 208–211 and Raßloff, Steffen: Flucht in die nationale Volksgemeinschaft. Das Erfurter Bürgertum zwischen Kaiserreich und

NS city councilor Wilhelm Frühwald can be seen as a representative of this group and at the same time stands for a broad stratum of teachers who carried out ideological indoctrination in Coburg's schools.

The bourgeois camp and, to some extent, the old dignitaries also produced a group of party members and officials who were active in the völkisch camp, often resisting the NSDAP's efforts due to their radicalism, but ultimately deciding to join the party and profit from it. This personal change of heart may have been motivated by a desire to secure their own career prospects, or by conviction and personal radicalization. Whatever motives lay behind their conversion to the NSDAP, they paved the way for many others to join the party, as was also established in the denazification proceedings against Wilhelm Rehlein. Here, the Coburg Chamber stated that precisely because "he enjoyed respect and prestige in these [bourgeois, author's note] circles, (...) his move [had] to serve as an example to many who, being politically uninterested, were more susceptible to the NSDAP's propaganda."[461] Franz Dehler's biography also shows how a bitter opponent of the NSDAP could become an extremely successful National Socialist official.

2.2.4.1 Wilhelm Frühwald

Wilhelm Frühwald was born on December 24, 1888, in Marktsteft and aspired to become a teacher. Among other things, he worked as a substitute teacher at the preparatory school in Neustadt an der Aisch and was appointed seminar assistant at the teacher training college in Bayreuth in September 1913.[462] He joined the NSDAP in November 1928 and was active within the party as a district training speaker and later as a district speaker.[463] Frühwald also distinguished himself through his work at the Coburg Adult Education Center, where he gave lectures on the national development history of Germany, including the special role of Ernst II and Coburg, and contributed to weaving together the history of Coburg with nationalist ideas and a resulting responsibility for the present into a narrative. The success of his work became apparent when a participant in Frühwald's course subsequently wrote a letter to the editor demanding that these lectures be disseminated more widely, especially in the current climate, so that history could serve as a teacher.[464] It was precisely through his work at the adult education center that Frühwald gained a high reputation in the urban bourgeois milieu and was therefore able to act as an important mediator between national bourgeois circles and the NSDAP. Frühwald knew how to intelligently combine the idea of a "people's leader" with nationalist and monarchist ideas, thereby rooting the ideal of the "people's community" in the educated middle classes. Referring to Heinrich von Treitschke and Otto von Bismarck, he led the way to Adolf Hitler. Likewise, he succeeded in

NS Dictatorship (= Publications of the Historical Commission for Thuringia, Small Series Volume 8). Cologne 2003, p. 420.

461 See ruling of the Coburg City Denazification Court of September 3, 1948. StACo Denazification Court Coburg City R45.

462 See *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten* of September 3, 1913.

463 See Gauredner ausweis Wilhelm Frühwald. BA R 9361-II/266657.

464 See *Coburger Zeitung* of October 17 and 26, 1927.

to reinterpret the history of Coburg in such a way, with the spread of anti-Semitic slogans, that it inevitably led to its role as the first Nazi city.

In June 1929, Wilhelm Frühwald was one of 13 National Socialist city councilors who moved into Coburg City Hall after the dissolution and re-election of the city council. Here he served as an influential mediator between the NSDAP and the *Stahlhelm*, holding a meeting in May 1930 with Dr. Gerstenmeier, district court judge Hans Rose, and Dr. Kolb to clarify the relationship and cooperation between the National Socialists and the *Front Soldiers' League*. The four men agreed to emphasize the similarities between the two organizations more clearly, including cooperation on the issue of the third mayor and on future events. In the Coburg city council, Frühwald exercised particular influence in the cultural sphere until 1933 through his seat on the administrative committee of the state theater, where he advocated for a political purge of the theater's repertoire. In June 1931, for example, he ensured that Carl Zuckmayer's *Der Hauptmann von Köpernick* was removed from the repertoire and was only allowed to be performed as a closed event.[467] A gifted speaker and educator, Frühwald also played a role in the education and indoctrination of young people at the youth labor camp in Wüstenahorn, where Schwede appointed him to be responsible for the intellectual development of the young people. He gave lectures on political issues and discussed and interpreted selected plays seen at the State Theater from an ideological perspective. [468]

Frühwald ultimately had a decisive influence on transforming Coburg's bourgeois-dominated cultural and educational life in line with the regime's agenda. In 1931, teacher and city councilor Wilhelm Frühwald was finally assigned the school department that had been taken away from Franz Dehler in the course of the "Gleichschaltung" (enforced conformity) of the city administration, and he became a member of the city school board, at the same time being integrated into the ranks of the deputy mayors.[469] In 1933, Frühwald left the city council, but continued to participate in the cultural staging of the "people's community" in the administrative committee of the state theater until 1935. Meanwhile promoted to senior director of studies, Frühwald was appointed head of the Ernst Albert Seminar, Coburg's teacher training college. In organizing school celebrations, which he stylized as "highlights of national life," he combined athletic competitions for physical education, musical performances, and thematic lectures, which were often accompanied by radio broadcasts of speeches by prominent National Socialists. Parallel to the National Socialist calendar of celebrations, schools developed their own culture of celebration, which included celebrations on the anniversary of the founding of the Reich, on the anniversary of Leo Schlageter's death in memory of those who fell in the movement, and on the anniversary of the Saar referendum.In 1935,Frühwald also served temporarily as

465 See, for example, Frühwald's remarks on "Führer and People." *Coburger Nationalzeitung* of October 15, 1932, or the special edition of the *Bayerische Ostmark* of June 8, 1935.

466 See minutes of the discussion between the Stahlhelm Coburg and the district group of the NSDAP, May 25, 1930. BA NS 6/873.

467 See minutes of the meeting of the administrative committee of the Landestheater on June 8, 1931. StACo Landestheater 72.

468 See journals of the Wüstenahorn labor camp from October and November 1932. StadtACo A 7987.

469 See Coburg City Council to the Government of Upper Franconia, Chamber of the Interior, April 16 and May 20, 1931. StadtACo A 6441. See Chapter III3.1.1.

470 See Annual Report of the Coburg Teacher Training College 1934/35. BayHStA Munich, MK 42248 Coburg.

He remained head of the German Aufbau School in Coburg before being appointed to Würzburg and later moving to Munich, where he worked as a clerk for the Central Publishing House of the NSDAP.

2.2.4.2 Franz Dehler

One such change of heart was undergone by district administrator Franz Dehler, who had already run for mayor in Coburg in 1924 as a candidate for the nationalist and patriotic camp, losing to Erich Unverfähr. Despite his promising career in the civil service, Dehler had repeatedly taken a radical stance through his involvement in the DNVP and as chairman of the Coburg veterans' associations, openly rejecting the Weimar Republic and the established politics of Coburg's dignitaries. As chairman of the *Patriotic Working Group* and the veterans' associations, Dehler had deliberately politicized Coburg's associations, polemicized against social democracy, and taken an offensive anti-democratic and radicalizing stance in the referendum on the expropriation of the princes. Dehler used his position as a consultant for the political police in the district office to fight against the republic, as he did when he established the "Grenzschutz Nord" (Northern Border Guard).[472]

Nevertheless, after moving to the municipal service as Coburg's legal advisor, he found himself in direct confrontation with Franz Schwede and the NSDAP. With responsibility for the welfare, theater, and school departments, as well as the housing and rental office, he was able to exert considerable influence in the city administration and, as deputy to the two incumbent mayors, actively opposed the NSDAP's power ambitions. On the issue of Schwede's dismissal from municipal service, Dehler had prepared a legal opinion on behalf of Unverfähr that justified the legality of the measure. In it, he argued that an employee's political activities were subject to certain limits imposed by their employment relationship and that the employee's conduct should in no way lead to damage to their own administration.[473] As chair of the city council, he endeavored to break through the NSDAP's obstructionist tactics, for example by enlisting the intervention of the government of Upper Franconia, and to prevent Schwede's appointment as third mayor. A motion of no confidence against Dehler, which the NSDAP tried to push through in return, failed, but the city councilor was heavily attacked over the *wake-up call*.

Since the differences between Dehler and the NSDAP had also manifested themselves on a personal level, particularly with Werner Faber, and Franz Schwede was trying to reconcile the two, he was able to persuade Dehler to join the party in September 1932 and immediately appointed him as district speaker. In 1932, he became a member of the SS and, from autumn 1937, also worked for the SD. In October 1938, he was assigned to the SD headquarters and eventually rose to the rank of Obersturmbannführer by 1940. As chairman of the veterans' association he now also engaged in recruitment.

471 See Central Publishing House of the NSDAP to the Reich Chamber of Literature, March 25, 1942. R 9361-V/18869.
472 For Franz Dehler's biography and activities up to 1931, see chapters II2.1.2.3 and II2.2.1.
473 See State Ministry of the Interior to the Coburg City Council, September 22, 1933. StadtACo A 7894.
474 See *Der Weckruf*, January 3, 1930.
475 See Franz Dehler's registration form. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg City D 25. Franz Dehler's curriculum vitae dated June 30, 1936, and letter from the Chief of the Security Police and SD to the Reichsführer SS, October 17, 1940.

for the NSDAP among the approximately 5,000 members in 75 associations. Both sides had their own motives for this. Dehler himself wrote after 1945 that it was his work as a welfare officer in particular that had radicalized him and forced him to make the apparent choice between National Socialism and Bolshevism.[476] For Schwede, the main priority was probably to harness the lawyer's potential. Well-educated and legally trained National Socialists like Dehler were rare and an enormous asset to the NSDAP. Schwed is said to have had his eye on Dehler for the post of mayor as early as 1931. [477]The expert opinion once prepared by Dehler, in which he had advocated and justified Schwede's dismissal, now disappeared from the city files and was henceforth denied by Dehler himself. [478]

Joining the NSDAP proved to be extremely worthwhile for Dehler. After the
After the "seizure of power," Dehler returned to the district office as district administrator on Schwede's recommendation and was appointed its head and thus also city commissioner after Ernst Fritsch had been dismissed by the NSDAP. Schwede had emphasized that Dehler had previously "carried out very fruitful administrative work in the spirit of the Führer" , and Adolf Wagner appointed him due to the special circumstances in Coburg, even though he had left the civil service and there were still a number of people ahead of him in line for promotion to head of the office. As an exception, Dehler's time as city legal advisor was therefore credited to his period of service in the civil service for "particularly compelling political reasons" [480]. Through his personal commitment to his former political opponent, Schwede was ultimately able to significantly expand his own sphere of influence and demand loyalty from his party comrade of the same age. In his new role, Dehler was now responsible, among other things, for issuing "protective custody orders" for the imprisonment and concentration camp internment of political opponents. From 1934, Dehler also served as the first chairman of the board of the Coburg State Foundation and, from 1935, as a member of the board of trustees of the Niederfüllbach Foundation. From here, he also took over the management of the SD branch office in Coburg and eventually transferred from the SS to the SD, where he rose to the rank of Standartenführer.

In December 1937, Dehler was promoted to senior government official and moved to the Bavarian State Ministry of the Interior in Munich the following summer, where he headed the department for senior personnel. His work for the NSDAP was highlighted as a particular qualification. In this position, Dehler was promoted to government director in October 1939 and to ministerial advisor in November 1940. He rejected the option of running for mayor himself after the withdrawal of the candidate Haidn in favor of a further career in the civil service. [482] The climax

BA R 9361-III/520871. For more on Franz Dehler, see also: Anonymous: Franz Dehler (1888–1970). In: Coburger Geschichtsblätter 28 (2020), pp. 79–81.

476 See annotated curriculum vitae of Franz Dehler. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg Stad D 25.

477 See Affidavit by Georg Linke, January 14, 1950, and annotated curriculum vitae of Franz Dehler. StACo Spruchkammer Coburg Stad D 25.

478 See Coburg City Council to the State Ministry of the Interior, October 24, 1933. StadtACo A 7894.

479 Reference letter from Franz Schwedes for Franz Dehler dated July 2, 1934. BayHStA MInn 83342.

480 Adolf Wagner to Franz Schwede, April 20, 1933; State Ministry of the Interior, May 24, 1933. BayHStA MInn 83342.

481 See annotated curriculum vitae of Franz Dehler. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg Stad D 25.

482 See Franz Dehler to the Secretary General of the State Ministry of the Interior, Dr. Mendens, March 15, 1939. BayHStA MInn 83342.

Dehler finally reached the peak of his career in March 1942 with his appointment as president of the administration of state palaces, gardens, and lakes, for which he was qualified not only by his party membership but also by his work in the Coburg State Foundation. In addition, he was assigned the department responsible for the Wittelsbach Compensation Fund in the Ministry of Finance. According to investigations in the denazification proceedings, as president of the palace administration he allegedly participated in "hiding stolen art objects for Reichsleiter Rosenberg and securing the archives of the Reichsführer SS, the Waffen-SS, the Race and Security Main Office, and Hitler's own furniture" [483]. He also helped to make the Schleißheim, Lustheim, and Dachau palaces available as alternative camps for the SS.[484]

After the end of World War II, Franz Dehler was discharged from service, arrested on Herrenchiemsee, and returned to Coburg after being interned in various camps.[485] In July 1948, the Coburg Denazification Court initially classified him as a Group II offender and, as a measure of atonement, sentenced him to 34 months in a labor camp, which he had already served during his internment, and ordered him to cede a garden to the city.[486] In March 1949, the Ansbach Appeals Chamber classified him as a follower in the appeal proceedings.[487]However, following a decision by the Court of Cassation in the Bavarian State Ministry for Special Tasks, the rulings from Coburg and Bamberg were overturned in May 1949, particularly because the appeal decision had not fully taken into account Dehler's actual involvement in the "Third Reich." In a new appeal proceeding before the Main Chamber in Nuremberg, Dehler was reclassified into Group III of those with minor involvement.[488] Parallel to his denazification, Dehler filed a lawsuit against the pension he had been awarded, which was set at the level of a government director, a position that, in the opinion of the State Ministry of Finance, he could have attained without his professional advancement through the party. Dehler finally had his pension reassessed in 1955 in accordance with the position of a ministerial councilor. [489]He died in Coburg in February 1970.

2.3 "The name Coburg obliges!" – Ideologized patterns of behavior

2.3.1 The claim of the pioneer

Franz Schwede himself summed up what he believed every Coburg National Socialist should bear in mind when acting, in relation to Coburg's special responsibility, under the motto "The name Coburg obliges!"

483 Ruling of the Main Chamber in Nuremberg, January 27, 1950. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg City D 25. In this context, Dehler had admitted that valuable art treasures in the form of furniture and paintings had arrived from abroad in Herrenchiemsee, Neuschwanstein, and Landshut.

484 See Reinhold Ziersch to SS Brigadeführer Dr. Katz, July 28, 1944. BA R 9361-III/520871.

485 See Franz Dehler's curriculum vitae dated February 16, 1947. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg City D 25.

486 See ruling of the Coburg City Chamber dated July 28, 1948. StACo Disqualification Chamber Coburg City D 25.

487 See ruling of the Bamberg Appeals Chamber dated March 18, 1949. StACo Coburg City Denunciation Chamber D 25.

488 See ruling of the Main Chamber Nuremberg, January 27, 1950. StACo Denazification Chamber Coburg City D 25.

489 See ruling of the State Ministry of Finance dated May 31, 1954. BayHStA MInn 83342.

or "Coburg ahead!" Ultimately, doing justice to Coburg's role as the first Nazi city became a guiding principle for political action in the former royal seat. Schwede formulated his expectations during the transition to the "Third Reich":

> "All the National Socialist principles that have been implemented in the city of Coburg for four years, despite the restrictions and limitations imposed by legal provisions and regulations, and which were denied recognition in the old state, are now recognized as guiding principles in the new Germany, and not only in local politics. Thus, the city of Coburg, which looks back on a great traditional past, will remain a model and example in the new Germany of National Socialism under the leadership of Reich Chancellor and Chancellor of the People Adolf Hitler."[490]

Political decisions in the city were therefore also measured after 1933 by its role as "Germany's first National Socialist city," and the attempt to live up to the city's significance through anticipatory obedience became the norm. When the city council had to decide on vacation time for young municipal workers and apprentices in June 1934, Mayor Dr. Schmidt, on behalf of Lord Mayor Schwede, argued that

> "the city of Coburg, which plays a special role in the National Socialist movement and in National Socialist ideology and marches at the forefront, should be the first German city to take care of working youth. (...) The city council did not want to wait until a legal regulation in this regard was enacted by the Reich, but wanted to draw the conclusion of its socialist worldview and at the same time set an example for the private sector."[491]

According to Schmidt, the city also had a special obligation with regard to exclusionary measures to "set a good example in enforcing National Socialist principles everywhere and to be at the forefront of the fight against all provocative and anti-state and anti-people elements."[492] Being a Coburg National Socialist was therefore associated with a special honor, but also with a special mission that was elevated to mythical status.[493]At the ceremonial incorporation of Coburg's new districts in September 1934, Mayor Dr. Schmidt reminded those responsible of the duty they now had to fulfill and admonished them accordingly to "always be aware of the tradition of our city, which had grown out of the ranks of other German cities in the political struggle. The name of our city is inscribed not only in the book of party history, but also in the history of Germany." City councilor Wilhelm Schulz from Neuses replied: "The new city councilors and fellow citizens are aware that the name Schwede and that of the city of Coburg come with obligations."[494]

Several concrete effects of this course of action can be found in the history of Coburg during the Third Reich, such as the granting of honorary citizenship to Adolf Hitler in 1932, the first German city to do so shortly after he received his German citizenship.

490 *Coburger Zeitung* newspaper dated May 31, 1933.
491 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, June 31, 1934.
492 *Coburger Tageblatt newspaper* dated August 13, 1935.
493 For *the myth of Coburg*, see Chapter IV1.1.1.2.
494 See *Coburger Zeitung newspaper* dated September 3, 1934.

citizenship. The NSDAP brought the proposal before the Coburg City Council in February 1932 by means of a surprise urgent motion and pushed it through despite opposition from the other factions and by persuading the hesitant Wilhelm Rehlein. The decision was accompanied by protests and scuffles in the audience of the town hall. [495]Since Hitler did not want to receive the corresponding certificate in Coburg Town Hall, but at a public event in front of a large audience, the award ceremony did not take place until October, during the anniversary celebrations of the
"German Day."

As a matter of course, the Coburg Hitler Youth also included the city in the ranks of those cities that had already publicly burned books before May 10, 1933, when the German Student Union organized the "Action against the Un-German Spirit." When, at the beginning of May 1933, Emil Klein, the HJ representative at the Bavarian State Ministry, appealed to the will, diligence, and willingness to make sacrifices of the HJ leaders to carry out a unified action on May 7, Coburg was one of only four Bavarian cities on the right bank of the Rhine and the only one in Upper Franconia to comply with this request.[497] In connection with "Youth Day," HJ leader Franz Heimberger, with the permission of the city police, organized a march to the castle square following a joint church service. In the courtyard of Ehrenburg Castle, the Coburg Hitler Youth then ritually burned "trash and smut" in conjunction with a fiery speech by Heimberger. The literature in question, which included undesirable political writings as well as erotic and Jewish literature deemed un-German, had been confiscated by the municipal police during an inspection of Coburg's bookshops and lending libraries. At the end of the event the Hitler Youth, BDM, and Jungvolk marched through the city with drums and pipes.

The "Adolf Hitler House" on Ernstplatz, built as the party headquarters, served not only as an administrative and meeting building, but also contained a memorial hall commemorating the success of the National Socialist tradition in Coburg, thus creating a central location for the party that was to do justice to Coburg's role as a pioneer. However, in cases such as this or the construction of the new building for the *Coburger Nationalzeitung newspaper*, where the party's own finances did not match its imagined grandeur, party members were called upon to contribute financially through the establishment of cooperatives and appeals for donations.

495 See *Coburger Zeitung* of February 27, 1932.

496 See memo by Franz Schwede dated October 14, 1932. StadtACo A 6494.

497 See circular letter from Emil Klein to all sub-banner and location leaders of the Upper Franconia banner, May 2, 1933. StadtACo A 8698. The other cities were Landsberg am Lech, Rosenheim, and Wasserburg am Inn. Munich had organized a book burning on May 6. See Kühnert, Jürgen: Bücherverbrennungen (1933). In: Historical Dictionary of Bavaria. URL: http://www.historisches-lexikon-bayerns.de/Lexikon/Bücherverbrennungen_(1933) (last accessed March 1, 2024).

498 See Franz Heimberger to the Coburg Police Department, May 5, 1933. StadtACo A 8698.

499 See memo from the Coburg Police Department dated May 5, 1933. StadtACo A 8698. See also Frey, Edmund; Maisch, Brigitte: The "Coburg pyre" burned on May 7, 1933. In: Coburger Geschichtsblätter 17 (2009), pp. 3–12.

500 For the construction of the "Adolf Hitler House," see Chapter IV1.1.1.3. The names of the donors were printed in the *Coburger Nationalzeitung newspaper* to encourage further financial contributions. See *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, April 5, 1934.

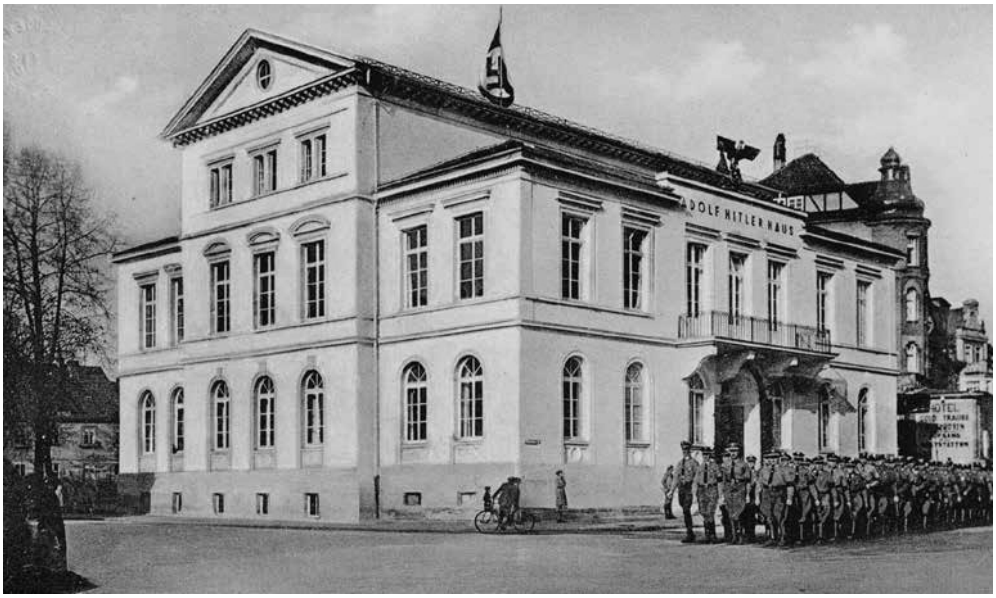


Fig. 23: Adolf Hitler House Coburg, postcard

Coburg and the self-awarded Nazi honorary title

Based on its pioneering role, the Coburg NSDAP ultimately claimed, in a kind of self-empowerment, to place Coburg on a par with Munich or Nuremberg. In 1936, Mayor Dr. Otto Schmidt wrote with the intention of stylizing Coburg as the starting point for the "spiritual penetration of northern Germany with National Socialist ideas": "If Munich bears the proud honorary title of 'capital of the movement' and Nuremberg is revered by all National Socialists as the city of the Reich Party Rallies, then Coburg, due to its special significance for the development of the movement, may be called the 'first National Socialist city'. For this beautiful Franconian city can no longer be ignored in the history of the NSDAP. Coburg was privileged to play an extraordinarily significant role for the party on two occasions."[501]However, Coburg had awarded itself the honorary title of "Germany's first National Socialist city" and used it confidently for its public image, similar to the honorary titles actually awarded by Hitler, for example by carrying large banners with this very designation at appearances abroad. An actual conferral of the title, as Hitler had done in the case of Munich or Nuremberg, for example, did not take place for Coburg, even though this had certainly been the wish of the Coburg Nazi leadership.[502] Efforts to make Coburg the

501 Schmidt, Otto: Coburg under the swastika. In: Stadt und Veste Coburg. Supplement to Das Bayernland 5 (1937), p. 129 f., here p. 129.

502 No evidence could be found in the sources for Hitler awarding the honorary title during the celebrations marking the tenth anniversary of the 1929 city council elections, as mentioned by Harald Sandner and widely reported. See Sandner: Coburg, p. 157. Only Franz Schwe-de writes in 1939 in *Kampf um Coburg* (Battle for Coburg) that he is proud to have won the honorary title of Germany's first Nazi city for Coburg. The Reich Governor's files in the Bavarian Main State Archive (BayHStA Reichsstatthalter 299–301) contain no applications from Coburg for the award of an honorary

"City of the NSKK" nor, due to the networks that had been established within the motor corps, to obtain an honorary title.

Parallel to the efforts to obtain an honorary title, the Coburg NSDAP wanted to establish Reich institutions in the city in order to enhance its prestige, but at the same time to expand its urban networks and increase its own sphere of influence. Fundamental to this desire was the fact that a city the size of Coburg, despite its merits to the party until 1933, had little opportunity to continue to stand out or act in a big way in the "Third Reich." In the end, the only Reich institution that was established in Coburg was the Reichsführerinnenschule (Reich Leader School) at Hohenfels Castle, but this was far from matching the size and power structures that Schwede and his successors had dreamed of for Coburg.

The Coburg Reichsführerinnenschule

After the city council had already decided in September 1933 to set up the first girls' labor service camp in Upper Franconia in the castle's farm buildings, the rest of the castle was now also put at the service of National Socialist women's work, for which the city handed over the castle, which it had recently acquired, to the NSDAP. The Reich School, which was placed under the direction of Mata Bottke, deputy Reich leader of the National Socialist Women's League, offered courses and classes especially for district women's league leaders and employees of the Gau headquarters from throughout the Reich. The grand opening ceremony was attended by Robert Ley, leader of the German Labor Front, Gauleiter Hans Schemm, Reich Leader of the National Socialist People's Welfare Organization Erich Hilgenfeldt, Reich Training Director Otto Gohdes, Head of the Racial Policy Office Dr. Walter Groß, and Reich Leader of the Women's League Getrud Scholtz-Klink. Here they met with local representatives of the municipal and state authorities, the political leadership, the labor service, and in particular the district women's leader Marie Riechers and Duchess Viktoria Adelheid. In his opening speech, Schwede himself expressed his gratitude that the relocation of the title had resulted in the approval of such a facility.

title had been approved. Nor does the Reich Ministerial Gazette of the Reich Ministry of the Interior, where such events were normally announced, mention this. The fact that the local press also knows nothing about the award of the honorary title makes this extremely unlikely. An honor of this kind would probably have generated a broad response within the city.

503 See memo from Mayor Dr. Schmidt dated August 8, 1936. StadtACo A 6232.

504 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, May 29, 1934. On the Reichsführerinnenschule, see also: Franger, Gaby: Die Reichsschule der NS-Frauenschaft auf Schloss Hohenfels. In: idem; Frey, Edmund; Maisch, Brigitte (eds.): "Seien Sie doch vernünftig!" Frauen der Coburger Geschichte. Coburg 2008, pp. 211–223. It was not only through the Duchess's presence at the opening ceremony that the Reichsführerinnenschule received the extraordinary support of the ducal family. Among the women who attended one of the 31 courses at the castle until its closure in 1944 due to the war was Alexandra zu Hohenlohe-Langenburg, the daughter of the former regent of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, who was born in Coburg in 1901. After spending most of her time in Coburg during the First World War and afterwards, especially in the winters, and having worked there in the municipal welfare office in 1929, Alexandra joined the NSDAP in May 1933 and subsequently founded a local group of the NS-Frauenschaft (National Socialist Women's League) in Langenburg. In December 1933, she also took over the leadership of the Gerabronn district, which qualified her for a training place in Coburg. Meta Bottke attested in particular that, despite her origins and upbringing, she integrated well into the community in the spirit of the "people's community." See Alexandra zu Hohenlohe-Langenburg's curriculum vitae. BA NS 44/7.



Fig. 24: Inauguration of the Reichsführerinnenschule Hohenfels on May 28, 1934: Gauleiter Hans Schemm, Mayor Franz Schwede, Reichsleiter Dr. Ley, district women's association leader Marie Riechers, Duchess Viktoria Adelheid

this Reich institution in Coburg, "which, taking into account the tradition and significance of the city of Coburg in the struggle for the National Socialist movement, wanted to recognize this significance."[505] The Reichsführinnenschule, as a "place of training and education for German women in the Third Reich," was to have the task of "finding the female expression of the National Socialist idea" and "to train a female gender that is mentally and organizationally capable of leading, yet revolutionary enough not to rest on its laurels, differentiated and obedient, knowing no 'I' but only 'you'." [506] The 14-day courses at Hohenfels Castle included sporting activities, political lectures that were discussed in the group, as well as discussions and exchanges on contemporary female topics such as child rearing, cooking, customs and festival planning, health care, and women's rights. At the same time, the groups took an active part in the cultural program of the city of Coburg, visiting the state theater, the art collections at the Veste, lectures, concerts, and movies and also took trips to the surrounding area.

Coburg's self-awareness and sense of mission

However, it was not only in relation to the honorary title and the imperial institutions that the city derived its claim to be one of the pioneers of National Socialism.

505 Ibid.

506 *Coburger Zeitung* newspaper, May 29, 1934.

507 See Bottke, Meta: Reich School of the National Socialist Women's League at Hohenfels Castle. In: Das Bayernland 5 (1937), p. 159 f. and Franger: Reich School, p. 216. For information on the participants, see BA NS 44/1–32.

specific demands that should be made on the city itself and its party members. While Coburg's self-confidence was sometimes ridiculed from outside,[508] the city consistently presented its role for the party in demands made on the state and the Reich leadership. A letter from the Coburg City Council to the Reich Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda regarding the financing of the Coburg State Theater read as follows:

> "The old fighter rightly deserves the special care and assistance of the National Socialist state. Shouldn't the city of Coburg, which can be considered one of the oldest fighters among German cities, in whose streets the Führer broke the red terror with his hundreds in 1922, on whose town hall, as the first public building in Germany, long before January 30, 1933, and in whose city council, under the leadership of the current Oberpräsident and Gauleiter Schwede, the first National Socialist majority was achieved, should not such a city, whose services to the National Socialist revolution are so obvious, be worthy of the special support of the National Socialist Reich leadership?" [509]

The fact that the National Socialist People's Welfare Organization (NSV) distributed a poster during the 1937 evacuation of mothers showing a map of the Bavarian Ostmark on which Coburg was not marked was therefore considered scandalous by the city. In a letter to the Gau leadership, councilman Wilhelm Schulz mockingly pointed out that Coburg was also located in the Bavarian Ostmark and that there was no reason for the Gau leadership to be ashamed of the Nazi stronghold of Coburg.

2.3.2 Corruption and enrichment

Closely linked to this sense of entitlement was the tendency of many party members to derive the right to enrich themselves from their service to the party. Despite the outwardly propagated façade of special charity and altruism as one of the party's highest ideals, cases of corruption and acceptance of benefits became increasingly common in the Coburg NSDAP. Encouraged by the elimination of any critical public opinion and effective control of power, this phenomenon ranged from social advancement through the awarding of special positions, which would have been hardly conceivable without party membership, to very concrete material gains. A common narrative among many NSDAP members was that they were entitled to special compensation for the alleged hardships they had endured in the struggle for the party before 1933. It was precisely through the party's network and clique system that these claims could be made quite specifically as comradely achievements of a fellow fighter. This was also because ruthlessness and assertiveness were considered virtues worthy of promotion by the NSDAP. Close allegiance to a local "leader" was always associated with a claim to benefits, which was interpreted as welfare.

508 See, for example, *the Frankfurter Zeitung* of August 28, 1931, and December 30, 1932, and *the Vossische Zeitung* of April 21 and May 17, 1932.

509 See Coburg City Council to the Reich Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, January 7, 1935. StACo Theater 73.

510 See minutes of the consultation with the councilors, August 5, 1937. StadtACo A 8074 a.

The remuneration was to be paid mostly by the "outsiders," whose disenfranchisement went hand in hand with the expansion of their own power. This logic also justified the theft of property from those who were persecuted, which at the beginning of Nazi rule and its consolidation was often still punished within the party, but in the course of the complete exclusion of the Jewish population from urban areas was ultimately officially arranged and approved.

Many cases of enrichment and acceptance of benefits arose from the information and connections that became available to NSDAP members in key political and economic bodies from 1929 onwards. This development began with the appointment of Franz Schwede as the "first party card official" immediately after the NSDAP won the 1929 city council elections.[512] As early as 1929, the *Coburger Volksblatt* uncovered a series of further cases in which NSDAP members participated in a system whose abolition they had demanded. For example, the *Volksblatt* accused master baker Ernst Bernhard of using knowledge acquired in the finance committee about a property sale to purchase a plot of land for himself. Grocer Alfred Streng was accused of being selected to supply the municipal forest recreation area Wüstenahorn despite the announcement that NSDAP city councilors would not do business with the city. Similarly, Werner Faber had received contracts from the city as a lawyer.The three men tried to defend themselves against the *Volksblatt*, but their lawsuits against the newspaper's editor were dismissed by the Coburg District Court, the Coburg Regional Court, and the Munich Higher Regional Court.Financial advantages for NSDAP members or party organizations were facilitated by the early "Gleichschaltung" (coordination)of the savings bank committee and the Coburg savings bank. The publisher of *the Völkischer Beobachter* and the paternal businesses of Wilhelm Rehlein and Ernst Kuhn were among the beneficiaries.

After 1933, a practice of filling positions in which the role in and merit for the party was a decisive criterion and the party's networks served as an almost exclusive recruitment mechanism was once again taken to extremes. However, it was precisely at this point that cases repeatedly came to light in which party members were able to abuse the positions they had been assigned on the basis of their party service, as they were subject to less strict controls due to the high level of trust placed in them. However, after the actual judicial control authorities ceased to function as unrestricted regulators after 1933, there was a decline in the prosecution or punishment of such corruption.

511 On the phenomenon of corruption in National Socialism, see Bajohr: Parvenüs and Bajohr, Frank: Corruption in the Nazi era as a reflection of the National Socialist system of rule. In: Prittwitz, Cornelius et al. (eds.): Criminality of the powerful (= Interdisciplinary Studies on Law and the State, Volume 46). Baden-Baden 2008, pp. 200–211. On the victimization of the "old fighters," see Schmidt, Christoph: On the motives of "old fighters" in the NSDAP. In: Peukert, Detlev; Reulecke, Jürgen (eds.): Die Reihen fest geschlossen. Contributions to the history of everyday life under National Socialism. Wuppertal 1981, pp. 21–43.

512 See Coburger Volksblatt: Coburg unter dem Hakenkreuz. Coburg 1932, p. 4.

513 See *Coburger Volksblatt* of September 5, 1929; minutes of the city council meeting of September 6, 1929; statement by the Nazi faction of September 6, 1929.

514 See *Coburger Volksblatt* of November 18, 1930, and January 22, 1931.

515 See Konrad Soergel to the State Ministry of the Interior, September 9, 1931. StadtACo A 8076 and Coburger Volksblatt: Coburg unter dem Hakenkreuz, p. 20. See Chapter III3.1.1.

516 See Chapter III3.2.3.

This only happened when public pressure became too great in Coburg's small-scale structures, where "party cronyism" was often a controversial issue. The higher the position within the party hierarchy, the more superficial the investigation and the more lenient the punishment.[517] A Sturmführer from Neuses, who had been employed at the district court and as a bailiff, was convicted of embezzlement and breach of trust in more than 70 cases.[518] The same was true of an employee at the district office and close confidant of Schwede.[519] The biggest scandal in the Coburg Chamber of Industry and Commerce during the Nazi era, the embezzlement case involving employee Max Probst, was also attributable to the fact that Probst, thanks to his merits as an "old fighter" and "Co-burg honorary medal holder," was given extensive powers, which he used exclusively for his own enrichment and embezzlement.[520] The merchants Karl Hartung and Franz Reuther also stood out for exercising certain special privileges through their positions of power. In 1943, for example, Karl Hartung had organized a lavish wedding celebration for his daughter, circumventing all war-related rationing regulations, whereupon the district leadership intervened and, as a result of public pressure, investigated him, at least superficially and without any significant consequences.[521] Franz Reuther had assaulted a waitress at a party with other party members in the "Adolf Hitler House" and was subsequently brought before the party court and the Coburg Regional Court, but was not punished.[522]The discrepancy between his own stylization as a modest benefactor and his simultaneous enrichment through his party office by blurring the lines between the private and public spheres was also clearly evident in Arno Fischer's licensing system, from which he himself, Schwede, and Wagner benefited.

In addition, there were cases in which party members enriched themselves quite specifically at the expense of "outsiders" and regarded this as their inherent right while ideologically degrading their counterparts. This affected, for example, the assets of banned workers' organizations, the Coburg lodges, and Jewish property, which were treated as personal assets after the deportation of the last Coburg Jews. The enrichment that took place here ranged from participation in the financial destruction of Jewish tradespeople and the subsequent incorporation of their business premises, inventory, and even their business models, to the cheap acquisition of "Jewish furniture" and other possessions that had to be left behind in Coburg.

Phenomena such as corruption and enrichment formed a fundamental principle inherent in the National Socialist regime. They bound many of the actors involved to it and linked their actions to the success of the regime, for the preservation of which they were prepared to fight accordingly. As discussed here and below

517 See Bajohr: Parvenüs, pp. 137–175.
518 See diary of the Neuses local Nazi group. StadtACo I 0229 (2).
519 See Emil Neidinger, Chamber of Commerce Syndic to Attorney Hermann Roquette, December 21, 1951. Archive of the Loge zur Fränkischen Krone.
520 See IHK Coburg, Brose to the Reich Minister of Economics, January 2, 1941. BA R 3101/9455–9456.
521 See interrogation transcript of Dr. Rudolf Schulze-Döbold by the Coburg City Denazification Court dated April 5, 1948. StAMü Tribunal Box 986, Tribunal File Ernst Kuhn.
522 See Chapter IV3.2.1.3.
523 See several examples in Chapter IV3.2.3.2.

However, as the cases presented show, this phenomenon was not limited to the top echelons of local party officials, but permeated the NSDAP as a whole. The ultimate scale of the system of corruption is difficult to determine, given the undoubtedly considerable number of unreported cases.

2.3.3 Retribution and humiliation as political tools

The NSDAP's treatment of "outsiders" and the Jewish population of Coburg also revealed that personal retaliation and the degradation of political opponents were declared adequate means of politics. Franz Schwede and Werner Faber in particular used their growing power to carry out veritable campaigns of revenge.

Schwede's personal campaign of revenge

Franz Schwede initially took action against the entire group of people who had opposed him in the *Schwede case*. After a large part of the city's society had sided with the National Socialists in the Schwede versus Friedmann case, he also continued his public agitation against the Jewish commission councilor. Before 1933, however, there were still certain legal limits to public defamation, which those affected, such as Friedmann, usually made extensive use of to assert themselves. The methods Franz Schwede was prepared to use to save his own skin despite inflammatory smear campaigns are demonstrated by the lawsuit Abraham Friedmann brought against him in 1932. On February 20, 1932, Franz Schwede had once again sharply attacked Abraham Friedmann in a propaganda speech in Zwickau, calling him a "little cattle Jew" and claiming that he had enriched himself through profiteering while German men were dying at the front. Since the *Zwickauer Zeitung* reported on Schwede's appearance after the meeting, quoting him directly, and the article was also turned into a leaflet by the Zwickau NSDAP and used for propaganda purposes, Schwede was confronted in April 1932 with a preliminary injunction at the request of Friedmann, who had accused the Nazi mayor of defamation. However, since Schwede had already had to pay a considerable amount of Reichsmarks in similar lawsuits and a genuine apology and retraction of the statements in the *Zwickauer Zeitung*, as stipulated in the injunction, would have represented an enormous propaganda defeat, Dr. Schmidt had to prevent this from happening. He now set about pressuring the Nazi local group in Zwickau to collect statements from people who had been present at the meeting in question, who were to testify that Schwede had not made the statements. However, as this would have been a blatant lie, even all the party members rejected this step. Dr. Schmidt even went so far as to draft the relevant statements himself and send them to Zwickau for signature only. Only after the district and regional levels of the party became involved and exerted appropriate pressure were three affidavits sent to him, testifying that although they could no longer remember exactly, they were certain that Schwede had not made the statements. At the same time, Schmidt became active in Autenhausen, Friedmann's birthplace, to collect statements against Friedmann that could have supported Schwede's statements. Since Schwede's appeal ultimately lasted until November 1933, he was able to benefit from the "Gleichschaltung" that had been carried out by then.

benefit. The Bamberg Higher Regional Court upheld his appeal and ordered the enforcement of the costs imposed on Abraham Friedmann.

But even without the legal victory, Friedmann found himself under constant threat after 1929, which repeatedly resulted in individual actions against his property. In addition, in March 1933, Friedmann was the first victim of the unleashed violence within the urban area when he was abducted by SS men to the Finkenauer Forest, where he was abused and psychologically tortured, resulting in a nervous breakdown and a hospital stay lasting several days. The party had rehearsed and practiced on Friedmann the method of combining physical and psychological violence to completely degrade its opponents, as ritualized in the "beating room."

In addition, Schwede also took targeted action in the town hall against those who had advocated his dismissal, so that ultimately the process of "Gleichschaltung" (enforced conformity) of the municipal administration seemed like a major reckoning. The two mayors, the directors of the municipal utilities, and city planning officer Köster were gradually forced out of their posts. Police Inspector Janzen, who refused to accept Schwede's abuse of power, also lost his position with the city shortly thereafter. As the cases of Mayors Erich Unverfähr and Ernst Altenstädter, as well as Police Inspector Wilhelm Janzen, demonstrate, the NSDAP's strategy of "breaking down" its opponents became legitimate. Cornering political opponents through psychological violence and literally driving them to total exhaustion, madness, or alcoholism, thereby creating irreversible facts that justified their removal even under the existing rule of law, proved to be one of the NSDAP's most successful patterns of action in the course of its seizure of power.

The example of former district administrator Ernst Fritsch also showed how far Schwede was able to take his vendettas. After Fritsch was forcibly transferred to Regensburg in 1934 as a result of the NSDAP's activities, the NSDAP's smear campaign against him, who had joined the NSDAP in May 1935, did not stop. In 1937, on the 15th anniversary of "German Day," articles by Franz Schwede appeared in the *Bayerische Ostmark* and the *Völkischer Beobachter*, once again discrediting Fritsch and his role in the "Kampfzeit" (period of struggle). The damage to his reputation ultimately had such an impact that Fritsch was temporarily suspended from duty and reassigned in 1938 due to the political burden from his time in Coburg. All subsequent appeals and efforts to defend himself against this defamation and counteract his professional disadvantage failed until Fritsch, who was now unable to work due to illness, finally agreed to his retirement in 1943.

Faber's personal vendetta

Werner Faber also waged a vendetta against the Coburg lodge, which had been targeted by nationalist circles and the NSDAP ever since. In 1925, on the advice of his father, Johann Faber, a medical officer and district medical officer in Neustadt near Coburg, who was himself a member of the lodge, Werner Faber joined the lodge for the purpose of advancing his career.

524 See Dr. Otto Schmidt's files on the case of Schwede v. Friedmann. StadtACo Files of attorney Dr. Schmidt, submitted to the main office.

525 See Chapter IV3.1.2.

526 See District President of Lower Bavaria and Upper Palatinate, October 22, 1937, and Fritsch to the District President in Regensburg, July 14, 1942. BayHStA MInn 78116.

submitted an application for membership in the *Ernst Lodge for Truth, Friendship, and Justice*. However, as he had already attracted attention for his crude behavior in nationalist associations at that time, his application was rejected, which ultimately prompted his father to leave the lodge. [527]As soon as Faber had sufficient power in the city, he launched a counterattack and attempted to label the *Ernst für Wahrheit, Freundschaft und Recht lodge* as anti-national. He claimed that it had forbidden its members from voting nationally in the 1920 Reichstag elections, referring to a circular letter stating that certain parties would take a stand against Masonic lodges. Franz Schwede and Wilhelm Frühwald also presented these allegations to their audience at party meetings, which prompted the lodge to take legal action against Franz Schwede. In the Coburg lodge trial, Schwede's secretary Karl Schunck and Faber's entire family testified on his behalf, while the lodge itself sought to prove its political neutrality and national reliability. The trial was also accompanied by a smear campaign by the NSDAP against the lodge members in the *Coburg National Newspaper*. The Coburg District Court acquitted Franz Schwede, but the lodge was able to obtain a conviction against Schwede through an appeal in December 1934, which was also confirmed by the Bavarian Supreme Court in Munich.

Despite all this, the trial sealed the end of the lodge. In 1932, Carl Eduard resigned as protector of the lodge. After the lodge's attempts at adaptation had failed, namely by renaming itself *the Coburg Order Group of the National Christian Order of Frederick the Great* in accordance with the Old Prussian Grand Lodge, and by organizing educational evenings and lecture series to emphasize its national sentiment, it decided in May 1933 to dissolve itself, which became final in September. The NSDAP and Franz Schwede were now determined to recover at least the compensation he had to pay as a result of the proceedings from the lodge, for which they successfully put massive pressure on those responsible. The lodge's assets and the lodge building at Theatergasse 1 were ultimately transferred to the *Duke Ernst I Foundation* through a donation agreement, which was to be subordinate to and administered by the city.[528] Without further involving the lodge members, their property was subsequently disposed of in an arbitrary manner. A large part of it went to the NSV, the NS-Frauenschaft, and the BDM, or was used to build and furnish the trade and commercial school. The "Adolf Hitler House" was furnished with a concert grand piano and a harmonium. The ritual furnishings, such as table lodges, silverware, porcelain, archives, and books, were initially stored with members of the lodge themselves, who had been appointed as liquidators, but in April 1934, against the will of the lodge, they were confiscated by the SS and partly taken to Munich. The lodge's silver cutlery was retained by the city itself. City official Edmund Volk inventoried it and handed it over to the district leadership for use in the canteen of the "Adolf Hitler House."[529] The campaign of revenge initiated by Faber ended

527 See minutes of the public hearing of the Coburg District Court on August 13, 1931. Private archive of the Lodge zur Fränkischen Krone.

528 See donation agreement dated February 24, 1934. Private archive of the Lodge zur Fränkischen Krone.

529 See circular letters from the Johannis Lodge to its former members dated July 11, 1934, and February 27, 1936. Emil Neidinger, Chamber of Commerce legal advisor, to attorney Hermann Roquette, December 21, 1951; Emil Neidinger to Hermann Roquette, March 30, 1953, and statement by Emil Neidinger during the hearing before the Reparations Chamber on October 11, 1954. Private archive of the Lodge zur

Ultimately, this resulted in significant enrichment of the party with the help of the city administration.

Humiliation as a social practice

However, the reprisals were not limited to local party officials, but were also evident on the part of the SA and SS, who used the power assigned to them in the "beating room" to vent their personal anger over previous beatings. The cutting of political prisoners' hair, which made their humiliation visible beyond the act of humiliation itself, the public pillorying on Coburg's market square, the attacks on Jews in the open street, and finally the dehumanizing degradation within the "beating room," which destroyed lives, broke personalities and resulted in suicide attempts, [all] contributed to the overall picture of a targeted and planned public campaign. Behind[this], a certain tactic and pattern of action could be recognized that could not be explained by situational arbitrariness. The persecution of political opponents had taken on a ritualized structure with the arbitrary violence in the Coburg "beating room" and continued to function as a pattern of action and instrument of terror in the years that followed.

The increased intensity of persecution, as seen in Coburg during the exclusion measures, can therefore be attributed to the time advantage in the ability to exercise power and "Gleichschaltung" (enforced conformity) of the Coburg National Socialists, to group dynamic processes that favored the use of violence, but also to the size of the urban area. It was small enough to stage personal vendettas through manageable networks and communication structures, but still large and significant enough to allow for greater political freedom of action and power, and to attribute overriding importance to one's own political struggle and personal motives for it.

3 Administration

As independent actors in the National Socialist system of rule[531], executors of National Socialist objectives and implementing bodies of state directives with their own persecution mechanisms[532], the city administrations in the

Franconian Crown. Only the porcelain bearing the lodge insignia could be distributed to the members of the lodge themselves.

530 See Chapter IV3.1 for all of the cases listed.

531 Fundamental to the role of administration in National Socialism is: Matzerath: National Socialism and Local Self-Government. Building on this, however, research has long focused on the destructive nature of National Socialism for local self-government, based on the basic assumption of a dualism between party and state. On the other hand, the evidence for viewing the city administration as an independent and serious actor with its own scope for action within the National Socialist power structure was provided primarily by: Gotto: Kommunalpolitik (Local Politics). Got-to contrasts Ernst Fraenkel's image of the distinction between a "normative state" and a "measure-taking state" with the principle of "administrative normality." For an overview of the role of local authorities as independent actors, see: Gruner: Kommunen, pp. 167–211.

532 See Christians: Amtsgewalt, p. 12.

National Socialism-specific conditions for action. The power relations in Coburg, which saw itself as a National Socialist model city, played a decisive role in how the administration was restructured according to the primacy of ideology. The administrative structures and actions thus provide important insights into the transformation of bourgeois society into a "people's community," for example through the adaptation of ideological and racial utopian premises in administrative actions and the implementation of the "Führer principle" in the structuring of public authorities. The significance of the administration in the National Socialist process of communitization lay above all in the fact that, as a link between the party and the population, it could grant or withdraw access to resources, grant or withdraw permission to participate in public life, and thus open up or restrict the scope of action for the population.

3.1 Transformation according to the primacy of ideology

3.1.2 Reorganization after 1929

When the swastika flag flew for the first time in the Reich at Coburg Town Hall on January 18, 1931, the NSDAP made it clear that the administrative headquarters was now under party control. The speeches from the town hall balcony were followed by a party event in the Hofbräu restaurants, at which NSDAP chairman Adolf Hitler also spoke. As the *Coburger Volksblatt* revealed in the days following the event, Hitler was chauffeured from Meiningen to Coburg in a municipal car. This was a small detail, but it made it clear that the NSDAP not only claimed the town hall symbolically for the party, but was also willing to use and exploit the municipal administration for its own purposes.

As early as 1929, with its growing power, the NSDAP began to reshape the Coburg city administration according to its own ideas. Schwede initially aimed to position the NSDAP at the levers of power and thus occupy the political space. In 1930, Hitler himself had thought through a takeover of power in Thuringia, concluding that it was primarily necessary to fill the Ministry of the Interior, which was responsible for personnel issues and the police, and the Ministry of Education with National Socialists.

The expansion of Nazi rule at the local political level

The approach in Coburg was similar, where the NSDAP relied on two strategies to secure these central areas of local politics. Initial attempts to change the municipal code, for example by granting city council members expanded access to files and thereby expanding the power of NSDAP city councilors, had failed.Therefore, the Nazi faction attempted to gain control of the committees and senates of the

533 See Gotto: Kommunalpolitik, pp. 1–14 and Mecking; Wirsching: Stadtverwaltung, pp. 1–19.
534 See *Coburger Volksblatt* of January 20, 1931.
535 See Hitler's letter of February 2, 1930. Reprinted in: Dickmann, Fritz: Die Regierungsbildung in Thüringen als Modell der Machtergreifung (The Formation of the Government in Thuringia as a Model for Seizing Power). In: VfZ 14 (1966), pp. 454–464, here pp. 460–464.
536 In consultation with Karl Fiehler, Schwede had attempted to contest the mayor's traditional rights prior to his appointment as head of the city. The NSDAP thus demanded secrecy regarding the



Fig. 25: Market and town hall with rising swastika sun, postcard

City Council to expand its voting power in order to gain influence over the various departments of the city administration and the distribution of corresponding powers. As early as July 1929, it began making a number of changes to the City Council's rules of procedure and redistributing the committees, which the *Coburger Zeitung* described as a "assault" and the SPD faction as "rape." The reorganization was accompanied by an excessive gain in power for the NSDAP and the systematic ousting of the SPD from decision-making positions. Even at this early stage, the Social Democrats were only allocated one seat each on the finance committee and senate and on the administration and police committee and senate, and Werner Faber announced to them that the NSDAP's goal was to remove them from the most important posts.[537] The National Socialists also made it clear to the German Nationalists that they had to submit or they would also be challenged for their seats on the committees. After the dispute with the German Nationalists escalated as a result of a leaflet containing a campaign speech by Schwede in Zwickau, to which the DNVP responded with a counterstatement, Karl Güntzel, for example, was dismissed from the administrative committee of the state theater. The German Nationalists also withdrew other seats in the finance committee and the works council, which had been promised to their former partners in return for their approval of NSDAP measures. Werner Faber gave

City council matters were to be overturned by granting city council members expanded access to city council files. See decision of the Bavarian Administrative Court of March 5, 1930. StadtACo A 7869.

537 See *Coburger Zeitung* of July 6, 1929. The NSDAP received 22 seats, the SPD 12, the DNVP 5, and the National Liberal Association 3, with the SPD being fobbed off with seats on less important committees.

admitted openly that the measures were intended to punish the DNVP. Although the changed distribution of seats in the committees and senates between the *Patriotic Citizens' and Economic Bloc and the Black-White-Red Bloc* was partially reversed, the warning to the German nationalist camp clearly resonated.[538]

It soon became apparent that Schwede had secured a key position for himself in the restructuring of the city administration, particularly through the strong position of the NSDAP in the police and administration senate. From the moment the NSDAP held the actual majority in the city council thanks to Schwede's position as third mayor, most of the issues aimed at increasing the NSDAP's power were moved to confidential meetings, and urgent motions were usually tabled, giving the other factions little time to prepare accordingly. These were measures that the NSDAP had criticized the bourgeois parties for before 1929 and used in its propaganda against the politics of dignitaries. Due to the large number of formal meetings of the city council convened by the NSDAP, actual discussions and debates now hardly took place anymore. Attempts to take legal action, such as that by Social Democratic city councilor Christian Reichenbecher against the government of Upper and Middle Franconia, failed.[539]

In addition, Schwede developed a personnel policy that employed a repertoire of methods ranging from public humiliation and harassment to disciplinary proceedings and lawsuits, with the aim of dismissing or forcing leading officials in the city administration into retirement. Schwede's motives were twofold: the strategic replacement of key positions in order to implement National Socialist local politics as effectively as possible, and the need for revenge against all those who had played a decisive role in the *Schwede affair* surrounding his dismissal from the municipal works in 1929 or who had otherwise shown him his limits prior to 1929. Since the NSDAP referendum in 1929 and the circumstances that led to it were seen as a major setback for the city administration, Schwede could expect little opposition to his administrative reforms.

Through targeted exchanges at the highest decision-making level, policy-making authority and decision-making power were to be quickly transferred to the NSDAP. At the same time, by filling the lowest positions with National Socialists, they were to be provided with wages and livelihoods, and the administrative structure was to be stabilized from the bottom up. However, by retaining the middle management of the administration in particular, which was its core and equipped with specialist knowledge, the administration was able to continue to function smoothly even after the National Socialists took power. Since Schwede was acting without any legal or administrative basis here, he once again coordinated his approach to the dismissals closely with Karl Fiehler in Munich. The two National Socialists drew on the experience Fiehler had gained in Munich in dismissing party members from municipal service, so that Schwede could use it in reverse to remove unwelcome employees.

538 See German Nationalist City Council faction to the government of Middle and Upper Franconia, January 14, 1933; Franz Schwede to the government of Middle and Upper Franconia, February 2, 1933. StadtACo A 6424 and *Coburger Nationalzeitung* of January 13, 1933.

539 See Christian Reichenbecher to the government of Upper and Middle Franconia, January 3, 1933. StABa K3, Government of Upper Franconia, submission 1981, 114.

get rid of.[540] It was also mentioned elsewhere that certain individuals from the city administration were replaced on the basis of an order from Munich, so it can be assumed that the entire "Gleichschaltung" of the Coburg administration was agreed upon with the NSDAP in Munich.[541]

At the heart of an administrative restructuring was initially the desire to gain control over the municipal police force, which brought municipal police chief Wilhelm Janzen into the NSDAP's sights. The Janzen case is particularly revealing of the strategies used by Schwede and the NSDAP to eliminate political opponents. Like First Mayor Unverfähr before him, Janzen was deliberately worn down, creating irrefutable facts that could be used to force his retirement and thus remove him from office without any possibility of appeal, even under the rule of law. Through a combination of the deliberate wearing down of political opponents and the arbitrary application of existing legal measures, the NSDAP created enormous pressure for persecution even before 1933.

Access to the municipal police department

Wilhelm Janzen, born on March 15, 1886, attended the Bürgerschule (citizens' school) in Schwerin and became a candidate for a mid-level civil service career at the local magistrate's office. After attending the police academy in Cottbus, he qualified as a police commissioner and worked as such in Altona. In 1920, Janzen was assigned to the border region as a police captain before accepting the position of police inspector in Coburg in August 1922, where he was promoted to police director in 1924.[543]Politically, Janzen was a German nationalist and joined the DNVP during his time in Coburg, so he was initially sympathetic to the völkisch camp. During his tenure as police director, however, Janzen made it his mission to maintain peace and order in Coburg in the face of political unrest and escalations. With this premise, Janzen also took energetic action against the increasingly powerful NSDAP, which had made it its strategy to operate across borders. This brought Janzen into personal opposition to Franz Schwede, whose abuse of power as third mayor and Nazi faction leader he was unwilling to accept. Janzen also attempted to prevent the National Socialists from violently expanding their power on the streets of the city. His efforts to use his office to keep Schwede in check backfired with the NSDAP's increasing gain in power.

Immediately after seizing power, the Nazi faction intrigued against Janzen in both the city council and the police and administrative senate, for example by initiating disciplinary proceedings. His applications for a higher classification, which had been deferred in the past, were justified by the fact that in Coburg, the police

540 Fiehler wrote an essay for Schwede on the dismissals of workers in Munich in this context. See Karl Fiehler to Franz Schwede, September 17, 1931; Franz Schwede to Karl Fiehler, October 24, 1931; Karl Fiehler to Franz Schwede, January 11, 1932; Karl Schunck to Karl Fiehler, April 30, 1932, and Karl Fiehler to Franz Schwede, May 6, 1932. BA NS 25/185.

541 See *Coburger Zeitung*, March 14, 1931.

542 For information on the issue of claiming compensation after 1945 on the basis of such persecution measures, see Chapter V4.

543 See personnel files of Wilhelm Janzen. StadtACo personnel file of Wilhelm Janzen, submitted by the main office.

544 See Chapter IV3.1.1.

The proposal that the head of the main office should also take on administrative tasks that were performed by the legal advisor in other cities was immediately rejected in 1929 with the help of the NSDAP's majority vote. At the same time, attempts were made to limit the police director's area of responsibility and to transfer certain functions back to the mayor as police commissioner.[545] In 1931, they went even further and decided to demote Janzen at the request of the NSDAP. However, he could avoid this if he voluntarily retired with immediate effect, thereby allowing Schwede access to the Coburg police department. Janzen initially agreed to this course of action, but when the NSDAP heard that he was telling people in the city that there were no health reasons for his retirement, the city council withdrew its proposal and instead transferred Janzen to a remote post in the municipal welfare office while maintaining the demotion.

At the same time, as in the case of Mayor Unverfähr, they had committed themselves to deliberately harassing and meticulously monitoring the police chief in order to use every mistake against him. Wilhelm Scheel, a naval comrade of Schwede's who was to serve as Janzens' successor, acted as his informant. [547]In addition to Janzens' existing health problems, he finally developed a nervous disorder in 1929, causing his overall health to deteriorate steadily. As early as the summer of 1929, the district physician Dr. Hönisch had issued him a certificate for sick leave, which, according to the doctor, had become necessary due to the various machinations against Janzen. Janzen now had to report unfit for duty more and more often, with doctors consistently confirming that his condition was worsening due to mental overexertion and emotional agitation. This was a condition that the National Socialists deliberately promoted and ultimately used against Janzen. The city council now obtained various specialist medical reports on Janzen's condition in order to prepare for his removal from office.

At the psychiatric clinic of the University of Erlangen, for example, the following was recorded in the minutes:

> "He initially provided information about his life in a calm and orderly manner, then moved on to talk about his current job. In doing so, he became increasingly agitated, recounting the enormous difficulties his professional activities in Coburg presented for him. He fell into a state of severe emotional distress, becoming angry and distrustful, and experiencing severe depression that at times almost brought tears to his eyes. His fingers began to tremble and fidget nervously. He finally lost his train of thought while talking, mentioning how the constant excitement of his work was causing him to lose sleep; the many adversities had put him in such a permanent state of nervous excitement that even minor things, especially when directed against him personally, could completely upset him. He is full of thoughts of impairment, claims to have been insulted on the street

545 See Franz Schwede to Mayor Unverfähr, January 3, 1931. StadtACo A 6441.

546 See Justice Councilor Ziehr to the Bamberg Higher Regional Court, November 8, 1932. StadtACo personnel file Wilhelm Janzen, submitted by the main office.

547 See Coburg City Council to Director Linke, November 29, 1933. StadtACo personnel file Wilhelm Janzen, submitted by the main office.

548 See medical report by Director Zapf, March 25, 1931; report by the management of the Erlangen Medical Clinic, September 2, 1931; provisional report by Dr. Zapf and Dr. Hönisch, May 29, 1931; report by Dr. Hönisch, August 27, 1932. StadtACo personnel file Wilhelm Janzen, submitted by the main office.

> that people were imitating his asthmatic cough, pointing him out to children on the street, trying to ridicule him in every way possible, even though, as a former soldier and officer and member of the German National People's Party (before Hugenberg), he had only been striving to do his duty for his fatherland and for the state; he could no longer bear it."[549]

After attempts had been made to use the material collected against Janzen to initiate disciplinary proceedings against the police director, the city council ended the dispute over Wilhelm Janzen by transferring him to permanent retirement in September 1932. Janzen tried to defend himself against his treatment by taking legal action, but since his state of health was a fact and the NSDAP also brought further minor offenses against Janzen, he was unsuccessful in court. Neither the government of Upper and Middle Franconia nor the Bamberg Higher Regional Court recognized any political motivation for his retirement.[550]Immediately after the "seizure of power," Schwede exploited his newly acquired power to have Janzen sent to the Dachau concentration camp for allegedly insulting "supporters of the national revolution" and having ties to leading Marxists, where he was interned from mid-April to July 1933. Schwede made Janzen's release from the concentration camp conditional on his not returning to Coburg. After receiving confirmation of this from Mrs. Janzen and the moving company that had been hired to handle the move, he was released.

Janzen then returned to Mecklenburg with his wife. Even when he was looking for a new job there, the city administration used its discretion to further harass Janzen by informing potential employers about the "protective custody" that had once been imposed on Janzen and his alleged misconduct. Even the fact that Janzen temporarily failed to pay his contribution to the Winter Relief Fund, which was deducted from his Coburg pension, in the winter of 1936/37 due to financial difficulties was presented to potential employers as a failure to support the "people's community."[552]At the same time, Janzen, who wanted to work as a private detective, was accused of not acting in the interests of the "people's community" because he was seeking additional income to supplement his pension.[(553)]When Janzen was charged before the Schwerin Special Court in August 1944 on the basis of the "Treason Act" after making a critical statement, the city of Coburg willingly sent information about his dismissal from municipal service and his admission to the Dachau concentration camp to support his indictment.

549 Additional neurological report from the psychiatric clinic and neurological clinic of the University of Erlangen, August 27, 1931. StadtACo personnel file Wilhelm Janzen, submitted by the main office.

550 See Government of Upper and Middle Franconia to the Coburg City Council, October 26, 1932; Judgment of the 2nd Civil Senate of the Bamberg Higher Regional Court by Senate President Baumann, December 12, 1932. StadtACo personnel file Wilhelm Janzen, submitted by the main office.

551 See Mrs. Janzen to Mayor Schwede, June 12, 1933. StadtACo personnel file Wilhelm Janzen, submitted by the main office.

552 See Wilhelm Rehlein to various companies, January 17, 1938.

553 See Mayor Dr. Schmidt to Wilhelm Janzen, January 31, 1936. StadtACo personnel file Wilhelm Janzen, submitted by the main office.

554 See Schwerin Chief Public Prosecutor's Office to Coburg City Council, August 4, 1944, and indictment before the Schwerin Special Court, December 8, 1944. StadtACo personnel file Wilhelm Janzen, submitted by the main office.

Schwede appointed Wilhelm Scheel, who had already proven his loyalty to the party as a member of the NSDAP, as Janzen's successor. Scheel quickly filled the police department with other party members and turned it into a compliant instrument of Schwede and the NSDAP. With the dismissal of Janzen, the National Socialists had already achieved a cornerstone of the "Gleichschaltung" enforced conformity of the municipal administration and the expansion of their powers in urban areas. This success was only temporarily diminished by the transfer of police authority to District Administrator Fritsch in 1932.

The Coburg Savings Bank under Nazi rule

In addition to the police, Schwede sought to make the Coburg Savings Bank subservient to the NSDAP and its rise to power. As one of the largest savings banks in Bavaria, the financial potential associated with the institution was an important instrument of power. As early as 1930, Franz Schwede, Ernst Kuhn, and Wilhelm Rehlein, who had seats on the savings bank's administrative committee, had been working to transform the institution and, above all, to limit the powers of its director, Konrad Soergel, who had been the focus of right-wing propaganda because of his royalties. With this in mind, the Nazi majority in the city council decided to appoint a city official as controller of the savings bank, who was accountable to the city council, or to establish the hierarchy of representation in the savings bank committee in such a way that, in the absence of Mayor Unverfähr, a representative of the strongest faction, and thus the NSDAP, would take his seat. With a weighted vote in the savings bank's administrative committee, the NSDAP was now able to initiate decisions without the savings bank director's involvement, with Ernst Kuhn in particular rising to become the controlling authority. When it came to granting mortgages, the NSDAP organized a loan of one million Reichsmarks for the Munich book trade company M. Müller & Sohn, the publisher of *the Völkischer Beobachter*.[557] The paternal businesses of Rehlein and Kuhn were also provided with special mortgages. At the same time, the NSDAP instrumentalized the savings bank to fulfill its social promises, for example by making large donations to the unemployed at Christmas, accelerating revaluations, lowering interest rates, and employing unemployed people in the institution.[558] Decision-making authority over personnel issues at the savings bank was also transferred to the Nazi-occupied savings bank administration committee.

At the same time, the NSDAP waged a campaign against the savings bank director Konrad Soergel himself, whose salary was unanimously reduced by the city council in fulfillment of its propaganda promises. After Soergel had made aggressive efforts to avert damage to the savings bank and counteract the NSDAP's insubstantial financial policy, Schwede and the Nazi faction wanted to remove the director. This was all the more so because, in April 1931, Soergel had demanded that the city repay all loans to the savings bank in order to expose the ruinous financial policy of the NSDAP, which the city was unable to do. Once again, the means of choice was initially disciplinary proceedings for alleged embezzlement, for which Soergel was forcibly suspended.

555 See Chapter IV3.1.1.3.

556 See minutes of the city council meeting of October 30, 1930. StadtACo A 8073.

557 See Konrad Soergel to the State Ministry of the Interior, September 9, 1931. StadtACo A 8076. Elsewhere, there is mention of a loan in the amount of RM 500,000. See affidavit by Ernst Bernhard, July 14, 1947. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg Stadt Sch 336.

558 See *Coburger Zeitung*, November 12, 1930.

559 See minutes of the city council meeting of April 24, 1931. StadtACo A 8074.

and froze his assets at the savings bank. In this context, Soergel was also accused of having enabled embezzlement, which was actually committed by two savings bank employees who had been hired by the NSDAP shortly before due to their party membership.[560]An obvious problem with National Socialist personnel policy, which had placed party loyalty above suitability, was thus shifted onto Soergel. However, after the regional court soon acquitted Soergel of the charges, the NSDAP worked to degrade the savings bank director professionally and privately with further accusations and salary cuts. Since Soergel could not be prosecuted even after 1933 due to repeated court confirmations that no offense could be proven against him, the National Socialists also changed their tactics in the case of the savings bank director and sought to have him declared unfit for service. Soergel also fell seriously ill as a result of the public humiliation and denigration and was declared permanently unfit for service by a medical report on January 6, 1936, and retired. Although the disciplinary chamber at the Bamberg Higher Regional Court fully rehabilitated him shortly thereafter and obliged the city to pay him the salary it had withheld, the damage done to his position and his person could no longer be reversed.

"Gleichschaltung" of the municipal utilities and the school authority

The early retirement of a number of top officials in the city administration had become a common method for the NSDAP to achieve the "Gleichschaltung" (enforced conformity) of the administration even before the legal and political protection of the Nazi state after 1933. In fact, the pension payments resulting from the proceedings placed a heavy financial burden on the city, even though every trick in the book was used to keep the payments as low as possible. As early as 1931, the *Coburger Volksblatt* summed up: "Nothing is too expensive for the swastika society in its experiment to create the preconditions for the 'Third Reich'."[562]

Schwede's campaign of revenge against the two directors of the municipal utilities, Leonhard Meckel and Heinrich Diercks, following the dispute over Schwede's dismissal from the municipal utilities, although the measures soon focused on 65-year-old Meckel, who had also voted against Schwede's reinstatement and civil service status and whose retirement was easier to arrange due to his age. The two directors were initially subjected to disciplinary proceedings and were accused of allegedly receiving unlawful allowances, which Franz Schwede himself had actually co-decided and defended in 1927.[563] However, the Bavarian Ministry of the Interior rejected proceedings against Meckel and Diercks. At the same time, a political smear campaign was waged against the directors in *the Weckruf newspaper*, which threatened to damage the entire municipal works.

At the same time, from April 1929 onwards, the NSDAP sought to force the commercial director Meckel into retirement, but was always

560 See minutes of the city council meeting of April 10, 1931. StadtACo A 8074 and Konrad Soergel to the State Ministry of the Interior, September 9, 1931. StadtACo A 8076.
561 For more on the Nazis' actions against Konrad Soergel, see also: Finzel, Reinhart: Spuren, pp. 312–237.
562 *Coburger Volksblatt*, June 8, 1931.
563 See minutes of the city council meeting of November 22, 1929. StadtACo A 8072.
564 See minutes of the city council meeting of April 26, 1929. StadtACo A 8072.

overruled again after the other political parties did not want to oppose the long-serving civil servant. [565] According to the NSDAP's argument, the retirement of the 65-year-old Meckel would, on the one hand, save costs and, on the other hand, they wanted the outcome of the referendum to be understood as the citizens' vote against the director of the municipal utilities.[566]Various tricks, such as challenging the voting rights of city planning officer Köster, were initially unsuccessful. Nevertheless, the political pressure on Meckel grew enormously, so that in October 1929 he agreed to his retirement, whereupon the NSDAP changed its course to reducing his retirement benefits. Meckel was now required to repay the royalties and an appeal was lodged with the Administrative Court on the royalty issue. In addition, the NSDAP sought to contest his and Diercks's well-earned rights, such as the provision of free housing, lighting, and heating with corresponding assessed values.[567] Meckel and Diercks finally took legal action against the reduction in their royalties decided by the Police and Administration Senate, which ended with the city having to pay compensation and bear the costs of the legal dispute.[568] In December 1934, Heinrich Diercks was also initially suspended and then forcibly retired on December 1, 1934, clearing the way for a loyal National Socialist to fill the position at the municipal utilities. Initially, this task was entrusted to Arno Fischer, a senior civil servant, who soon moved to Stettin with Schwede. This was followed by a transitional arrangement in which the management of the municipal utilities was divided among various individuals until teacher August Gerspacher finally took over the post in 1935.

Karl Fiehler in Munich instructed Schwede on how to eliminate Herbert Spott, director of the Überlandwerke. In March 1932, Schwede wrote to Fiehler:
"In my opinion, however, it would still be possible to dismiss Director Spott by formally dissolving the Überlandwerk and transferring all of its tasks to the city." As a municipal employee, Spott could then be "dismissed for good cause," and such cause could be solely the need to reorganize the municipality. A corresponding severance payment would have to be accepted. Schwede ultimately followed Fiehler's instructions to the letter. Spott was dismissed when the municipal works and the Überlandwerk were merged, and the argument put forward was that this would simplify the management of Überlandwerk Coburg A.G. However, Spott took legal action and was awarded damages. When the pension fund was subsequently

565 See NSDAP faction to the Coburg City Council, April 2, 1929. StadtACo personnel file Leonhard Meckel, submitted by the main office.

566 See minutes of the city council meeting of July 26, 1929. StadtACo A 8072.

567 See minutes of the city council meeting of March 28, 1930. StadtACo A 8073 and Association of Gas, Water, and Electricity Works, Road and Light Railways of Germany to the Coburg City Council, March 11, 1930. StadtACo A 12881.

568 See Coburg City Council to Directors Heinrich Diercks and Leonhard Meckel, December 30, 1930. StadtACo A 12881 and judgment of the Civil Chamber of the Coburg Regional Court of June 12, 1931. StadtACo A 8086. Leonhardt Meckel died on December 25, 1938.

569 See orders issued by Mayor Dr. Schmidt on December 4, 1934, and October 15, 1935. StadtA-Co A 6441.

570 Karl Fiehler to Franz Schwede, March 28, 1932. BA NS 25/185.

When the city carried out the threat of ridicule and reduced his salary, he again filed a lawsuit with the regional court. In the meantime, however, the threat against Spott had been significantly intensified by the "seizure of power." Under pressure from the publication of the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service, which now made retirement appear permissible, Spott agreed to a settlement without the law actually being applied to him.

The battle against the directors of the municipal utilities and the Über-landwerk was linked to Schwede's influence on the municipal operations office. He removed this from the area of responsibility of city planning officer Ernst Köster, against whom Schwede also staged a personal vendetta as part of the restriction of Köster's powers. In October 1930, the Nazi city council faction initiated measures to ensure that, contrary to Köster's objections, Schwede, as third mayor, was given independent control over the operations department, which was henceforth separated from the city planning office.Shortly thereafter, Schwede also took control of the finance department by removing the second mayor, Altenstädter, from office. The department was transferred to the third mayor's area of responsibility, and the NSDAP now had a decisive influence on the budget plans.[574]After Schwede was appointed second mayor, he handed over the relevant powers to Werner Faber, thus paving the way for his appointment as mayor.

In the area of schools, the NSDAP city council faction submitted an urgent motion in February 1931 to remove the school department from legal advisor Dehler, allegedly to relieve him of his workload, and to hand it over to an honorary city councilor. [576] The NSDAP thus intervened massively in the sphere of influence of First Mayor Unverfähr. This was possible because, although according to municipal regulations Unverfähr was solely responsible for the distribution of duties, he was already considerably weakened politically at that time. The DNVP faction in the city council, representatives of the Bavarian Association of Cities, and District President Otto von Strössenreuther raised massive objections to the NSDAP's initiative, accusing it of jeopardizing the city's right to self-government if the NSDAP's directives from Munich were to be implemented here. However, both Franz Dehler himself and Mayor Unverfähr, who had fallen ill several times during the dispute, agreed to the NSDAP's proposal, so that at the city council meeting on March 12, 1931, the NSDAP's votes decided to transfer the school department to the honorary NS city councilor and school board member Wilhelm Frühwald. After Unverfähr was no longer available

571 See Mayor Schwede to the Government of Upper and Middle Franconia, August 5, 1933. City ACo A 7893.

572 See Chapter III3.2.1.

573 See minutes of the meeting of the executive committee, October 6, 1930; minutes of the city council meeting of October 10, 1930, and memo from the central administration, October 23, 1930. StadtACo A 6441.

574 See Franz Schwede to Mayor Unverfähr, January 3, 1931, and Mayor Unverfähr to the Coburg City Council, January 9, 1931. StadtACo A 6441.

575 See *Coburger Volksblatt*, April 21, 1931.

576 See NS City Council faction to the Coburg City Council, February 13, 1931. StadtACo A 6441.

577 See *Coburger Zeitung*, March 14, 1931; Otto Strössenreuther to Mayor Unverfähr, March 17, 1931; Mayor Otto Hipp Regensburg to Mayor Unverfähr, March 17, 1931, and Office of the Bavarian Association of Cities to Mayor Unverfähr, March 26, 1931. StadtACo A 6441.

Since Frühwald had been appointed second mayor in the course of the conflict, he took it upon himself to appease the City Council and the government on behalf of the mayor. By appointing City Councilor Frühwald as the First Mayor's additional general deputy and member of the city school board, he wanted to circumvent the legal problems associated with appointing the National Socialist as head of the school department. At the same time, Schwede announced to the government that Unverfähr's imminent retirement was inevitable, thereby making it clear that it was only a matter of time before he himself had the necessary powers of the First Mayor for the distribution of business.

The Coburg State Theater and Nazi politics

With regard to the Coburg State Theater, the NSDAP, under the directorship of Dr. Hans Erdmann von Kutzschenbach, who had been appointed in Coburg in August 1929, had already been able to exert massive pressure on the cultural institution to organize its program according to National Socialist ideas. However, thanks to its majority in the city council, the NSDAP succeeded in ensuring that his contract was not renewed and, in July 1931, the NSDAP-supported candidate Oskar Walleck took over the management of the Landestheater. Walleck subsequently carried out a complete Nazification of Coburg's central cultural institution.

In accordance with Hitler's instructions, the administration in Coburg had already been brought into line with the NSDAP by 1931, and with the help of the Munich NSDAP, the plan to steer the city's fortunes by filling key positions had succeeded. From this position, Schwede was also able to provide concrete assistance to the party, for example by having the Munich Waffen-SS issue firearms licenses for Hitler's escorts via the Coburg police department, which the Reichsführer SS was no longer able to obtain from the Munich city administration. The fact that Schwede was able to entrust "a politically reliable police officer with the issuance of these [firearms licenses], disregarding the usual formalities in the police and administrative senate (...)" clearly shows how far the "Gleichschaltung" [enforced conformity] of the administration in Coburg had already progressed before 1933. In the midst of the democratic structures of the Weimar Republic, the Nazi dictatorship had already made its way into Coburg.

3.1.2 "Gleichschaltung" after 1933

After the Reich-wide "seizure of power," Mayor Schwede was finally able to complete the process of "Gleichschaltung" in the city administration in line with the changed legal situation. In fact, however, the visible upheaval in power structures that most cities experienced in 1933 did not occur in Coburg. Even before the "seizure of power," Schwede and the NSDAP had already attained a level of power that was equivalent to the effect that the implementation of the "Gleichschaltung" provisions was intended to have.

578 See Coburg City Council to the Government of Upper Franconia, Chamber of the Interior, April 16 and May 20, 1931. StadtACo A 6441.
579 See Chapter IV1.2.1.
580 Schwede: Kampf, p. 211 f.

The "Gleichschaltungsgesetze" (enforced conformity laws) initially changed the composition of the city council, which had already been dominated by the NSDAP in Coburg for three and a half years. The results of the last Reichstag election had to be used to form the new city council, according to which the NSDAP received 16 of the 25 seats, the SPD five, the *national citizens' bloc Schwarz-Weiß-Rot* three, and the KPD one, and nominations could be submitted for each seat. However, the ordinance on the representative bodies of municipalities, districts, and counties already excluded all members of communist parties from the city council.[581]After the number of seats was reduced to 20 in order to "avoid excessive demands on individual city council members," the NSDAP ultimately received 13 seats, the SPD four, and the Bürgerblock, now *the Kampffront Schwarz-Weiß-Rot*, three city council seats.[582]While the SPD and the Kampffront did not replace any city council members, only seven new people joined the NSDAP on the city council, as several party members changed positions in the city administration. In addition, the NSDAP now provided all three mayors after Wilhelm Rehlein became a party member. One of the two professional city councilors, Arno Fischer, was also recruited from the ranks of the NSDAP, and the other was soon to join the party.

However, as early as the summer of 1933, Social Democrats were banned from participating in local parliaments and political parties were dissolved. The four seats held by the SPD could now be filled by replacements from the NSDAP after Otto Voye, Hermann Bätz, Ludwig Mayer, and Georg Wollandt were taken into "protective custody" and, with the exception of Voye, sent to the Dachau concentration camp.[583]After senior teacher Edmund Hofmann resigned from the city council in July 1933, he was also replaced by a National Socialist, so that the council now consisted of 18 members of the NSDAP and two former members of the *Black-White-Red Combat Front* faction, master baker Wilhelm Feyler and Professor Karl Güntzel.[584]When a picture of Hitler was hung in the town hall on November 26, 1933, for the ceremonial meeting, and meetings were henceforth opened with a salute to the "Führer," the now irrevocable monopoly of the NSDAP was also symbolically complete. By declaring to Franz Schwede that all city councilors would do their duty in the spirit of Schwede, Mayor Dr. Schmidt reaffirmed this.
The "Führer principle" in Coburg. [585]

Reorganization of the administrative structure

In the administrative organization, Franz Schwede, as mayor, secured for himself, in addition to the tasks assigned to him by the municipal code, those areas of city administration that he had already wanted to bring under his control before 1933 and which, in addition to securing power, allowed him to penetrate the local bureaucracy in the sense of

581 See Ordinance of the State Ministry of the Interior of March 10, 1933. StadtACo A 6387.
582 See memo dated April 22, 1933. StadtACo A 6387.
583 See memo by Franz Schwede, June 19, 1933, and memo by Wilhelm Rehlein, June 3, 1933. StadtACo A 6387. See Chapter IV3.1.2. The four replacement members of the NSDAP were: lawyer Otto Schmidt, businessman Karl Hartung, senior teacher Robert Lang, and businessman Franz Reuther.
584 See Headmaster Hofmann to Coburg City Council, July 24, 1933, and Coburg City Council to the Government of Upper and Middle Franconia, October 21, 1933. StadtACo A 6387. The NSDAP's replacement candidate was master mechanic Georg Ressel.
585 See minutes of the city council meeting of November 26, 1933. StadtACo A 8074.

the "people's community" from the top down. In addition to sovereignty over general municipal affairs, this included the personnel office with all personnel matters relating to civil servants and employees, as well as pension matters for municipal civil servants, employees, and workers, and civil status matters. The central police administration, including the residents' registration office and the municipal savings bank, also remained under the mayor's jurisdiction as important instruments of power. Through the tourist office, he also secured responsibility for the city's image policy. At the same time, the powers of the deputy mayor and sole expert at the top of the administration were greatly expanded after Faber was given responsibility for all financial and legal administration. The tasks that had previously been performed by a professional legal advisor were assigned to the department of the professional deputy mayor. The profile of the third mayor's office was tailored to Wilhelm Rehlein's skills, so that he was entrusted with building administration, matters relating to the entire voluntary labor service and the labor service camp, as well as the job creation office and wage tariff matters for municipal workers.

In addition, Arno Fischer, as professional technical city councilor, headed the municipal operations office, which administratively consolidated all of the city's technical operations. These included the electricity works, the gas and water works, together with Überlandwerk A.-G. with its motor vehicle department, the municipal baths, the sewage treatment plant, the cemetery administration with crematorium, the slaughterhouse, the heating systems of all municipal buildings, churches, and schools, and all other technical or mechanical facilities, such as the telephone system. Attached to the Betriebsamt was a contract and procurement office for all municipal contracts, which could then be distributed at the discretion of the National Socialist rulers. In addition, there was the school and theater department, headed by an honorary city councilor who was also the representative of Minister of Culture Schemm. This position had already been transferred to elementary school teacher Hans Dietrich in April 1933, after Wilhelm Frühwald, who had been promoted to headmaster, resigned as city councilor in 1933. In April 1934, Schwede finally appointed Franz Heimburger, a teacher and now also a city councilor, to the post, as Hans Dietrich moved to Neustadt an der Haart as organizational director and adjutant to the Gauleiter of the Rhine-Palatinate Gau of the NSDAP.[587] From the former remit of a legal advisor, which had now been temporarily abolished, the municipal chief inspector Puff was given an independent youth and welfare office, which was responsible for general and higher welfare, the WHW, municipal hostels and communal kitchens, child nutrition, foundations, marriage loans, and official guardianship issues. [588]

Although the division of the city administration into six superordinate departments established here was the basic organizational model of the city administration for the

586 See Dr. Schmidt to the city administrations of Kulmbach and Mittweida, December 7, 1933, and February 16, 1934. StadtACo A 6441.

587 See decree by Mayor Schwede dated April 30, 1934. StadtACo A 6441.

588 The promotion of the exemplary nature of the Coburg system of government also led to other city administrations asking Coburg to share its organizational model. See Dr. Schmidt to the city administrations of Kulmbach and Mittweida, December 7, 1933, and February 16, 1934. StadtACo A 6441.

In the following years, the composition of the staff remained unchanged, as the distribution of responsibilities at the departmental level underwent enormous changes in 1933 and 1934. This was due to the fact that, after the "seizure of power," the deserving Coburg National Socialists were now able to reap the rewards of their pioneering work and, in many cases, received promotions that took them away from Coburg. In particular, the dismissal of Werner Faber and finally also Franz Schwede, who took a considerable number of Coburg staff with him to Stettin, made it necessary to constantly readjust the distribution of responsibilities. In August 1934, Mayor Dr. Schmidt appointed Hermann Vollmuth as legal advisor, who shortly afterwards was also given responsibility for the entire finance department and the savings bank department. Despite joining the party late, he rose to become one of the most influential supporters of Dr. Schmidt's rule. [589]Dr. Schmidt initially headed the municipal youth and welfare office himself as department head, but had to relinquish this post to city councilor and master baker Ernst Bernhard due to work overload. [590]

The distribution of responsibilities clearly showed that, on the one hand, party loyalty and ideological conviction were decisive factors in the appointment of individual candidates as department heads, rather than actual experience in the areas entrusted to them. The appointment of teacher August Gerspacher as director of the municipal utilities in 1935 was a case in point. On the other hand, it became apparent that the structure of the individual departments was less a matter of organizational rationality and more a matter of tailoring them to the people available, which meant that organizational fragmentation, as had been observed over the years in the city planning office, for example, was repeatedly accepted.

While key functional positions in the city administration were controlled by National Socialists, an important and influential area of the administration remained under the leadership of a former Democrat and served as a vivid example of how the old administrative elite could also be integrated into the local system of rule and how, in some areas, pragmatism had to take precedence over ideology. One of the most important guarantors of the smooth functioning of the city administration was the existence of the main office headed by Alfred Sauerteig and Emil Steiner. As indispensable experts with distinctive expertise and connections in important bourgeois circles, their dismissal would have been a bitter loss for any mayor of Coburg, which no city leader was willing to accept.

Alfred Sauerteig was born on October 15, 1877, in Unterwohlsbach and, after completing his education, initially worked at the Coburg District Court before joining the Coburg city administration in 1905. Interrupted by his military service in World War I, he rose within the city administration from city clerk and deputy head of the police department to head of the main administration in 1925, where he also took over the personnel department. At the same time, Sauerteig became active in local politics, was a representative of the DDP in the city council, and took over as chairman of the democratic faction·In the course of the takeover, both Franz Schwede

589 See decrees of Mayor Dr. Schmidt of November 26, 28, and December 4, 1934. StadtACo A 6441.

590 See decrees of Mayor Dr. Schmidt of July 12, 1934. StadtACo A 6441.

591 See Alfred Sauerteig's curriculum vitae. StadtACo personnel file Alfred Sauerteig, submitted by the main office and *Coburger Tageblatt newspaper* dated October 15, 1952.

and later Mayor Dr. Schmidt agreed to dismiss Sauerteig from his central position in the city administration. However, both of them, as well as August Greim later on, came to the conclusion that Sauerteig's knowledge and skills were indispensable to the administration, despite his political past, which meant constant surveillance by the criminal investigation department and the Nuremberg-Fürth Gestapo.[592] In 1934, Sauerteig finally joined the NSV, and on May 1, 1937, he joined the NSDAP. He remained in his position until shortly before the end of the war, when Mayor Greim appointed him acting mayor for the last days of the war. Since Sauerteig continued to be involved in municipal personnel matters through his office as city councilor even after 1945 and his departure as acting mayor, he can be seen as a typical example of personnel continuity in the city administration even across political upheavals.

3.1.3 The introduction of the German Municipal Code in 1935

When Coburg celebrated 600 years of self-government in June 1931, Franz Schwede lamented that self-government had fallen victim to "the fulfillment mania of the Dawes and Young Plans" and that the government of Upper Franconia and the Weimar system had already robbed the city of its self-government through "debt bondage, forced budgets, and tax dictatorship."[594] The celebrations thus captured the spirit of the times. Although Franz Dehler hoped on this occasion that the time was not far off "when the self-government of the cities would once again be honored and, as in earlier, better times, form the backbone of the German people" [595], it was precisely the National Socialist regime that completely transformed and restricted local self-government.

With the introduction of the German Municipal Code (DGO) in 1935, the German Reich was to be significantly transformed and the municipalities were to be placed under a uniform legal system.[596] Fundamentally, the DGO was intended to anchor the relationship between the party and the state at the municipal level. As a result, Coburg was confronted with the third variant of a municipal constitution within a very short period of time, after having been restructured from a magistrate constitution to a mayor constitution in 1920. Immediately after Mayor Dr. Schmidt took office, a reorganization was therefore necessary.

592 See Mayor Greim to District Leader Feichtmayr, November 23, 1944. StadtACo Pension file Sauerteig, submitted to the main office.

593 Even after 1945, Alfred Sauerteig, who was now a member of Coburg City Council as a candidate for the People's League and the FDP, continued to be consulted on administrative matters by Mayors Meyer and Langer. However, the works councils of the city administration and the United Coburg Savings Banks opposed Sauerteig's appointment as deputy mayor and his involvement in relevant issues in the police and administrative senate. In August 1948, the State Ministry of the Interior ruled that Sauerteig should not be restricted in any way as a city councilor, but should not act as full-time head of the personnel department. See Coburg City Council to the State Ministry of the Interior, August 25, 1947; motion by the works council of the Vereinigte Coburger Sparkassen; August 7, 1948; State Ministry of the Interior to the Coburg City Council, August 11, 1948. StadtA-Co Personnel file Alfred Sauerteig, resignation from full-time position; Works Council of the City of Coburg, April 22, 1947. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg City S 18.

594 Commemorative publication on the 600th anniversary of Coburg's self-government. StACo LRA 12855.

595 Ibid.

596 Cf. RGBl. I, 1935, pp. 49–64.

Reorganization of the administration was on the agenda. Municipal networks, among other things, served to implement the provisions of the DGO in everyday practice, so that, for example, a conference of the working group of directly affiliated Bavarian cities in June 1935 clarified individual questions regarding the implementation of the provisions of the DGO, which Hermann Vollmuth attended on behalf of Coburg. At the same time, the German Municipal Council also provided assistance as a coordinating body for administrative issues in this regard. Despite the significant changes that the DGO brought about for local politics and administration, it ultimately only represented the legalization of what had already been gradually transformed in Coburg between 1929 and 1933.

The office of party representative

With the introduction of the *party representative*, whose main task was to
In order to contribute to "ensuring harmony between the municipal administration and the party" [598], the concrete influence of the NSDAP on municipal affairs was codified and the party was assigned a decisive role, particularly in the appointment of mayors and municipal councils. *The party representative* was also involved in the decision-making process for the enactment of the main statutes and the awarding of honorary rights. For those cities and municipalities in which the district leader was employed by the municipality, for example as mayor, the Gau inspector served as the party representative. For Coburg, Dr. Paul Müller from Kronach was therefore appointed as *the party representative*, who in this position was also responsible for Bamberg, Bayreuth, Gräfenberg, and Höchstadt an der Aisch. Born on April 8, 1892, in Zeyern near Kronach, Müller had trained as a veterinarian and joined the NSDAP for the second time in 1928 at the latest. He had a catalytic effect in Kronach, winning over broad sections of the population for the NSDAP.[599] As a confidant of Gauleiter Hans Schemm, Müller served as deputy mayor of Kronach between 1933 and 1935, represented the NSDAP in the district council and county council of Upper and Middle Franconia, and appeared as a district and Gau speaker. Within the party, he was initially appointed Gau trainer for the Bavarian Ostmark Gau leadership in May 1934 and shortly thereafter Gau inspector for the Bavarian Ostmark North, where he coordinated the cooperation of 21 party circles and acted as a link between the party base and the Gauleiter. In his role, Dr. Müller advocated for a merit-based system within the party, where the date of party membership should not be the only deciding factor, and demanded strict party supremacy in the relationship or dual roles of mayors and district leaders.[600] His ideas ultimately coincided with what was considered a specific Coburg tradition in the interaction between the party and the state. Despite Müller's central authority in personnel matters, however, as in many places, the mayor repeatedly circumvented the cumbersome procedure of involving the party representative in day-to-day administrative matters in Coburg. [601]

597 See Hermann Vollmuth to Mayor Dr. Schmidt, June 15, 1935. StadtACo A 6232.
598 RGBl. I, 1935, p. 50.
599 See Hambrecht: Aufstieg, p. 310.
600 See Roth: Parteikreis, pp. 337–354 and Hofmann: Oberfranken, pp. 344–348.
601 See State Ministry of the Interior to Reich Governor Epp, August 9, 1935; The Reich Governor, September 9, 1935. BayHStA Reich Governor 9626. For similar cases in other cities, cf. Gotto: Kommunalpolitik, pp. 132–139.

The duties of the mayor and his deputies

The position of the mayor as the sole executive body was made independent of any control by a municipal council in the DGO through the introduction of the "Führer principle." Legislative and administrative power was transferred to him. While the state's ability to intervene in municipal administration increased, the mayors were initially strengthened against party influences.In many places, the rather ambivalent position of the mayors after the introduction of the DGO resulted in constant rivalry with the district leaders, which was impossible in Coburg, however, due to the dual occupancy of offices.

To help them cope with their various tasks, the mayors, who were now given the title of lord mayor in all independent cities, were assisted by deputy mayors. The first deputy mayor took on the position of mayor in urban districts and acted as the lord mayor's deputy. In Coburg, Wilhelm Rehlein took on this role. Alongside him, another full-time deputy was appointed, the city treasurer and legal advisor Hermann Vollmuth. Edmund Volk, who had been working in the city treasury since 1914, joined the party in 1931, and had served as city treasurer until then, was not transferred to the new office as in many other cities, but was replaced by Vollmuth, who was a fully qualified lawyer, had served as legal advisor since July 1934, and had been a professional city councilor since the 1930s and was now joining the party.and had only just joined the party. [603]Vollmuth's appointment was presumably made in order to place a fully qualified lawyer at the head of the administration, thereby compensating for Mayor Dr. Schmidt's lack of qualifications. In addition, National Socialist financial experts were often a rarity, so that city treasurers in particular often did not meet the usual qualification criteria. [604]Furthermore, despite his late entry into the party, Vollmuth had already distinguished himself through his considerable official diligence and willingness to make sacrifices for the interests of the city.[605] The full-time deputy mayors also had to be advertised, selected by *the party representative*, and approved by the government and the Reich Governor. In addition, three honorary deputy mayors were appointed as advisors for the various departments of the city administration. With the head of the vocational school and leader of the Hitler Youth, Franz Heimberger, the master baker and coal merchant, local group leader, holder of the "Golden Party Badge" and Schwede's colleague on the city council since 1924, Ernst Bernhard, and the SA standard-bearer and director of the municipal works, August Gerspacher, the posts remained in the hands of prominent and loyal National Socialists.[606] Mayor Dr. Schmidt had actually intended to appoint Wilhelm Feyler to the position of honorary deputy for Department III, the Youth and Welfare Office, probably to serve as a balancing candidate for the city's bourgeois forces. It was precisely his many years of experience in local government that would have made Dr.

602 See Noakes, Jeremy: Mayor and Gauleiter. City Government between Party and State. In: Hirschfeld, Gerhard; Kettenacker, Lothar (eds.): The "Führer State." Myth and Reality. Studies on the Structure and Politics of the Third Reich. Stuttgart 1981, pp. 194–227, here p. 207.

603 Vollmuth had only been a member of the SA since May 1933.

604 See Gotto: Kommunalpolitik, p. 134.

605 See personnel file Hermann Vollmuth. BayHStA Munich Reich Governor 9626. See Hermann Vollmuth to the Mayor of Coburg, August 27, 1946. StadtACo personnel file Hermann Vollmuth. Submitted by the main office.

606 See Mayor Dr. Schmidt to the representative of the NSDAP, Dr. Müller, September 26, 1935. StadtACo A 6430.

Schmidt. Why he was ultimately not appointed remains unclear.

The Council Committee

The city council had served as the main gateway for National Socialists into the city administration in Coburg. The DGO abolished the collegial body of elected representatives and replaced it with a council committee. From then on, the task of the individual councilors was to "ensure constant contact between the municipal administration and all sections of the citizenry. They are responsible for advising the mayor and promoting understanding of his measures among the population."[608] As the "transmission belt of nationalist-oriented local politics to the population" [609], the committee met at the behest of the mayor, and all councilors were able to have their opinions recorded in the minutes, but actual votes were no longer taken at the end due to the right to issue instructions enshrined in the "Führer principle."[610] The number of councilors in Coburg was now limited to 18, who were appointed for six years and officially inaugurated on October 9, 1935, with an oath to the "Führer." [611] The composition of the councilors was primarily based on the ranks of the

"old fighters," all but five of whom had previously been members of the city council. Eight of them were recipients of the "Golden Party Badge" [612]and another seven were also "old fighters" who had joined the party before it came to power in 1933.[613]Only the district mayor and block leader Otto Höhn had joined the NSDAP on May 1, 1933. However, he served on the committee together with Wilhelm Schulz, the former mayor and now district mayor of Wüstenahorn and Neuses, to integrate the newly incorporated suburbs. Gottlieb Rauschert, as local group leader of the NSDAP in Cortendorf, also fulfilled this same purpose in the council committee, as the population of the former suburbs would hardly have accepted it if their representatives had been removed from the representative committee shortly after their incorporation into the city of Coburg. For all three, as well as for the "old fighters" Ernst Kuhn and Hans Schilling, special permits had to be obtained from the government of Upper and Middle Franconia, as municipal employees were actually supposed to be excluded from office as councilors. Especially in the case of Ernst Kuhn

607 See provisional rules of procedure dated May 10, 1935. StadtACo A 6232.

608 RGBl. I, 1935, p. 55.

609 Gotto: Local Politics, p. 84.

610 See RGBl. I, 1935, p. 56.

611 See *Bayerische Ostmark*, October 10, 1935.

612 These were: Reichsbahn inspector and head of the civil service office Fritz Bieler, city inspector and local group leader Ernst Kuhn, timber merchant and NSKK squadron leader Georg Linke, merchant and SA standard-bearer Herbert Grempel, master baker and SA colonel Max Link, basket manufacturer and district treasurer Paul Behringer, grinder and shop steward at Brose & Co Alfred Mitlacher, farmer and local group leader Edwin Forkel. Four of the five new councilors were also holders of the "Golden Party Badge."

613 These were: Gerhard Engelstadt, businessman and district office manager of the Labor Front (membership no. 141,074), Hans Schilling, municipal senior driver and SS-Sturmführer (membership no. 235,735), Robert Lang, senior teacher and district office manager of the National Socialist Teachers' League (membership no. 1,069,338), textile merchant and chairman of the retail association Karl Hartung (membership no. 141,070), municipal employee and local group leader Wilhelm Schulz (membership no. 124,368), savings bank employee and local group leader Gottlieb Rauschert (membership no. 421,473), metal goods manufacturer and district master craftsman Georg Ressel (membership no. 1,369,565).

It became apparent that the additional prestige he enjoyed as a councilman was beneficial to him as head of the employment office in his dealings with the imperial and state authorities, enabling him to achieve his objectives.

In addition, two non-party members also became part of the council: Wilhelm Feyler, honorary chairman of the Coburg Chamber of Crafts and master confectioner, who had submitted a party application but was not accepted into the NSDAP until May 1, 1937, and Karl Güntzel, professor and leader of the Turngemeinde 1848 gymnastics club. As German nationalist members of the old city council, they had supported parts of the NSDAP's policies, but, like Feyler, they had also actively opposed the NSDAP, for example in the election of Schwede as mayor or the awarding of honorary citizenship to Adolf Hitler. As representatives of a right-wing conservative bourgeois camp, both can be seen as compromise candidates who were intended to appease the former bourgeois milieu and thus integrate it into the NSDAP's system of rule.

When selecting council members, Dr. Schmidt and Dr. Müller placed importance not only on the candidates' national reliability and party loyalty, but also on ensuring that the council represented a cross-section of the population, so that men from different demographic groups and professions, and thus from different spheres of influence, were represented. The composition in the spirit of the "people's community" was also intended to unite and pacify various social groups in the city. In addition, both had obtained the approval of the district judge and holder of the "Golden Party Badge," Franz Reeg, for the composition of the council. At the same time, many of them were active as local officials in the party, the SS and SA, or other Nazi organizations, who could now distinguish themselves with a new prestigious office within the party. At the ceremonial meeting to introduce the councilors, both Mayor Dr. Schmidt and party representative Dr. Müller emphasized that it had been easy to select suitable individuals from the large number of "old fighters" in Coburg.[615]However, due to the purely advisory function of the councilors, in 1935 the city council finally lost the powerful role it had once held as an elected decision-making body under the Bavarian Municipal Code, but which it had lost with the "Gleichschaltung" in 1933. It was particularly evident from newspaper reports on the council meetings that the press and the population itself soon lost interest in this powerless body.

As in other cities, Mayor Dr. Schmidt halved the frequency of meetings to a monthly cycle. He and his successors maintained this schedule throughout. Only after the outbreak of World War II were the monthly meetings repeatedly canceled due to call-ups or the preference for short official channels. The meetings of the central police and administrative senate, on the other hand, continued to take place every two weeks. [616]Nevertheless,

614 See Dr. Müller to the government of Upper and Middle Franconia, October 1935. StadtACo A 6430.

615 See speeches at the ceremonial meeting of the councilors on October 9, 1935. StadtACo A 6430.

616 See provisional rules of procedure dated May 10, 1935. StadtACo A 6232; minutes of deliberations with councilors and the police and administration senate between 1935 and 1944. StadtACo A 8074, 8074 a, 12243–12247 and Gotto: Kommunalpolitik, p. 83. The minutes of the consultations with the councilors are missing for the year 1935. However, since parallel records contain evidence of individual excerpts from the meetings, it can be assumed that meetings with the councilors continued to take place here as well.

However, the councilors in Coburg were not merely decorative figures; Mayor Dr. Schmidt repeatedly involved them in the political decision-making process in order to integrate the influence and strategic cooperation of the "old fighters" into his system of rule. When the councilors were appointed, party representative Dr. Müller had already appeased them by saying that a good and responsible leader could hardly do without the old party members and fellow fighters in his decisions, even if, in the spirit of the Führer principle, one person ultimately had to have the final say.[617] In one of the first meetings of the councilors, Dr. Schmidt called on them to make use of the right granted to them by the DGO to record a dissenting opinion in the minutes, as he would otherwise have to interpret silence as consent. [618] From then on, the actual work in the city administration shifted to the various advisory boards, which operated below the council committee, with the administrative advisory board in Coburg, as before 1935, becoming the decisive decision-making body. In addition, there were financial, operational, works, and construction advisory boards. It was here in particular that the councilors were actively involved in the decision-making process. According to Dr. Schmidt's rules of procedure, matters of fundamental importance were to be discussed in the advisory committees, which were also made up of councilors, while less important matters were to be dealt with according to the "Führer principle" through official channels. Decisions of a financial nature for which no funds were provided for in either the budget or the staffing plan always required the approval of the city treasurer, whereby in the case of one-off expenditures exceeding RM 500 or annually recurring expenditures exceeding RM 150, the matter had to be referred to the finance advisory board. In principle, however, it was up to the mayor to decide which matters were subject to his authority. had to be discussed in the municipal council. [619]

Ultimately, the introduction of the German Municipal Code did not bring about any substantial changes for the city administration in Coburg. Mayor Dr. Schmidt acknowledged this, particularly with regard to the "Führer principle" in Coburg, when he stated:

"The German Municipal Code has legally sanctioned what was already a matter of course in the National Socialist-led city administrations, and we in Coburg can boast that the Führer principle, which has now been fully recognized in the DGO, had long been recognized and implemented here in practice before the revolution."[620] The "Führer principle" laid down in the DGO had in fact become part of everyday administrative life in Coburg long before 1935 through the administration's fixation on Franz Schwede. The simplification and consolidation of the administration into five departments, which were now organized according to the deputy mayors, had also already been carried out in 1933.

3.1.4 A dualism of party and administration?

The National Socialist system of rule was based on a polycratic system of several pillars that competed with each other institutionally. This had an impact at the municipal level.

617 See speeches given at the ceremonial meeting of the councilors on October 9, 1935. StadtACo A 6430.
618 See minutes of the consultation with the councilors on October 11, 1935. StadtACo A 6430.
619 See provisional rules of procedure dated May 10, 1935. StadtACo A 6232.
620 Speeches at the ceremonial meeting of the councilors on October 9, 1935. StadtACo A 6430.

particularly in the coexistence of positions in the party and in the administration, which were endowed with the same or similar powers and were responsible for the same matters.[621] Franz Schwede explained the relationship between the state and the party, which was often difficult to balance under National Socialism, saying, "It is always the party that forms the state, because it was the party that built this state. Certainly, it remains the primary task of the party to orient and shape people ideologically, while the state acts not only in a purely administrative capacity, but also in a formative and leading capacity; nevertheless, a close relationship between the two is absolutely necessary in order to solve the tasks of both."[622] The primacy of party affairs, combined with the administrative freedom to act on the basis of close cooperation, can ultimately also be described as the principle underlying the system of government that Schwede established in Coburg after 1929.

The structural dualism between state and party was significantly weakened here by the intertwining of both institutions and by the party networks, which equally included the top levels of the administration, as well as by a number of dual appointments of officials in the party and the administration. Overall, this made it possible to reduce the polycratic conflicts and frictions that were often highlighted in the National Socialist system of rule in Coburg. Although the creation of a number of dual functions meant increased administrative work for the respective officials, as they had to provide information to higher-level party and administrative bodies at the same time, conflicts of jurisdiction were significantly reduced.

Starting with the dual role of the mayor as district leader, a similar staffing practice was evident throughout the Coburg administration. The deputy mayor and acting mayor, Wilhelm Rehlein, was simultaneously appointed as the Nazi district office head for local politics and for the Nazi office for job creation. The senior civil servant and later managing director of the youth and welfare office, Karl Puff, was also responsible for the office of Nazi district office head for public welfare. Senior teacher Franz Heimberger, representative for the school, gymnastics, sports, and theater department and director of the public library, was also a Hitler Youth troop leader and head of the Nazi district training office. Under his direction, about one-third of the teachers at the Coburg secondary school served as troop leaders or in similar positions within the Hitler Youth, and the school orchestra served as the Hitler Youth orchestra. The head of the municipal transport office, Walter Weidmann, also headed the NSDAP press office. The mayor's music representative, appointed by the party, was tied to the position of director of the state theater, and August Gerspacher, head of the municipal utilities, was appointed representative for the Four-Year Plan. In local government, there was a close interlocking of municipal bureaucracy and parallel party organizations, such as the municipal youth and welfare office with the NSV and the National Socialist War Victims' Welfare Organization (NSKOV).[623]

621 On polycracy in National Socialism, see Hachtmann, Rüdiger: Polykratie – Ein Schlüssel zur Analyse der NS-Herrschaftsstruktur? In: Docupedia-Zeitgeschichte. URL: http://docupedia.de/zg/Hachtmann_polykratie_v1_de_2018 (last accessed 20.09.2020). The polycracy thesis goes back to a contemporary work on National Socialism by Franz Neumann. Neumann, Franz: Behemoth. Structure and Practice of National Socialism 1933–1945. Cologne 1977.

622 *Pommersche Zeitung*, November 2, 1937.

623 See Chapter IV2.1.1.

In addition, local ruling cliques, which acted between the party and the administration, promoted their cooperation in Coburg.[624] With regard to the city's policy of exclusion, the clique around Ernst Kuhn and Karl Hartung, for example, was able to promote the expulsion of Jews from economic life through cooperation between administrative authorities and the National Socialist Organization of Crafts, Trade, and Commerce, and to initiate concerted actions. Due to the central influence of the party, individual civil servants in this area also felt encouraged to devise persecution measures that went beyond the framework set by the Reich government.[625] It is true that there are also examples in Coburg of party members such as the Nazi cultural officer Schilling who felt called upon to demand consistent National Socialist administration from the administrative authorities they dealt with and to monitor them. This inevitably gave rise to elements of competition and conflict between the party and the administrative authorities. In the cultural sphere in particular, however, such conflicts were defused by the undisputed supremacy of the Coburg State Theater, to which even overzealous party members had to submit. In addition, such rivalries also unleashed dynamics within the urban sphere of influence that led to further negotiation processes and ultimately to a consolidation of the Nazi regime.

The cooperation between the party and the administration was institutionalized, for example, by the actions of the aforementioned Nazi district office head for local politics, who was appointed to influence local politics in line with the party's agenda. Since this task fell to Wilhelm Rehlein in Coburg, the intertwining of administrative and political spheres of influence was further promoted. On Rehlein's instructions, the head of the main administration, Alfred Sauerteig, was now obliged to report monthly to the district office head for local politics on various matters concerning the city administration. The aim of this mandated exchange was to forge even closer ties between the party and the municipal administration and to guarantee the party a more detailed insight into the day-to-day workings of the administration. The aim was to work together to remedy shortcomings in order to optimize administration and solve problems in line with the regime's interests. Rehlein wanted to determine "how laws and regulations relating to remuneration, promotion, disciplinary proceedings, etc. affect civil servants and whether there are any shortcomings in the legislation that run counter to a sound personnel policy."[627] In addition, Rehlein wanted the reports to be extended to other issues, such as municipal incorporations, civil registry matters, and issues relating to professional and honorary deputy mayors and councilors.[628] On the one hand, the exchange was intended to guarantee the party more direct access to the organization and personnel policy within the city administration, especially since Alfred Sauerteig continued to have a reputation as an old democrat. On the other hand, however, the administration could also use the more direct line to the party to pass on suggestions for improvement and optimization from administrative practice to higher levels.

624 As the example of Regensburg had already shown, such ruling cliques were no exception. See Halter, Helmut: Stadt unterm Hakenkreuz. Kommunalpolitik in Regensburg. Regensburg 1994 and Gotto: Kommunalpolitik, p. 79 f.

625 See Chapter IV3.2.

626 See Chapter IV1.2.

627 District office manager for local politics Coburg to the head office, March 5, 1937. StadtACo A 6283.

628 See ibid.

The administrative reports ultimately served as a means of increasing the efficiency of the city administration. Sauerteig repeatedly drew Rehlein's attention to the discrepancies that arose from the implementation of National Socialist premises in concrete administrative action. In the new tariff regulations, for example, he demanded more leeway and independence for the municipalities in regulating the wages of employees who were not fully capable of working. In order to fulfill the NSDAP's promises to relieve the burden on welfare offices, municipal administrations had hired more people with reduced working capacity than in the private sector, people who would have had difficulty finding jobs elsewhere. In order to avoid causing dissatisfaction among fully able-bodied employees, Sauerteig wanted to place responsibility for a corresponding regulation not with the Reich Trustee for Labor, as planned, but with the city administration itself.[629] In addition, Sauerteig pointed out the injustice of reducing the recreational leave of civil servants, employees, and workers who were active in the party, its branches, and affiliated associations for participating in training courses, while others who did not sacrifice their free time for the party enjoyed their full vacation time. On this issue, Sauerteig's suggestion prompted Rehlein to forward a special report to the government of Upper and Middle Franconia in order to initiate changes.

The local structure of Nazi rule in Coburg was therefore decisively shaped by the intertwining of party and administrative offices, starting at the top of the city administration. Overall, despite inevitable points of friction, the relationship between the party and the administration was characterized less by competition than by a pronounced and functional culture of cooperation, which was often based on political consensus, party political pressure, and overarching goals that closely linked the realization of the ideal of the "people's community" with the progress and advancement of the city of Coburg itself. It was not until the outbreak of World War II that this situation began to change.

3.2 Nazified personnel

3.2.1 The "Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service"

When the "Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service" or "Professional Civil Service Law" (BBG) of April 7, 1933, created the legal basis for, among other things, excluding civil servants from local government who were "not of Aryan descent" or "who, based on their previous political activities, did not offer any guarantee that they would unreservedly support the national state at all times" [632], had already been partially implemented in Coburg. As part of the institutional "Gleichschaltung" (enforced conformity) of the administration and the creation of a "national civil service," the BBG was intended to serve to stabilize the regime. Prior to its implementation, the BBG was preceded by a series of

629 See Alfred Sauerteig to Wilhelm Rehlein, March 23, 1939. StadtACo A 6283. The Reich Trustee of Labor was an authority established in 1933 that was subordinate to the Reich Ministry of Labor and was primarily responsible for mediating between employers and employees.

630 See Alfred Sauerteig to Wilhelm Rehlein, December 22, 1938. StadtACo A 6283.

631 See chapters V1.2 and V2.3.4.

632 RGBl. I. 1933, pp. 175–177, here p. 175.

Implementation and amendment regulations, supplementary and amendment laws pragmatically modified to make them actually applicable for the various administrative bodies. In July 1933, the government of Upper and Middle Franconia finally ordered the municipalities to initiate measures to implement the BBG so that its execution could be completed by August 5, 1933.[633]The city administration sent questionnaires to civil servants and employees of the city administration, including the savings bank, the municipal utilities, the interurban utility, and the state theater, which were intended to provide information about membership in communist or social democratic organizations and parties. Schwede insisted on a comprehensive survey, so that not only those required to do so by law, but also the other civil servants and employees in salary grades 3 and 4 were given the questionnaire. In cases of doubt, those concerned were asked to provide appropriate evidence.

However, as expected, there was no reason to apply the BBG to the vast majority of municipal employees, so Schwede reported seven individuals to the supervisory authority, the government of Upper and Middle Franconia. He proposed the dismissal of three civil servants and two employees, as well as the retirement of two others. In addition, there were a few cases in which proceedings were still pending, so that the appropriate application of the BBG had to be examined.[635]After the city administration's expert opinions on the relevant cases had been submitted to the government of Upper and Middle Franconia, together with written statements from the persons concerned and the district leadership, the government forwarded them to the State Ministry of the Interior in Munich with a statement from the district president. The Reich Governor in Bavaria ultimately acted as the final decision-making authority.

The two most prominent cases of the application of the BBG in Coburg concerned the former mayor Erich Unverfähr and the city planning officer Ernst Köster. Franz Schwede had been given legal leverage by the BBG against both city administration officials, which he used to settle old scores and retroactively secure his measures against both of them. Both officials had spoken out in favor of his dismissal from municipal service in 1929. In the proceedings, Schwede now made it clear that he equated rejection of his person with rejection of the National Socialist idea per se and that such behavior resulted in corresponding treatment as an opponent of the party. Four years after his brief dismissal, Schwede thus raised the issue again as a matter of prestige and power, showing that anyone who opposed him would suffer disadvantages. The case of city planning officer Köster in particular showed how Franz Schwede wanted to set an example here by exploiting the BBG.

633 See The Government of Upper and Middle Franconia to the city councils of the immediate cities and the district offices of the administrative district, July 12, 1933. StadtACo A 7893.

634 See Resolution of the Police and Administration Senate of June 10, 1933, and Schwede's order of July 25, 1933. StadtACo A 7893.

635 In 1933, disciplinary proceedings were still pending against Konrad Soergel, but at the same time, no political activity could be proven against him. Ultimately, his retirement was arranged through other means. City inspector Robert Scholz was found unfit for duty by a medical officer and retired without the application of the BBG. Herbert Spott's retirement was also decided in a settlement without the application of the BBG. See Mayor Schwede to the government of Upper and Middle Franconia, August 5 and 8, 1933. StadtACo A 7893.

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The case of Ernst Köster

Ernst Köster was born in Kassel on July 7, 1881, and after studying in Darmstadt and Munich, he trained as a government building inspector in the Hessian civil service. After passing his examination to become a government master builder, he worked in the Hamburg civil service in the directorate office of the building commission until the outbreak of war and, after 1918, in the 1st building construction department of the building commission. During the World War, he was seconded to the navy as an army officer, but was not deployed to the front. [636]From 1920, he was initially city planning officer for the university city of Marburg, moving from there to the city of Coburg in 1925.[637] As city planning officer, professional city councilor, and head of the municipal utilities, Ernst Köster had been involved in Schwede's dismissal from municipal service in 1929, after serving as chairman of the works council committee that brought about Schwede's dismissal. Köster also spoke out against Schwede's reinstatement as a municipal official, which is why the NSDAP immediately began to harass him. The Nazi city council faction brought a series of accusations against the city planning officer and successfully sought to initiate a vote of no confidence against Köster. In the period after the 1929 elections, when the NSDAP could still be outvoted in the city council, Köster used his voting rights on construction issues to thwart some of the NSDAP's plans, prompting the party to try to deny him those rights.[638] After the public attacks against Köster subsided in 1931, when Schwede wanted to position himself as a serious local politician, attempts continued to be made to harm Köster through internal measures, and more and more of his duties were transferred to the significantly less well-trained Wilhelm Rehlein.[639]In February 1932, the Nazi representative Linke approached Köster in the city council and urged him to change his mind while there was still time.

In May 1933, Köster was finally suspended from duty due to his "well-known opposition to the National Socialist movement, which endangered public peace, order, and security in Coburg," and the urban development department was transferred to the third mayor, Rehlein. However, as the State Ministry of the Interior noted, the only charge against the city planning officer was his stance on the dismissal of Schwede. Köster argued that he had merely wanted to prevent damage to the municipal utilities. The grounds for dismissal on the basis of "national unreliability" under Section 4 of the BBG therefore remained doubtful at first. The government

636 This fact was repeatedly emphasized in the dispute over Köster's dismissal and ultimately ruled out Köster's membership in the network based on naval comradeship.

637 See Ernst Köster's personnel file. StadtACo Köster personnel file, submitted by the main office.

638 See minutes of the extraordinary meeting of September 16, 1929. StadtACo A 8072; minutes of the city council meetings of February 14, March 14, and May 23, 1930. StadtACo A 8073 and minutes of the city council meeting of March 6, 1931. StadtACo A 8074. Köster was not politically active and had never joined a party, but described himself as close to the German Nationalists.

639 At the end of 1931, the Police and Administration Senate decided to reduce Köster's salary, even though he had asserted his rights in a ruling by the State Arbitration Court, which he had sought. See decision of the Police and Administration Senate of November 25, 1931; Ernst Köster to the Coburg City Council, November 27, 1931, and Wilhelm Rehlein to Ernst Köster, December 4, 1931. StadtACo Personnel file Köster, Main Office. Ultimately, however, this reduction could not be upheld.

640 See *Coburger Tageblatt*, February 13, 1932.

of Upper and Middle Franconia described him as a borderline case and raised the question of "whether the principle of 'in dubio pro reo' or the national interest should prevail."[641] This happened even though the Coburg NSDAP tried to attribute sympathies for the SPD to Köster, accused him of inducing the NSDAP to incur expensive expenditures through costly proposals as city planning officer in order to destroy the population's trust in it, and denounced his architectural style as un-German and "preferred by Jews and Marxists." The NSDAP stylized Köster's dismissal as a question of the prestige of the Nazi movement par excellence.

Ultimately, the Köster case dragged on until the spring of 1934 and ended with him actually being dismissed for "national unreliability." The reason given for his dismissal was that he had "abused his official position to oust a nationally minded employee, the former machine master Schwede, now Chief President of the Province of Pomerania, from his position and to harm him."[643]Adolf Wagner also agreed with the argument that the proof of "national unreliability" could be found solely in the fact that Köster had voted for Schwede's dismissal. Reich Governor Franz Xaver Ritter von Epp also agreed with this. [644]Köster subsequently moved to Kassel, but unsuccessfully attempted to have the decision to dismiss him overturned through the appeals process. [645]

The case of Erich Unverfähr and dismissals for "national unreliability"

The case of former mayor Erich Unverfähr proved to be similar, and Schwede now wanted to cause him further harm by applying the BBG. The Coburg city administration also wanted to apply Article 4 of the BBG against Unverfähr using the same argument as against Köster and to interpret the amendment laws and implementing regulations accordingly so that they applied to the former mayor. The motion against the retired mayor was also based on his stance in the *Schwede case*. Schwede and district leader Schmidt also attempted to prove that Unverfähr had close ties to the SPD and to interpret Schwede's dismissal as a purely political act stemming from opposition to the NSDAP. However, after the supervisory authority had ruled against suspending Unverfähr because he was on temporary rather than provisional retirement, the city administration, with the backing of the government of Upper and Middle Franconia, the State Ministry of the Interior, and the Reich Governor, set about reducing Unverfähr's retirement pension with the help of the BBG. Unverfähr's father-in-law, Justice Councilor Jaenicke, who, according to his own statements, was one of the oldest party members in Thuringia, also spoke out on Unverfähr's behalf.

641 Expert opinion of the state supervisory authority, District President OF/MF, on the dismissal of City Planning Officer Köster pursuant to § 4 of the BBG of August 26, 1933. StadtACo A 7894.
642 Coburg City Council to the State Ministry of the Interior, January 4, 1934. StadtACo A 7894.
643 Discharge certificate Ernst Köster. StadtACo A 7893.
644 See State Ministry of the Interior to the Reich Governor in Bavaria, Munich, February 27, 1934. BayHStA, MInn 80480.
645 See Ministerialrat to Reich Minister of the Interior, July 19, 1934; Reich Minister of the Interior to Ernst Köster, August 1, 1934, and State Ministry of the Interior to the Reich Governor, November 18, 1934. BayHStA Reich Governor 5129.
646 See Mayor Schwede to the Government of Upper and Middle Franconia, August 8, 1933. Stadt-ACo A 7894.
647 See statement by District Leader Schmidt dated August 9, 1933. StadtACo A 7894.

From this position, he wrote to the government of Upper and Middle Franconia and to Reich Governor Epp, and also intervened in the Kösters case. Despite all this, Unverfähr's pension was reduced in September 1934.[648] When the former first mayor approached the city council to lodge an objection after the application of the BBG to his case had been announced, Mayor Rehlein responded threateningly: "Incidentally, we believe it is in your own interest to refrain from making such statements and remarks in your submissions to the city council in future."[649] In addition to the two officials, two further dismissals were made on grounds of national unreliability at lower levels of the city administration. The city council had already dismissed Moritz Hofmann, the managing director of the public information office of the city of Coburg, in June 1933 on grounds of "national unreliability" and dissolved the public information office. Hofmann had been a member of the SPD until 1933 and a supporter of social democracy for more than 20 years. Werner Faber had also conducted interviews about him, in which Hofmann was denounced for having told a person seeking advice, as an employee of the legal information office, that the Social Democrats would return to power as soon as the Führer was in "protective custody."[650]Hofmann fought back by filing a lawsuit with the Coburg District Court for defamation and against his dismissal from the government of Upper and Middle Franconia, but failed to prevent his dismissal. District leader Otto Schmidt, who always had to enclose a written statement with applications for dismissal, denounced Hofmann as an "opportunist" who was actually a die-hard Marxist and was now trying to keep his position by joining the NSDAP. A corresponding application by Hofmann for party membership was rejected in February 1933. [651]Chamber musician Alfred Lippisch, a civil servant, was also dismissed on grounds of "national unreliability" after having been a member of the DDP since its founding. In his dismissal letter, he was accused of criticizing the "government of national uprising" and its measures, as well as Reich President Hindenburg himself, in a restaurant in a hateful and hostile manner, and of supporting former Reich President Ebert instead. praised her for this. [652]

Schwede wanted to invoke Section 3 of the BBG in the case of Waltraude Frey, a choir singer employed at the Landestheater, because according to Nazi ideology, her maternal grandparents belonged to the
"Jewish race." Frey argued against her dismissal on the grounds that her "Aryan" father had served as a volunteer in the war and her mother had worked as a volunteer nurse. With two of her sisters already unemployed and dependent on her father for support, her dismissal would have been a severe financial blow to the family. [653] The management of the Landestheater itself also addressed

648 See State Ministry of the Interior to Reich Governor Epp, September 28, 1934. BayHStA Reichsstatthalter 9490.
649 Transcript of Wilhelm Rehlein to Erich Unverfähr, August 4, 1933. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg City R 45.
650 See list of employees who may be eligible under § 2, § 3, § 4. StadtACo A 7893.
651 See District Leader Schmidt, June 29, 1933. StadtACo A 7893 and Government of Upper and Middle Franconia, January 19, 1934. StABa K3 Government of Upper Franconia, submitted in 1975, 223.
652 See dismissal certificate Alfred Lippisch. StadtACo A 7893.
653 See Frey to the Coburg City Council, September 9, 1933. StadtACo A 7894.

A request to the administrative committee of the State Theater to withdraw the dismissal, as it would be difficult to find a replacement for Frey and she was a good representative of her profession. Artistic director Hans Abrell emphasized that he had "complete understanding for the eradication of the Jewish element and, from my own bitter experience, every reason to make this government slogan my own, but as long as a 100% Jew is still tolerated at one of the most important German theaters in Duisburg: Dr. Saladin Schmidt, a 20% Jew and good choir singer can be kept for the duration of the contract."[654] At the same time, Abrell pointed out that the termination would place a heavy burden on the state theater's budget, since according to § 3 of the second implementing regulation of May 4, 1933, to the BBG, Frey's salary would have to be paid for as long as the contract would have run without termination.[655] Although Coburg tried to persuade the government not to continue paying the salary, the government pointed out the risk of legal action. The financial problems that would have resulted from Frey's immediate dismissal were ultimately decisive in the Administrative and Police Senate's decision in September 1933 to apply to the government for an exemption and withdraw the dismissal until the end of her contract.

In addition, building control officer Kurt Kleiditsch and building inspector Hermann Düren were retired in November 1933 at the ages of 61 and 62, respectively, in order to "simplify city administration" in accordance with Section 6 of the BBG. Section 6 of the BBG could be invoked in this sense to bring about early retirement, which meant financial losses for those affected but savings for the city administration. Schwede planned to replace the two officials, whose performance was allegedly limited due to their age and health impairments, with younger and more efficient workers.[657] Kleiditsch, as a father of four children with financial obligations, asked to be allowed to remain in service because he had never taken sick leave and had also been a member of the NSDAP since April 1931, but to no avail. [658]

With seven civil servants and employees affected by the BBG, including two officials, Coburg stood out in comparison to Bamberg with five dismissed workers, Bayreuth with four, and Hof with five affected.[659] In relation to the total number of employees and civil servants in the municipal administration, including the municipal works, the municipal savings bank, and the state theater, 2% of the workforce in Coburg was affected by the BBG. [660] This put the city in roughly the same range as Augsburg or

654 Intendant to the Administrative Committee of the State Theater, September 16, 1933. StadtACo A 7894.
655 See ibid.
656 Cf. Decision of the Administrative and Police Senate of September 1933 and State Ministry of the Interior to the City of Coburg, October 28, 1933. StadtACo A 7894. The decision stated that Frey's father had participated in the war. His mother's service as a nurse was removed from the statement.
657 See Mayor Schwede to the government of Upper and Middle Franconia, August 5, 1933. Stadt-ACo A 7893.
658 See Kleiditsch to the Coburg City Council, August 19, 1933. StadtACo A 7893. However, the city was prohibited from refilling the civil service positions, as this contradicted § 6 of the BBG and the exception did not apply. See Government of Upper and Middle Franconia to Mayor Schwede, August 10, 1933. CityACo A 7893.
659 See Hofmann: Upper Franconia, pp. 240–261 and overview table on p. 532.
660 See staffing plan for April 1, 1933/34. StadtACo A 8005.

Munich, where about 2% of municipal employees had been dismissed or retired under the BBG. In Nuremberg, the figure was around 3.9%, and in Leipzig and Hamburg around 10%.[661] When comparing Coburg with other cities, however, it should always be borne in mind that a "purge" of the Coburg city administration had already taken place before the BBG was enacted.

While many city administrations applied "a characteristic mixture of strictness in principle, pragmatism in practice, and actual 'leniency' in individual cases"[662] when implementing the BBG, Coburg did not take individual cases into consideration. Only a financial calculation that was disadvantageous to the city administration in the dismissal of the choir singer Frey led to the termination being postponed in her case. Franz Schwedes also dealt with his opponents with extreme harshness. The internal strengthening of the city administration in Augsburg, for example, through exemptions that gave employees a certain amount of leeway as long as they complied with the mayor's directives, was implemented in Coburg in a different way.[663] Franz Schwede relied instead on a mixture of repression for those who did not support his plans and ideas and mobilization within the city administration geared toward the city's position as the first Nazi city.

When applying the BBG, Schwede was always tempted to interpret the existing law according to his own will, pretending to be able to correctly interpret the true National Socialist intent behind the regulations, even if the actual legal situation was different. For this reason, the government of Upper and Middle Franconia, which generally supported Coburg's approach, had to repeatedly readjust its position whenever Schwede wanted to interpret the BBG differently. Coburg's use of the law clearly demonstrates the spirit of revenge inherent in the law, as it was primarily used to punish those who had in any way stood in the way of Schwede and his "fight for Coburg" or to retroactively legitimize measures that had already been taken against them.

3.2.2 Measures of "Nazification"

At the latest since Franz Schwede took office as First Mayor, significant pressure was exerted on Coburg city administration employees to join the NSDAP in order to keep their jobs.[664] The dismissal of a number of social democratic workers since 1930 and their replacement by NSDAP members had confirmed what was at stake for individuals. [665] Due to its status as a National Socialist model city, the local government was also expected to follow suit.

661 See Gotto: Kommunalpolitik, p. 114; Neubauer: Arbeiten, p. 383; Braun, Matthias: Hitlers liebster Bürgermeister. Willy Liebel (1897–1945) (= Nürnberger Werkstücke zur Stadt- und Landesgeschichte, vol. 71). Nuremberg 2012, p. 454 and Lohalm, Uwe: "... Anständig und aufopferungsbereit" (Decent and Self-Sacrificing). Public Service and National Socialism in Hamburg from 1933 to 1945. Hamburg 2001, p. 19.

662 Gotto: Kommunalpolitik, p. 113.

663 See ibid., p. 114.

664 See Coburg District Office to the Bavarian State Ministry of the Interior, September 18, 1931. StACo LRA 10375.

665 See Hambrecht: Aufstieg, pp. 268–270.

meet the demands imposed on them. The measures taken to "Nazify" the city administration's personnel were based, on the one hand, on a range of repressive measures that had a direct impact on the career opportunities of individual civil servants, employees, and workers, as well as on their colleagues in the form of bullying or incitement. This included the legal system established by the "German Civil Service Act" and the Reich Service Regulations of 1937, which could be used to discipline civil servants.[666] On the other hand, the glorification of the city as a pioneer, the idea of working to build a better future for the city, and the activism of the "national revolution" also created a "people's community" pull that enticed people to join the party between 1930 and 1933. A mixture of repression, opportunism, and genuine conviction formed the basis for the extensive "Nazification" of Coburg's city administration. Although Coburg's party leadership hoped that its actions and promotion of the NSDAP would attract many like-minded people who were fully committed to Nazi ideology, it was also concerned with how the city was perceived both internally and externally in terms of its role model character. The fact that the district leader and mayor were almost always the same person in Coburg also gave the party the opportunity to exert a strong and concrete influence on party membership and party discipline among municipal employees. In recruiting for the NSDAP, the principle of "whoever is not for us is against us" ultimately played a decisive role, as municipal employees in particular were
"National Socialist city of Coburg," refusal to join the party could be interpreted as opposition to the NSDAP per se. [667]

As early as February 1932, Pg. Georg Linke publicly commented on the attitude of various city officials who, in his opinion, still dared to oppose the will of the National Socialist majority in the city hall. For the first time in public, he called on the officials, employees, and workers in municipal service, on behalf of the NSDAP majority in the city council, to take a closer look at National Socialism and join the NSDAP before it was too late. If, for example, one million applications for party membership were reached and no new members were accepted, Linke believed that those who had delayed would have to bear the consequences of having missed the boat. [668]Linke subsequently faced disciplinary proceedings for coercing civil servants, but was acquitted. [669]In their everyday work, the

666 See RGBl. I. 1937, pp. 39–70 and 71–90.

667 See, for example, the similar personnel policies in Augsburg and Munich: Gotto, Bernhard: Stabilization from below. The personnel policy of the Augsburg city administration 1933–1939. In: Mecking, Sabine; Wirsching, Andreas: City administration under National Socialism. System-stabilizing dimensions of municipal rule (= Research on regional history, vol. 53). Paderborn 2005, pp. 23–49 and Neubauer, Jan: Working for National Socialism. The City of Munich and its Personnel in the "Third Reich" (= Munich under National Socialism. Local Government and Urban Society, Volume 6). Göttingen 2020.

668 See *Coburger Tageblatt* and *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, February 13, 1932. In addition, it was repeatedly pointed out in the denazification proceedings that, from 1932 onwards, Schwede, as mayor and district leader, ordered all municipal officials, employees, and workers to serve in the party or one of its branches. See, for example: Political career of Franz Dehler. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg City D 25. However, there is no longer any official order to this effect.

669 See disciplinary proceedings against Georg Linke. StadtACo A 6428.

In addition to personal recruitment efforts, municipal employees were also repeatedly confronted with party advertising campaigns, in which they found forms for joining the NSDAP or at least one of its branches or affiliated associations, primarily the National Socialist People's Welfare Organization or the National Socialist Civil Servants' League, on their desks.

With regard to the entire municipal administration workforce, the city publicly demanded that all its members be active in the party. In April 1944, the municipal administration confirmed this in writing, at least for its male employees. In selection procedures, party membership was therefore used as a decisive criterion. When hiring a legal assistant, the priorities were as follows: "Party membership prior to the seizure of power, special knowledge of local government and special training in local government, examination certificates, etc."[671] Nevertheless, until the end, there were isolated employees across the various offices and departments who resisted pressure from the party and were still able to keep their jobs. Joining the party was ultimately not unavoidable, as it could not be the sole criterion for hiring and promotion practices.[672] Especially in a city the size of Coburg, there was no endless supply of professionally suitable and politically unobjectionable candidates. The smooth functioning of the city administration had to be ensured precisely through the expertise of long-standing employees, because in this respect too, Coburg was under self-imposed pressure to deliver the image of exemplary local politics. Even for new hires, expertise, especially in the higher administrative ranks, could be just as important as party membership and work.[673] This must have been even more true for the period after 1939 and the war-related labor shortage. Temporary positions, on the other hand, which were created to implement National Socialist legislation, for example in the registry and welfare offices, as well as in the city planning office and the city treasury, could be filled much more comprehensively based on the applicants' party membership. In order to meet its social obligations, the city primarily hired unemployed merchants or tradesmen, who were to be exclusively "old fighters" and pensioners.

670 See SA Standard 95 Coburg to the Mayor of Coburg, April 24, 1944. StadtACo A 6297. Due to the lack of comprehensive personnel files for the city administration, only limited information can be provided on how many city employees had joined the NSDAP and how high the degree of "Nazification" of the city administration actually was.

671 Minutes of the consultation with the administrative advisors on August 22, 1938. StadtACo A 12246.

672 When it came to personnel decisions, the main office first compiled lists of possible changes that had been collected from the departments. After discussing the matter with the councilors, the mayor made a preliminary decision. If this affected regulations in the already approved staffing plans, a decision by the government of Upper and Middle Franconia was required. After the government had issued its opinion, lengthy negotiations with representatives in Ansbach often followed in order to enforce the city's will. The State Ministry of the Interior could also be involved in this process. See StadtACo A 8005–8009.

673 See compilation of requests, applications, and proposals from civil servants and employees regarding the staffing plan for the 1936/37 fiscal year. StadtACo A 8006.

674 See the mayor's letters to the government of Upper and Middle Franconia, April 3, 1936, and January 25, 1938. StadtACo A 8006. Overall, however, the city administration had bad experiences with this practice, especially with the employment of pension beneficiaries.

Overall, a very high degree of Nazification of the Coburg city administration can be observed, in which, with few exceptions, almost all civil servants, employees, and workers were active in the NSDAP or one of its branches. Even those who did not join the party itself often responded to the pressure exerted on them by becoming members of the NSV. A list of civil servants and male employees of the city administration compiled in the post-war period shows that only 12 of 186 people, or about 6%, were non-party members. Of the 174 party members listed, 120 were characterized as active party members who were known as "old fighters," office holders, political leaders, or those who had received preferential promotions. In turn, 80 of them had joined the party before April 1, 1933. In senior positions, 38 of 43 civil servants and employees were party members, and 27 of them were classified as activists, 20 of whom had belonged to the NSDAP before April 1933.

The Coburg Savings Bank as an example of "Nazification"

Illustrative material on the degree of "Nazification" and the hiring practices of the city administration is provided, for example, by the personnel composition of the savings bank, for which personnel files are available to a limited extent. In the course of "Gleichschaltung" after 1929, the administrative committee of the Coburg savings banks, in which the National Socialists had gained a majority, initially dismissed 43 employees by the end of 1931. The dismissals, which included four senior employees but mostly lower-level positions, were politically motivated, but also stemmed from the economic problems of the Coburg savings bank, as only 15 new employees were hired during the same period. Among those dismissed was the son-in-law of the deposed savings bank director Konrad Soergel, who had been employed as an authorized signatory at the institution.[676] Of a total of 51 people who had been employed by the savings bank before 1929 and whose personnel files are still available, only eight did not join the NSDAP or become involved in any of the party organizations. The majority of party memberships were acquired between 1930 and 1933, with a clear peak when the party came to power in 1933. Eighty-one people were newly hired from 1930 onwards, of whom information is available for 41 based on their personnel files. About half of them were already party members when they joined the municipal service, and the other half, with the exception of one person who joined the Wehrmacht in 1938, joined the NSDAP without exception. Before the Coburg Savings Bank merged with the United Coburg Savings Banks in 1937, it employed 135 women and men, of whom 95 personnel files are available. Ultimately, 91% of the savings bank employees in this group can be proven to have been members of the NSDAP or its affiliated organizations and associations. Of course, party membership did not necessarily reflect the individual's actual attitude toward the NSDAP and its goals.

675 The list is printed in: Beyersdorf, Peter: Military Government and Self-Government. A Study of American Occupation Policy at the Municipal Level in the Years 1945–1948, Illustrated with Examples from the City and District of Coburg, Erlangen 1966, p. 149.

676 See Finzel; Reinhart: Spuren, p. 341.

677 Finzel and Reinhart's attempt to categorize savings bank employees as activists or followers based on three criteria (clear political record, participation in the Reich Party Congress and political training, and activity as a political leader in the NSDAP or in a leadership position in the SA, HJ, etc.) seems too formalistic and neglects the level of action. See ibid., pp. 341–346.

Requirements for the actions of municipal employees

As a result of the city's public image as a model National Socialist city and the institutional Gleichschritt (enforced conformity) between the party and the administration, high demands were also placed on the administrative actions of municipal employees. Retroactively based on a claim made by Franz Schwede against the city administration, its members were repeatedly told that, as part of a National Socialist authority, they had to act in an exemplary manner for the entire population. Gauleiter Wächtler also appealed to Coburg City Hall in this regard: "Whatever you do, you always do it as National Socialists. The population will rightly never distinguish between the city administration that did this and the party that wanted it done. For the population, you are all representatives of the party, from the mayor to the deputy mayors to the lowest administrative officials."[678]

In order to bring the officials in Coburg City Hall into line with the party, public officials' meetings were held from around February 1933, at which the Gau Hannover's specialist advisor for civil servants informed them about the goals of National Socialism and to which all municipal officials and their wives were invited. [679]The party declared that every official had a duty to be aware of the nature and aims of the NSDAP. In addition, the city administration was now to set an example to the general public in terms of the practical implementation of National Socialist demands in everyday life. For official use, municipal employees were therefore instructed to conform to the nature of the "people's community" in their expression and behavior. In 1933, they were required to use the Hitler salute both on and off duty and to refrain from using unnecessary and no longer appropriate forms of politeness such as "most devotedly," "most obediently," or "Your Highness."[680] In order to "eliminate demoralization in social life and give real meaning to the concept of 'good faith,' but also to promote the concept of honesty and simplicity in the life of our people everywhere" [681], Schwede demanded that his subordinates' wives no longer be addressed by their husbands' titles and that others no longer be addressed accordingly. From 1934 onwards, municipal employees were compulsory to attend a large number of official events, such as the ceremony marking the start of construction of the Adolf Hitler House or May Day celebrations.[682] In addition, the local branch of *the Reich Association of German Civil Servants* exerted a disciplining influence on the city administration, setting up a lending library with Nazi literature and purchasing its own flag to ensure that civil servants were noticed during marches and seen as a unified group.[683]

In addition, measures for forced inclusion were initiated, which worked according to the principle of "carrot and stick." The city administration now organized regular mandatory family evenings for all municipal workers, employees,

678 See *Bayerische Ostmark*, December 19, 1938.

679 See the district leader of the National Socialist civil servants' working group of the Coburg local group to the civil servants of the city of Coburg, February 8, 1933. StadtACo A 15252.

680 See Mayor Schwede to all municipal departments, July 13, 1933, and Mayor Rehlein to all municipal departments, August 15, 1933. StadtACo A 6274.

681 Mayor Schwede to all municipal departments, July 13, 1933. StadtACo A 6274.

682 See Mayor Schwede to all municipal departments, March 20, 1934, and Dr. Otto Schmidt to all municipal departments, April 30, 1934. StadtACo A 6274.

683 See Representative of the Reich Association of German Civil Servants, August 11, 1934. StadtACo A 6274.

Civil servants and pensioners in the Hofbräu restaurants, who lived out their "Volksgemeinschaft" on a small scale and had a class-equalizing effect. The aim of the evenings was therefore that, in accordance with Adolf Hitler's ideology, the heads of the administration should see their workers and employees only as fellow citizens and that "from the street sweeper to the mayor"[684] everyone should eat and celebrate together. This was a deliberate attempt to counter the old politics of dignitaries, which was now labeled as arrogant and class-conscious, with a different model. The events also included an afternoon program for children as well as lectures and performances, for which city employees and their wives received vouchers for beer, bratwurst, coffee, and cigarettes. Non-participation would have been tantamount to self-exclusion and would have resulted in professional disadvantages.

Mayor Dr. Schmidt also made it clear to all city employees and their families that they were no longer to have any business or social dealings with Jews, emphasizing how much he demanded that the city administration act in a manner that was ideologically sound and in line with National Socialist principles. At the same time, he emphasized the important role that he assigned to civil servants and employees, and workers in shaping a society structured around the concept of the "people's community." As head of the city, he assumed the right not only to determine the direct operations and administrative actions of his subordinates, but also to dictate rules for their private interactions. The fact that misconduct would ultimately result in dismissal from municipal service was not only implied as a disciplinary measure, but explicitly stated.

The service instructions for police officers in municipal service also clearly showed how much the exercise of office was to be imbued with "national community" ideas. Individual officers were required to make their selfless contribution to the formation of National Socialist society, including their fellow citizens and excluding "aliens to the community." Here, individual officers were instructed to

> "In the National Socialist state, police service is to be understood as service to the people, i.e., in all his duties, the police officer must strive, through understanding and social action, to contribute to the ever deeper penetration of the German people by the national community sought by our Führer and Reich Chancellor. However, conceit or professional arrogance would not only make a police officer ridiculous, but would also constitute sabotage of the national community. But even in his pursuit of the highest achievements, the police officer must only consider the interests of the whole, i.e., the interests of the blood-related and ideologically National Socialist community of like-minded people, since only this community can be the embodiment of his entire thinking and work. Police officers who muster the courage and strength to measure their performance against the standards of the community receive unexpected motivation for their actions and work. They will not limit themselves to fulfilling the duties assigned to them.

684 *Coburger Nationalzeitung newspaper* on January 8, 1934.
685 The *Coburger Nationalzeitung* reported that it would have been impossible for Mayor Unverfähr or City Councilor Köster to sit down at a table with a street sweeper or garbage collector due to their class consciousness and arrogance. See ibid.
686 See ibid. and notice for the family evening on January 7, 1934. StACo Landestheater 65.
687 See *Bayerische Ostmark*, *Coburger Zeitung*, and *Coburger Tageblatt* from August 13, 1935.

> To fulfill his duties and do justice to the current service requirements in accordance with regulations or instructions, but also to joyfully subordinate himself to the ideas and needs of the entire people in his tireless work, all the more so as he lives his entire life only within the framework of this community and owes the security of this life and his position in life to this community."[688]

The particular pressure that individual municipal employees could come under is illustrated by the example of August Marr, a former city councilor for the DDP and local group leader of the trade union federation for employees. August Marr, a businessman, had been working as an assistant in the municipal investigation office since August 1933. His supervisor was extremely satisfied with his work, assuring that he never made himself noticed in political matters, but always did his work conscientiously and punctually. Nevertheless, a report by Marr on, among other things, the abuses in housing construction at Spittelleite in January 1934 was interpreted by the city leadership as a direct attack on the Coburg city council. They initiated August Marr's dismissal from municipal service, even though this resulted in considerable personnel shortages. The dismissal was briefly withdrawn and Marr was urged to keep quiet under threat of being transferred to the Dachau concentration camp. In January 1935, however, under pressure from Ernst Kuhn and August Gerspacher and against the express wishes of his superior, he was finally forced to leave the city's service. The members of Kuhn's ruling clique clearly placed administrative economy behind loyalty to the National Socialist line. In March 1937, Marr found new employment with the ducal administration. However, he was dismissed again shortly afterwards when August Gerspacher warned Duke Carl Eduard about Marr and the Duke, after seeking reassurance from Franz Schwede in Stettin, decided to dismiss the former democrat immediately. Marr joined the NSDAP the day after his renewed dismissal.

3.2.3 Promotion practices

A look at promotion practices in the Coburg city administration reveals the preferential treatment and promotion of "old fighters," which was also mandated throughout the Reich. In January 1934, Franz Schwede stipulated that, following the example of the Reichspost, the Reichsbahn, and the Ministry of Finance, the Coburg city administration and businesses should also promote those "old fighters" who had
"who have worked for the national uprising without regard for any disadvantages they might face" should be given preferential promotion. This was followed by the promotion or transfer to permanent employment of a total of 40 "old fighters" and one "old fighter," 21 of whom worked in the city administration itself, 11 in the municipal works, five at the municipal savings bank, and four at the state theater. The special promotion could take the form of a raise to a higher salary grade, for example.

688 See Service Instructions of the Security Police. StadtACo A 12866.
689 See City Secretary Schmitz to the Coburg City Council, January 23, 1934, and July 19, 1934. StadtACo A 15252 and August Marr to the Coburg Denazification Tribunal, December 12, 1945. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg City M 30.

group, the transfer from worker to employee status, the granting of honorary, company or factory allowances, the early termination of the probationary period, and the transfer to civil servant status. Among those promoted were August Gerspacher, Johannes Künzel, Otto Kubasch and Friedrich Thiel, a number of members of the city council faction of 1929. In addition, there was a strikingly large number of promotions from the municipal works, who had been in Franz Schwede's immediate circle. This shows the extent to which the municipal institution served as a supply institute for the party from 1929 onwards. Seventeen men from the group of honorees were singled out and awarded a specially designed certificate of honor. These men had been city employees before June 30, 1929, when the NSDAP came to power in Coburg, and had allegedly jeopardized their professional positions through their party activities. The promotions were accompanied by an appeal from Schwede to continue to use the honor as a call to perform their duties for the city and the movement with increased dedication.

The party membership system, which the NSDAP had opposed until it came to power and which it had set out to combat, had thus become a constitutive element of National Socialist personnel policy. Apart from that, the *Coburger Volksblatt* had already pointed out in 1931 that Franz Schwedes and Werner Faber's most obvious qualification for the mayor's office had been their party membership.[691] This led to further negotiations within the city administration as to which group of people should be given preference as "pioneers of the movement." A number of other city employees now also attempted to identify themselves as "old fighters" in order to obtain promotion. They cited their service in the Coburg residents' militia or their co-founding of the *Stahlhelm* as merits for the "national uprising," but this was not recognized by the police and administrative senate. In this context, the Senate also emphasized that "old fighters" who did not actively support the party in this position were equally ineligible for preferential promotion.

Beyond this one-time action, the city administration not only guaranteed "old fighters" a professional home in the city administration, but also worked to ensure that their career paths led to success. Accordingly, the careers of many "old fighters" in the city administration show a series of preferential promotions and appointments to civil service positions that would hardly have been possible without their party background. The individuals concerned themselves always cited their position within the party as their most important bargaining chip when applying for promotion. The preferential promotions of "old fighters" were always an expression of the fact that many National Socialists wanted to see their achievements and sacrifices during the "struggle" in the "Third Reich" compensated and rewarded. In addition to a staged cult around the
"old fighters," the city of Coburg made it a priority to grant them advantages beyond the Reich-wide regulations, after the "old guard" had contributed to the success of the NSDAP in Coburg to a particular degree.

690 See Mayor Schwedes' decree of January 22, 1934, resolution of the Administrative and Police Senate of March 21, 1934. StadtACo A 8005 and *Coburger Nationalzeitung* of March 22, 1934.

691 *Coburger Volksblatt* of October 17, 1931.

692 See resolution of the Police and Administration Senate of February 4, 1935. StadtACo A 8006.

693 Due to a lack of source material, it is no longer possible to determine the total proportion of "old fighters" in the city administration.

The filling of a police sergeant position in the uniformed security police in 1935 illustrates this circumstance. The city leadership vehemently advocated to the state commander of the protective police in Bavaria and the government for two SS men and "old fighters" as candidates, who, however, had no previous experience other than their services to the party and their SS service. Despite repeated representations by the mayor on the matter, the higher authorities refused to hire the SS men.[694] In order to be able to quickly fill vacant positions or services with party members, the city's main administration, in consultation with the Nazi district leadership, had also compiled a list of suitable candidates that could be drawn on as needed.[695] In addition, there are several known initiatives in which the city administration wanted to grant special bonuses to the "old fighters" in its ranks or sought to adapt the legal situation, for example, to credit party service time toward the years of service for Coburg and its early Nazification. [696] Retroactively to
April 1, 1938, following a decree issued by the Reich Minister of the Interior on November 19, 1937, a number of "old fighters" were also accepted into the civil service, which in practice entailed a considerable burden. [697]

"Old fighters" and their careers

This approach can be illustrated using three examples and CVs. Reinhold Ender, born on June 21, 1901, in Coburg, joined the NSDAP and SA in May 1928 and quickly gained a reputation as a notorious thug. Alongside his schoolmate August Rittweger, he was considered the ringleader in many brawls and was sentenced to six months in Bayreuth prison for breach of the peace, among other things, for attacking a truck carrying a group of SPD members. Within the SA in Coburg, Ender became a compliant perpetrator of violence who was called upon precisely when the goal was to demonstrate power through brutality. After a period of unemployment, the municipal utilities hired Ender in 1932 as a gasworks worker, street sweeper, and garbage collector because of his services to the party. In the course of the honoring and promotion of the "old fighters" in March 1934, he rose from wage class II a to wage class II b. Later, for the same reason, he received a one-time payment of 200 RM from the "Adolf Hitler Donation." In addition to his service at the municipal works, he remained loyal to his reputation in the SA and was significantly involved in the mistreatment of Jewish citizens of Coburg in November 1938. Due to further proceedings against him, he had to be dismissed from the municipal works for a short time. Nevertheless, together with August Rittweger, he rose to the rank of "old fighter" in November 1939.

694 See Mayor Rehlein to the State Commander of the Bavarian Police Force in the State Ministry of the Interior, October 23, 1935. StadtACo A 12866.
695 See memo from Mayor Schmidt, July 2, 1934. StadtACo A 12866.
696 See minutes of the consultation with the administrative advisors on March 23, 1936. StadtACo A 15849 and minutes of the consultation with the councilors on August 5, 1937. StadtACo A 8074 a.
697 See minutes of the council meeting of November 10, 1939. StadtACo A 8074 a and Alfred Sauerteig to Wilhelm Rehlein, October 18, 1938. StadtACo A 6288.
698 See Chapter IV3.1.
699 See Reinhold Ender's denazification file. StACo Denazification Chamber Coburg City E 79; NSDAP personnel file. BA R 9361-II/208272. The reason for this procedure could not be determined.

He was appointed to the civil service and received the "Golden Party Badge."[700] As an educational measure resulting from the city administration's displeasure with his misconduct, his appointment to the civil service was not made retroactive to April 1, 1938, as was the case with the other "old fighters," but only on October 1, 1939. Within just seven years, Ender had thus gone from being a gasworks worker, street sweeper, and garbage collector to a city official. The decisive criterion here was his work for the SA and the NSDAP, so that even when he repeatedly went too far after the
"combat period."

Karl Schunck [702], born on March 19, 1903, also joined the party in April 1928 and was able[to]count himself among the "old fighters." He was also a recipient of the "NSDAP Badge of Honor" and the "Coburg Badge of Honor." Schunck was also a temporary member of the SS and the SA. Through his activities in the NSDAP, Schunck rose to become a close confidant of Schwede. In 1930, the city took on Schunck as a candidate and employed him in this capacity as Schwede's secretary, who took him under his special wing.[703] In this role, Schunck was jointly responsible for correspondence with Karl Fiehler and the local politics department of the NSDAP in Munich. [704] With Schwede's backing, his protégé's rise was rapid. In 1932, Schunck was appointed city secretary, served as deputy registrar, and in 1934 was promoted to senior city secretary in the wake of the promotion of the "old fighters."[705] As city inspector, Schunck was then assigned to the welfare and youth office as a case worker for the youth welfare office, official guardianships, and honorary sponsorships of the city of Coburg. In May 1938, he was appointed a civil servant for life, with Schunck, now city inspector, also serving as Greim's right-hand man. In the spring of 1939, he took over the management of the youth welfare office, which now operated separately from the welfare office. This position also involved the "old fighter" in the sterilization proceedings of the hereditary health court.[706] After Schunck was not drafted into the Wehrmacht due to cancer, he was also assigned tasks in the school and theater department in October 1939, representing the city youth welfare office and the municipal guardianship authority of Coburg before the Coburg district court, and later HJ affairs.[707]As a leading member of the Coburg city administration, he was also involved in the areas of

700 Since Ender had been expelled from the NSDAP from May 1928 to October 1929, proceedings had to be initiated to clarify the extent to which he could be awarded the "Golden Party Badge." See file from the department to the Gau treasurer of the Bavarian Ostmark Gau of the NSDAP, August 26, 1937. BA R 9361-II/208272.

701 See minutes of the council meeting of November 10, 1939. StadtACo A 8074 a and Rudolf Ender's denazification file. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg City E 79. In the denazification tribunal ruling of December 18, 1946, Reinhold Ender was classified as a "burdened person" and sentenced to two years in a labor camp and confiscation of one-third of his assets. Due to an oversight, Ender was released from the labor camp ten months early. The confiscation of his assets and other restrictions were also lifted.

702 Karl Schunck's personnel file was destroyed at the end of the war.

703 See minutes of the city council meeting of March 14, 1930. StadtACo A 8073.

704 See correspondence between Karl Fiehler and Franz Schwede. BA NS 25/185.

705 See Coburg city administration to the government of Upper and Middle Franconia, September 23, 1932. Stadt-ACo A 5883 and *Coburger Nationalzeitung* of March 22, 1934.

706 See Chapter IV2.2.3.

707 See memo from Mayor Greim dated October 10, 1939, and August 13, 1941. StadtACo A 6441.

seizure of Jewish property. [708] Due to his work in the administration, his loyalty to the party, and his status as an "old fighter," Schunck appeared to be the ideal candidate for key positions in the local government from the party's perspective. As personnel officer Alfred Sauerteig later judged, his rise in the city administration was primarily due to his relationship with Schwede and his status in the party, which his official achievements, in particular his promotion to city inspector, would not have justified.

By giving preference to party members when filling leading positions, the party was able to expand and secure its direct influence on the city's affairs. However, due to a lack of education and knowledge, party members such as August Gerspacher were able to hinder the further development of municipal institutions. August Gerspacher, SA leader and teacher at the Coburg Trade and Commerce School, was promoted from senior teacher to professor in 1934 as part of the homage to the "old fighters." In 1935, Gerspacher's professional career underwent a complete reorientation when Mayor Schmidt appointed him director of the municipal utilities and put him in charge of implementing the Four-Year Plan. He was promoted to full-time deputy mayor, thus assuming one of the most important positions in the Coburg city administration. Thanks to his promotions as an "old fighter," Gerspacher was ultimately able to more than double his annual salary, even though he had no professional qualifications or prior knowledge for the management position at the municipal utilities and could only perform his duties with the help of his subordinates' expertise. Despite the upward trend in the development of the municipal utilities in the 1920s, this trend came to a halt under Gerspacher, with the result that the utilities became increasingly outdated in all their facilities.

In addition to the special promotion of "old fighters," special commitment to the party and its branches was also considered an essential reason for promotion in a number of cases. City inspector Karl Puff had rendered outstanding services as district office manager of the NSV at the Nazi Winter Relief Organization, enabling him to expand his range of responsibilities as head of the municipal welfare office and rise to the position of city administrator in 1935. Not only the city fathers, but also the individual office managers appreciated commitment to the party.[713] The party also obtained a corresponding promotion practice, for example when the NSDAP faction in October 1938

708 See Chapter IV3.2.3.2.

709 See Sauerteig's interrogation on September 6, 1948. StACo Denazification Court Coburg City Sch 348.

710 See *Bayerische Ostmark* of December 14, 1936.

711 See Legal Department of the City of Coburg to the Administrative Court of Bayreuth, November 16, 1954. City Archives, Legal Department files, pension matter August Gerspacher. After his internment, Gerspacher was classified as a principal offender in Group I by the Ansbach Main Chamber on February 19, 1949, and sentenced to five years in a labor camp and confiscation of his property. In addition, he was restricted from vocational training for 10 years. See ruling of the Ansbach Main Chamber of February 19, 1949. StACo Coburg City Chamber of Justice G 65. In March 1949, Gerspacher was also sentenced to six months in prison by the criminal division of the Coburg Regional Court for coercion with dangerous bodily harm and deprivation of liberty. See judgment of the Coburg Regional Court of March 14, 1949. StadtACo files, Legal Office, Pension matter August Gerspacher. In the period after 1945, Gerspacher devoted himself increasingly to painting and drawing again.

712 See Mayor to the Government of Upper and Middle Franconia, May 11, 1935. For other similar cases, see Compilation of requests, applications, and proposals from civil servants and employees regarding the staffing plan for the 1936/37 fiscal year. StadtACo A 8006.

713 See Transport Director Weidmann to Mayor Greim, March 29, 1939. StadtACo A 8008.

The mayor requested that city inspectors Kuhn and Schunck be promoted to senior inspectors on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of Hitler's coup, which Greim approved.

Promotion practice and evaluation criteria

In addition, based on the few personnel files and staffing plans available, the city administration's promotion practices reveal a number of criteria that were conducive to employment and promotion, apart from political assessment and professional expertise.[715] In the evaluations of city employees, the complete dedication of the individual to their job and absolute loyalty to their employer ranked at the top. This was accompanied by the complete subordination of one's own interests to those of the service and the alignment of one's own life plan with the requirements of the employer. Symptoms of this mindset were numerous examples of municipal employees who were completely overworked and overburdened even before the increase in workload during the Second World War.[716] Accordingly, personnel and administrative files often contain references to many employees who, out of zeal for their work, waived their entitlement to vacation or counted a health-related spa stay, which should actually have been recorded as sick leave, as vacation in order not to be a burden on the city.[717] Linked to the idea of fulfilling one's duty, this professional ethic was tied to a heroic image of masculinity and ideologically charged with ideas such as honor and self-sacrifice. Illness or excessive demands, on the other hand, were considered weaknesses and, as the cases of Erich Unverfähr and Ernst Altenstädter show, could be used against the person in question. Linked to the idea of sacrifice in the service of the "people's community" was also the ideal of the selfless civil servant. The fact that, in the opinion of a councilman, a municipal civil servant always thought only of others and not of himself was sufficient grounds for promotion.[718] In addition, punctuality and conscientiousness in carrying out orders and commands were integral components of exemplary zeal in office. In the municipal police force in particular, the heroic image of masculinity was also deliberately interpreted in military terms, with much greater emphasis being placed on physical strength and performance, and military virtues being applied to the service as guardians of law and order. In the spirit of a front-line community, the camaraderie of individual civil servants was valued here.

The evaluation criteria listed here emphatically document how, in a National Socialist administration, virtues of a civil service ethos established long before the "Third Reich" could be combined and complemented with "national community" values. This reveals how city administration employees, regardless of party membership or active service in the party, its branches, or affiliated associations, were able to contribute to the "national community" through exemplary administrative action and the

714 See NSDAP faction to Mayor Greim, October 14, 1938. StadtACo A 8008.
715 See Mayor to the government of Upper and Middle Franconia, May 11, 1935. StadtACo A 8006; staffing plans and employment principles of the city of Coburg. StadtACo A 8005–8009.
716 See Chapter V1.2.
717 See personnel file Emil Herold. StadtACo A 12864.
718 See Franz Reeg's personnel file. StadtACo A 12889.

By exploiting their scope for action and power to shape policy in the interests of a "people's community," they were able to support, help shape, and promote the National Socialist regime. In the postwar period, civil servants often cited their official diligence and willingness to make sacrifices as grounds for exoneration. For example, Hermann Vollmuth stated in 1946: "As a city official, I felt and still feel a special connection to this beautiful city, its welfare and woes, its tasks and interests. (...) From 1934 onwards (...) I worked for the city and its population day after day, Sundays and weekdays, often through the night, without shying away from any task, even the most difficult ones, and without sparing any time or effort. Without regard for my health, I demanded the utmost of my strength and, in doing so, unfortunately neglected my family far too much" [719]However, he then goes on to describe precisely the basic administrative attitude that formed the foundation of National Socialist local government and guaranteed its stability. The unwavering determination to contribute to the city's progress consequently unleashed a high degree of initiative and energy among city officials, which promoted the implementation of National Socialist goals.

3.3 Guidelines for administrative action

3.3.1 Anticipatory obedience

The scope of action of local authorities under National Socialism was subject to a clear conflict, which ultimately had to be negotiated at the practical level in everyday life, depending on the creative will of individual officials. On the one hand, the National Socialist regime sought to translate its ideological demands into concrete laws down to the last detail, which sometimes resulted in a flood of regulations. Particularly during the consolidation phase of the regime after the completion of "Gleichschaltung" (enforced conformity), when it was also important to represent the Nazi state to the outside world, independent actions at the lowest level, which had been a welcome instrument of power in the course of the seizure of power, were to be avoided in order to guarantee uniformity and regularity within the regime. On the other hand, the administrative power to shape policy was also expanded by the fact that the highest priority was to"administer"the state in accordance with the Führer's will,"as Wilhelm Stuckart, the influential Nazi administrative lawyer and State Secretary in the Reich Ministry of the Interior, had put it. The message this conveyed left considerable scope for administrative action that did not comply with the rules, as long as it served to clearly implement the will of the "Führer."

In the specific case of the Coburg city administration, three factors were added to this circumstance, which promoted the exploitation of the local government's creative power in favor of an administrative implementation of "national community ideals" even beyond the existing regulations. First, the Coburg city administration, due to the city's status as the former residence of an autonomous

719 See Hermann Vollmuth to the Mayor of Coburg, August 27, 1946. StadtACo personnel file Hermann Vollmuth. Submitted by the main office.

720 *Völkischer Beobachter*, January 30, 1936.

721 See also: Gotto: Kommunalpolitik, p. 140 f.; Kershaw: Hitler, p. 663.

Duchy in the tradition of authoritarian yet independent administrative action. Secondly, as already explained, the desire to be a pioneer and to pursue the most exemplary and progressive policies possible had been firmly ingrained in the city's *identity* for decades since the days of Ernst II. Thirdly, the success of the National Socialists in Coburg had rekindled this trait of the Coburg mentality and could be taken up and exploited by the NSDAP. This ultimately gave rise to the idea of Coburg as a National Socialist pioneer, which, as the "first National Socialist city in Germany," was subject to a certain obligation. As Franz Schwede put it when he left Coburg: "Always remember Coburg's tradition in the history of the NSDAP. (...) Germany, Coburg now and forever!"[722] Similarly, responsibility for the city's continued success and reputation was now linked to administrative action, with municipal employees being called upon to "pull together undaunted if the name of Coburg, which has a good reputation in the new state, is to be preserved."[723] This very obligation also created an overarching pattern of meaning and orientation for the administration, into which its own administrative actions and area of responsibility could be integrated. Hermann Vollmuth, for example, had chosen as a premise for the city's financial policy that Coburg,
"must also be at the forefront of all German cities in terms of improving its financial management," thereby committing the individual departments to a course of austerity that took on overriding importance.

Out of the ambition to be a model city, the premise of *anticipatory obedience* in Coburg ultimately became a guideline for administrative action, a constitutive element of the city's organizational culture and the Nazi system of rule, and also a catalyst for a certain radicalization. The latter, however, did not mean that the majority of the city administration was inevitably on the path to progressive radicalization, which ultimately gained momentum and led to a competition between different departments to outdo each other. Rather, the constant appeal by the city leadership to live up to the tradition of being a pioneer and the claim to be a model city created an atmosphere and pressure in Coburg's city hall that encouraged individuals to take action, both large and small, to get ahead of the curve. In the case of Coburg, regional egoism and local political ambitions were not motives for betraying the goals of the Reich government. Here, it went hand in hand with National Socialist requirements and expectations. The freedom created by the polycracy inherent in the Nazi system was used flexibly and proactively in Coburg in the interests of the regime to transform Nazi ideology with its radical policy of exclusion into *administrative normality*.

In almost all areas of municipal administration, there were individual municipal employees who endeavored to use their entire scope of action to implement National Socialist objectives and to participate in the design of

722 See *Coburger Zeitung* of July 9, 1934.
723 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, January 8, 1934.
724 Hermann Vollmuth to all municipal departments, July 25, 1935. StadtACo A 6274. Coburg's special significance was repeatedly cited as an argument in letters justifying promotions or instructions. See police officer Gerber to the mayor, April 4, 1942. StadtACo A 8009.
725 Gotto: Local Politics, p. 429.

to work toward an ideal "people's community." The Coburg city administration repeatedly implemented measures even before a clear legal situation had been established, or went beyond the actual legal provisions in its interpretation. In particular, in the case of Jewish expropriation, which was also linked to the issue of enrichment and personal gain, municipal employees devised measures that exceeded the requirements of the Reich government.[726] The underlying conviction, which could be gleaned from the administrative documents, was based on the assumption that errors in the law could be compensated for by National Socialist practice. In the same manner, it became routine for the authorities to use their own administrative experience to suggest measures to higher authorities that would perfect the administrative Nazi persecution apparatus. In the displacement of Coburg's Jewish population from economic life, the party's actionist approach was complemented by corresponding administrative action. The matter-of-factness with which the entire city administration, from former democrats to die-hard Nazi activists, enriched themselves with the belongings left behind by the Jewish population after the deportations can be seen as the culmination of this development.

The city administration also played a major role in the increased intensity of persecution that was repeatedly noticeable in Coburg. Schwede's slogan "Coburg ahead!" was therefore not just a propaganda ploy imposed from outside for the administration, and not only met the party leadership's requirements for the administrative actions of municipal employees, but also corresponded to the motivation of individual actors. The need for recognition, which was woven into the city's *stubbornness*, further reinforced the impact and mobilizing power of the ideal of the "people's community." The call to action inherent in this National Socialist vision reinforced *anticipatory obedience*, as city employees and civil servants wanted to act in accordance with the city's reputation as a pioneer and model National Socialist city. With little personal risk and the prospect of gratification, the individual's commitment to the "Volksgemeinschaft" (people's community), but also the importance of the city of Coburg. Efforts to promote their own city and, at the same time, the Nazi state went hand in hand. The administrative scope for action was filled by a negotiation between maintaining *administrative normality* and the functioning of the administration on the one hand, and unyielding party zeal in administrative practice on the other.

Of course, the scope within which individual employees and the city administration as a whole could act on their own initiative and proactively after 1933 remained limited overall. The extent of actual radicalization emanating from the city during the "Third Reich" was therefore rather small. At the same time, the urge for anticipatory obedience did not affect the entire city administration. Since there was hardly an office that was not entrusted with concrete exclusion measures between 1933 and 1945, individual civil servants also used the leeway available to them to slow down the party zeal of the city leadership and instead rely on the existing legal framework.

726 See Chapter IV3.2.
727 See Chapter IV3.2.3.2.

However, it is difficult to assess whether this was due to inner conviction or the civil servant's desire to uphold the law. Ultimately, both the zealous advocates of Nazi ideology and pioneers, as well as those who wanted to slow down its progress, contributed to the implementation of the exclusion policy and the stabilization of Nazi rule. For example, as head of the main administration, Alfred Sauerteig worked together with the district office head for local politics, Wilhelm Rehlein, to eliminate the flaws in Nazi local politics through his administrative reports, in which he also expressed clearly critical views, thus making a significant contribution to the further development and shaping of the imagined "people's community" in Coburg. At the same time, the existence of men like Alfred Sauerteig in a functional position in the city administration also significantly integrated forces within the population that were critical of the regime into the system of rule, [as] they hoped and trusted in his moderating influence.

3.3.2 Assisting the mayor

When Franz Schwede initially left Coburg in July 1934 to take up his post in Regensburg, all municipal workers, employees, and staff were allowed to interrupt their work and gather at the town hall to say goodbye to the person who had been at the helm of Coburg's administration until then, who had shaped and guided it, and on whom the administration's actions had been based.. [730] Franz Schwede was associated with Coburg's successes like no other. He personally played a major role in mobilizing the population and the administration. *Preemptive obedience* was always oriented toward the "will of the Führer" as the highest priority and made the principle of *supporting the Führer* a fundamental condition and a formative element of the Nazi state. Ultimately, however, this phenomenon was not limited to Hitler, but could also be observed among subordinate leaders such as Gauleiters or mayors.[731] The question therefore arises as to what extent *working with* or *against the Führer*[732] found its counterpart at the administrative level in Coburg, so that ideological zeal implemented in administrative action also had a personnel component here.

In fact, as already explained, the mayor's office in Coburg had a special profile. The status as "Germany's first National Socialist city" was inextricably linked to the figure of Franz Schwede, his unverified role as Germany's first Nazi mayor, and the development of his leadership persona. The newly established and restructured city administration was deliberately organized by Schwede accordingly.

728 See, for example, the case of police officer Albin Weschenfelder in Chapter IV3.2.1.4.

729 See Gotto: Kommunalpolitik, p. 146 f.

730 See Dr. Schmidt to all municipal departments, July 12, 1934. StadtACo A 6274.

731 See Reichardt; Seibel: Radikalität und Stabilität, p. 10 f. Bernhard Gotto was the first to attempt to apply the pattern of *action of working against the mayor* to the lowest levels of administration in his study on the Augsburg city administration. See Gotto: Kommunalpolitik, p. 139–147.

732 The term "working against the Führer" originally comes from Werner Willikens, State Secretary of the Prussian Ministry of Agriculture. Ian Kershaw took it up and based his biography of Hitler on it, focusing on the relationship between Hitler and the German people and their unconditional loyalty to the "Führer." See Kershaw: Hitler, p. 666 f. Due to the slightly misleading meaning of "working against," the term "working for" will be used here as a synonym.

his entourage, which now found itself in positions of power, had tied its personal advancement closely to Schwede's rise. In addition, the "old fighters" and unemployed SA men, whom Schwede had often employed as workers at the lower end of the municipal administrative hierarchy, were indebted to him for the foundation of the local government. Personal loyalties, often linked to ideals of front-line comradeship, and the established party networks therefore contributed to the development of this mechanism of action. In addition, the personal connection between the mayor's office and the district leadership office further strengthened the willingness to work with the city leadership in the spirit of personal commitment to the implementation of National Socialist goals. Schwede's portrayal and staging of himself as an exemplary leader, characterized by an unshakeable will, "people's community" activism, and selfless readiness to fight, was intended from the outset to inspire emulation.

The entire administration in Coburg was also sworn in, initially in spirit and then legally under the German Civil Service Act of January 1937, to Hitler's work. Even more than in many other places, however, this obligation was linked to the person of the mayor as the local representative of the "Führer." Franz Schwede and his struggle for Coburg were declared the benchmark for action in the Vestestadt. This special, person-centered form of anticipatory obedience, *working to please the mayor*, was based on the desire to live up to Schwede's legacy through one's own actions. On the other hand, Schwede served as a role model in that his success was based on the fact that he had repeatedly crossed existing boundaries and regulations in his political actions in order to advance the objectives of the NSDAP.

Even after Schwede left Coburg, the commitment to him and his work was kept alive. His successors, who were regarded to varying degrees as his deputies, and also a number of administrative offices repeatedly committed themselves to making Schwede's example the guiding principle of their work and to emulating his ideal. Under Mayor Schmidt, the Coburg city administration also worked proactively and with a high degree of initiative to implement National Socialist ideals in concrete administrative action. However, Schmidt's officials did this less to counteract him as a leader figure. Schmidt's problems in enforcing the "Führer principle" were also due to the fact that his subordinates did not always find guidance in his directives, but rather tried to interpret Schwede's will according to the motto "Coburg ahead!" Schwede's axioms remained the touchstone for the correctness of actions. To swear allegiance to the austerity measures imposed on the city administration by Dr. Schmidt and Hermann Vollmuth, the city treasurer declared to the municipal departments: "The words of the former mayor, now Gauleiter and Oberpräsident, from March 13, 1934, still apply in full today: 'The ambition to obtain as much funding as possible from the city budget for one's own department is a thing of the past and was a typical sign of the liberal system. Those who serve the interests of the city best are those who set their sights on not only making do with the available resources, but also on making savings."[733] The clearest symptom of this was also the dispute

733 See Hermann Vollmuth to all municipal departments, January 17, 1936. StadtACo A 6274.

within the Coburg NSDAP and city administration about which ruling clique could best interpret and continue Schwede's will and legacy. The resulting split among Schwede's close confidants can ultimately be understood as a specific interpretation of *the mayor's opposition.* In the dispute over Schwede's legacy, aspects of personal power and the acceptance of advantages were ultimately not to be neglected. It was not until Mayor Greim took office that a certain dissolution of the strong and exclusive focus on Franz Schwede could be observed.

Nevertheless, the constant reference to Schwede and his work represented, on the one hand, a special line of continuity within the municipal administration and, on the other hand, despite its inherent potential for conflict, formed a stabilizing element for the regime by unleashing and mobilizing motivation even in competitive struggles.

N o t least, the initiatives taken by individuals and also by the Coburg city administration as a whole with regard to the policies of inclusion and exclusion inherent in the ideal of the "people's community"as a whole with regard to the policies of inclusion and exclusion inherent in the ideal of the "people's community" clearly illustrated the fact that local administrations in the Nazi state were not purely externally controlled executive bodies that were simultaneously crushed by the overwhelming Nazi polycracy.[734] The thesis that the municipalities were "the place, vehicle, and driving force of the persecution of the Jews"[735] applies particularly to Coburg. In Coburg, efforts were made to use and expand the scope for local action and to optimize Reich-wide jurisprudence based on practical experience at the lowest administrative level, as will be shown in the following with a number of examples of staging, differentiation, and persecution.

734 See Matzerath: National Socialism and Local Self-Government.

735 Gruner, Wolf: Nazi persecution of Jews and local authorities. On the mutual dynamization of central and local politics 1933–1941. In: VfZ 48 (2000), pp. 75–126, here p. 123.

IV Life World

1 Staging

1.1 Image politics: The German city of Coburg

Urban image and cultural policy played a prominent role in consolidating Nazi rule.[1] Image politics[2] in the form of municipal public relations work served not only to raise the city's profile externally, but also to integrate and involve the population in the Nazi state under the aspect of Nazi society as *a dictatorship of consent*[3] . In order for the city of Coburg to present itself in line with this dual claim, it was therefore necessary to establish *stories* of prestigeand *places of remembrance*, as well as to integrate monarchist ideals and confessional and bourgeois identities, since although the city's profile could be reconstructed under National Socialism, it had to build on existing ideas in order to develop effectively. It was particularly important to overcome the contradiction between the mentality of a monarchist royal seat and its role as a pioneer in the enforcement of a Nazi system of rule that excluded the idea of socially exclusive groups. The question is therefore which discourses, symbols, cultural and performative practices were used to conceive Coburg as a social space, and to what extent Franz Schwede and his party comrades incorporated existing concepts, semantics and forms of presentation and gave them new meaning. To this end, it is necessary to reveal not only the attributions with which Coburg presented itself as a tourist and conference city, among other things.

1 See also: Szöllösi-Janze: Munich.

2 For a definition of image politics in the context of the 20th century, see Saldern, Adelheid von: Symbolic Urban Politics – Urban Politics of Symbols. Representations in Three Political Systems. In: ibid. (ed.): Staged Pride. City Representation in Three German Societies (1935–1975 (= Contributions to City History and Urbanization Research, Volume 2). Stuttgart 2005, pp. 29–80. Image politics – as an anachronistic term – does not yet refer to a project implemented in a targeted manner in urban planning, as was characteristic of municipal politics from the 1960s onwards. See Stremmel, Ralf: Urban Self-Presentation since the Turn of the Century. In: Archive for Municipal Sciences 33/2 (1994), pp. 234–264, here p. 257. Due to its reciprocal nature, however, the concept of image can describe much more than the concept of propaganda as social practice. Cf. Münkel, Daniela; Seegers, Lu (eds.): Introduction. Media and Image Politics in the
20th Century. In: ibid. (eds.): Media and Image Politics in the 20th Century. Germany, Europe, USA. Frankfurt a. M. 2008, pp. 9–24, here p. 12.

3 Bajohr, Frank: The Dictatorship of Consent. Fundamentals of National Socialist Rule in Hamburg. In: Research Center for Contemporary History in Hamburg (ed.): Hamburg in the Third Reich. Göttingen 2005, pp. 69–121.
pp. 69–121.

4 Cf. Melville, Gert; Vorländer, Hans (eds.): Geltungsgeschichten. Über die Stabilisierung und Legitimierung institutioneller Ordnungen. Cologne et al. 2002 and Münkler, Herfried: Politische Mythen und nationale Identität. Vorüberlegungen zu einer Theorie politischer Mythen. In: Frindte, Wolfgang; Pätzolt, Harald (eds.): Myths of the Germans. German sensitivities between stories and history. Wiesbaden 1994, pp. 21–27.

staged, but also their inscription in the public sphere and their performative design in the form of festivals and celebrations.

1.1.1 Profiling: Symbol and Space Politics

1.1.1.1 The management of image

In the competition between cities during National Socialism, which vied not only for prestige throughout the Reich but also for the favor of the "Führer," it was the task of local politics to develop their own urban image and profile in order to gain political and economic advantages. The aim was to show the city in a particularly favorable light and make it appear attractive both externally and internally. The cultural capital gained from this was to generate measurable economic gains and increase the volume of municipal power despite the centralization of the political power apparatus in Berlin.[5] In addition to serving as a point of orientation, the staging of the city also offered its residents a powerful sense of identity and meaning. As a symbol of power, the city's image served to strengthen the local Nazi power apparatus internally. The image and its recipients constantly influenced each other, which contributed to the somewhat fluid nature of the city's self-image. The image of the city shaped the perception of its audience through its appropriation, but the audience also influenced the design of the actively constructed image of the city through its actions. At the same time, the appropriation of urban space was largely determined by the constructed city profile.

Coburg's public image

The National Socialist city administration under Franz Schwede was well aware of the importance of professional and centrally controlled public relations work.[6]Although the city already had a municipal tourist office and an official travel agency, in July 1934, at Schwede's suggestion, the city council decided to establish a press and tourism office to expand the municipal press office set up in June 1926 and headed by Alfred Sauerteig.[7] The aim of the newly created institution was to promote a positive image of the city. In 1930, the number of overnight stays by visitors to Coburg had declined compared to the previous year, not least due to the general economic crisis, while the overall results for tourism in Bavaria had not fallen behind those of previous years, causing alarm in Coburg's business community. The Coburg Chamber of Industry and Commerce therefore initiated a phase of intensified tourism promotion, which it coordinated with the municipal tourist office, the hotel owners' association, the retailers' association, the tourism association, and the Reich Association of Textile Retailers.

5 See Saldern: Stadtpolitik, p. 30.

6 Fundamental insights into National Socialist image cultivation in Coburg have already been provided by: Ha-bel, Hubertus: Im Zeichen von Veste & "Mohr" (Under the Sign of Veste & "Mohr"). Municipal symbols and historical culture using the example of Coburg. URL: http://archiv.ub.uni-marburg.de/diss/z2009/0160, pp. 95–125 (last accessed 16 April 2019) and Boseckert: NS-Baupolitik.

7 See memo dated September 8, 1934. StadtACo A 6330; minutes of the city council meeting of June 11, 1926. StadtACo A 8693. See also: Boseckert: NS-Baupolitik, pp. 129–134.

Franz Schwede now also explicitly took on responsibility for tourism and public relations.

The institutionalization and professionalization of the city's image policy in 1934 underscored the importance attached to it in consolidating power. This was also because the Press and Tourism Office was now allocated its own budget in the city's finances for the first time.[9]Louis Walter, an art historian born in Coburg in 1891, was entrusted with the substantive management of the office as a clerk after studying painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich and art history at the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich. Following his employment at the art collections of the Veste Coburg, he initially worked as an honorary senior employee of the tourist office for the city of Coburg, where he took on the organization and management of several important municipal celebrations, thus becoming Schwede's confidant in cultural matters. Under the guidance of Robert Lang, senior teacher and district office manager of the National Socialist Teachers' League, City Councilor Walter appointed him as administrator of the newly created office in August 1934.[10] In shaping Coburg's public image, he was assisted by, among others, the graphic designer Franz Höch, who was born in Linden near Hanover in 1900 and had studied at the School of Applied Arts in Nuremberg.[11] Dr. Walter Heins, born in Zwickau in 1894, also played a decisive role in the public relations work of the Vestestadt in his various functions. Heins studied history at the University of Munich from 1913 to 1918, subsequently became a member of the Historical Commission of the Bavarian Academy of Sciences, and, after completing his preparatory service and working at the Secret State Archives in Munich, was appointed archivist at the State Archives Department in Coburg in 1924. In 1925, he took on the additional role of city archivist, was given the title and rank of state archivist in September 1925, and became a permanent employee in March 1926. When the independent Coburg State Archives were established on October 1, 1939, Walter was promoted to chief state archivist, making him head of the Bavarian State Archives, the Coburg State Archives, and the State Library. After he was also appointed

On July 1, 1933, he was appointed to the board of *the Coburg Heritage Association*, founded in 1920, and took over the leadership of the League for German Culture and the editorship of Coburger Heimat, the local history supplement of the *Coburg National Newspaper*. He held a number of key positions in cultural affairs in the urban area. Although Heins did not officially join the NSDAP until 1937, he had already placed himself entirely at the service of the party.

8 See Chamber of Industry and Commerce and Chamber of Crafts to the Coburg City Council, February 29, 1931, and minutes of the meeting of the Transport Office, the Chamber of Industry and Commerce, and other organizations and associations, March 30, 1931. StadtACo A 5503.

9 See minutes of the city council meeting of November 9, 1934. StadtACo A 6330.

10 Before the restructuring in the public sector, there was a proposal to hire local historian and writer Emil Herold to support Walter for a monthly fee of RM 100. However, Mayor Dr. Schmidt rejected this proposal on the grounds that Herold was still not a party member. See file notes from May 17 and 23, 1934. StadtACo A 6330.

11 See Boseckert: NS-Baupolitik, p. 131 f., 140.

12 See Haslauer, Johannes: From the Saxe-Coburg House and State Archives to the Coburg State Archives (1939). The integration of a new region into the Bavarian archive administration. In: Archivalische Zeitschrift 96 (2019), pp. 277–294, here pp. 283–286 and Walter Heins denazification file. StACo Denazification Chamber Coburg City H130.

After Louis Walter, following Franz Schwede, had already moved to the Pomeranian provincial administration in Stettin in January 1935, the press and transport office was restructured or divided up because the coexistence of the various offices had ultimately developed into dualism, which also promoted administrative confusion.[13] Erich Probst, who had a doctorate in art history, took over public relations as head of the municipal press office, while the municipal transport office, under transport director Walter Weidmann, was once again exclusively responsible for tourism. [14] Both heads of office had already rendered outstanding services to the Nazi regime. Weidmann, born in Hamburg in 1902, had served as
"Old fighter" He headed the NSDAP's district press office in 1930 and was subsequently appointed director of transportation in 1932. In the future, he would be primarily responsible for organizing the entire range of municipal events. Erich Probst, who was born in Coburg in 1907, had been earmarked for political education in the SA in 1933 and, after studying history, art history, and literary history in Munich, Berlin, and Würzburg and obtaining his doctorate, had worked as a research assistant at the Veste art collections and as an editor at *the Coburger Tageblatt newspaper*.[16]Although he himself was not a party member and therefore did not meet the existing requirements for the profile of applicants, Mayor Dr. Schmidt considered him suitable and took him into the service of the city.[17]His main task was to continue promoting Coburg's image after he was instructed to publish articles about Coburg in newspapers such as the *Völkischer Beobachter*. In accordance with the "Führer principle" in the administration, both were directly subordinate to the mayor and always dependent on his approval. They coordinated their work closely with each other at municipal events. Weidmann and Probst worked closely with party offices such as the NS-Kulturgemeinde (National Socialist Cultural Community) or the NSKK (National Socialist German League of Youth) and took over the organization and public relations work for their events.[18]

The remit of the press and tourism office and the press and tourism offices now included, in particular, dealing with an expanding media landscape. In conveying the city's image as part of its profiling efforts, the media played an important role as a transmission belt between image politics and its audience, conveying and constructing the city's profile and thus playing a decisive role in the appropriation of social processes.[19] The daily newspapers had to be instrumentalized primarily for everyday image and propaganda work, to have an impact on the Coburg population itself and to include them internally. At the same time, national newspapers had to be supplied with manuscripts and advertising material about Coburg. [20] Special editions on

13 See memo from Louis Walter, undated, StadtACo A 8081.
14 See memo dated July 5, 1935, and employment contract dated July 30, 1935. StadtACo A 8081.
15 See certificate of good conduct issued by the Fleck Company Coburg, June 6, 1935. StadtACo A 8081.
16 See Erich Probst's curriculum vitae, March 4, 1938. StadtACo A 8081.
17 See memo from the municipal administration dated June 5, 1935. StadtACo A 8081 and memo from the municipal administration, July 4, 1935. StadtACo A 6329. Dr. Probst joined the NSDAP on May 1, 1937. See Erich Probst's curriculum vitae, March 4, 1938. StadtACo A 8081.
18 See memo dated May 17, 1934. StadtACo A 6330; Activity report of the head of the municipal press office from August 1, 1935, to February 1, 1936. StadtACo A 8081.
19 See Münkel; Seegers: Introduction, p. 10.
20 See activity report by the head of the municipal press office from August 1, 1935, to February 1, 1936. StadtACo A 8081.

Special occasions and celebrations or commemorative publications provided an effective medium for conveying the myths associated with an anniversary in a lasting and impressive way. As a sustainable, important new medium, radio, which, like daily newspapers, conveyed its messages directly into the private sphere of its recipients and was able to establish a connection between the micro level of the city and the macro level of the imagined "people's community," also had to be used for public relations work. By providing inexpensive radio sets such as the Volksempfänger or the Deutscher Kleinempfänger, the Nazi regime attempted to enable the widespread distribution of radio as a medium in Nazi society.[21] In 1933 alone, several radio broadcasts took place from Coburg on May 30, in September, and on October 23 and 30, allowing the city to present itself to the outside world. Newsreels and documentaries were also filmed in Coburg, resulting in the broadcast of a report on the labor service in Coburg in 1932, a feature on the Sweden Year and the Casimir celebrations in 1933, and the 75th anniversary of the German Gymnastics Association in 1935, among others.

In addition, numerous publications followed from the NSDAP and city administration officials. In the course of promoting Coburg's National Socialist image, an extensive body of literature was published. This began in the 1932 election campaign year, when Werner Faber propagandistically presented the work of the Nazi city council in Coburg for the Reichstag election campaign *in Coburg under the swastika*. Louis Walter then staged the work of the NSDAP in the illustrated book *Coburg in the First Year of the Third Reich*, published in 1933. One of Erich Probst's first official acts was to compile a propaganda-oriented presentation of the history of the Coburg Labor Service for external consumption, which he wrote for the Reich Labor Service leadership. In 1937, a special supplement to the magazine *Das Bayernland* was published about the city and fortress of Coburg, in which essays by the mayor and district leader Dr. Otto Schmidt, Dr. Erich Probst, and Dr. Walter Heins, among others, were published. The highlight of Erich Probst and Franz Höch's public relations work was ultimately the volume on Coburg in the series *Städte der Bayerischen Ostmark* (Cities of the *Bavarian Ostmark*). A chronicle of Coburg, which Probst continued to work on, was not completed until he left municipal service at the end of 1938.[22] In his autobiographical work *Kampf um Coburg* (The Battle for Coburg), published in 1939, Franz Schwede immortalized himself and his National Socialist development work in Coburg and reinforced the National Socialist narrative of Coburg's history in the 20th century.[24] As these publications were intended not only as promotional material for the city in the rest of the empire and for tourists, but also for the citizens of Coburg, they served as a broad-based self-promotion campaign.[25]

21 See Cebulla, Florian: Rundfunk und ländliche Gesellschaft 1924–1945 (= Kritische Studien zur Geschichtswissenschaft, Volume 164), Göttingen 2004, p. 210.

22 See Activity report of the head of the municipal press office from August 1, 1935, to February 1, 1936. StadtACo A 8081.

23 See chapter V1.2.

24 Schwede himself stated during his denazification proceedings that he had not written the work himself.

25 See *Bayerische Ostmark*, June 10, 1938.

1.1.1.2 The National Socialist image of Coburg

Several attributes formed the core of the image of the former royal seat conveyed by various media, which were mutually dependent and complementary. Similar to Munich, which was able to promote itself as the "capital of the movement" and the "capital of German art," an image of Coburg was now being created that focused essentially on two attributes. As a "German city," as Coburg henceforth called itself in all publications,[26] Coburg presented itself as a model National Socialist city that, on the one hand, embodied the archetype of a tranquil center characterized by authenticity and artistic sensibility and, on the other hand, as

"Germany's first National Socialist city," inextricably linked to the success of the Nazi movement.[27] In May 1934, for example, the *Coburger Nationalzeitung* announced:

> "Coburg has been mentioned time and again in the German press of all shades due to the struggle for the Third Reich and is cited in the new Reich as a prime example of a National Socialist city administration. No wonder that the millions of German compatriots who have now declared their complete allegiance to the Third Reich feel the desire and need to see this nucleus of the Third Reich, which is also blessed with infinite natural beauty, and to absorb the spirit of this city that now inspires them all."[28]

Coburg as an original rural town

In its application as an attractive tourist and convention city, Coburg explicitly presented itself as the counterpart to the negatively connoted big city. Criticism of large cities, which emerged in the course of urbanization and industrialization in the 19th century, took on a nationalistic and anti-Semitic tone immediately after the First World War and was then usurped by Nazi ideology. According to Nazi thinking, life in urban centers was characterized by uprooting, massification, and dehumanization.[29] At the same time, urbanity was always associated with degeneration.[30] Meanwhile, Coburg emphasized its originality and stylized itself as a "craftsmen's and trading town blessed with natural beauty."[31] In the description of Coburg in the series *Städte der Bayerischen Ostmark* Cities of the Bavarian Eastern March, Mayor Wilhelm Rehlein praised, for example:

"(...) nestled amid the lush greenery of rich parks and tranquil gardens, cheerful fields and forests, it adds to the patina of its ancient history the charm of special

26 See, for example, the 1934 address book of the city of Coburg, p. VII, and the 1937 address book of the city of Coburg, p. IX.

27 See a similar mythologization as a German city in the case of Nuremberg: Seiderer, Georg: Nuremberg – the "City of the Reich Party Rallies." Self-staging of a major city in the "Third Reich" (1933–1939). In: Mayrhofer, Fritz; Oppl, Ferdinand: City and National Socialism (= Contributions to the History of Central European Cities, Volume XXI). Linz 2008, pp. 311–340.

28 *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, May 30, 1934.

29 See Schaarschmidt, Thomas: "Into the lion's den." The ambivalent relationship of the Nazi leadership to the metropolis of Berlin. In: Thießen, Malte; Süß, Winfried (eds.): Cities in National Socialism. Urban spaces and social orders (= Contributions to the history of National Socialism, Volume 33). Göttingen 2017, pp. 21–45, here p. 25.

30 Cf. Krämer, Steffen: Degeneration and Urbanity. Metaphors of Disease and Decay as Criticism of the Metropolis in the 19th and 20th Centuries. In: Forum Stadt. Quarterly Journal for Urban History, Urban Sociology, Monument Preservation, and Urban Development 39 (2012), pp. 225–254, here pp. 245–250.

31 See Probst, Erich: Coburg. The Life of a City. In: Stadt und Veste Coburg. Supplement to "Das Bayernland" 5 (1937), pp. 141–143, here p. 142.

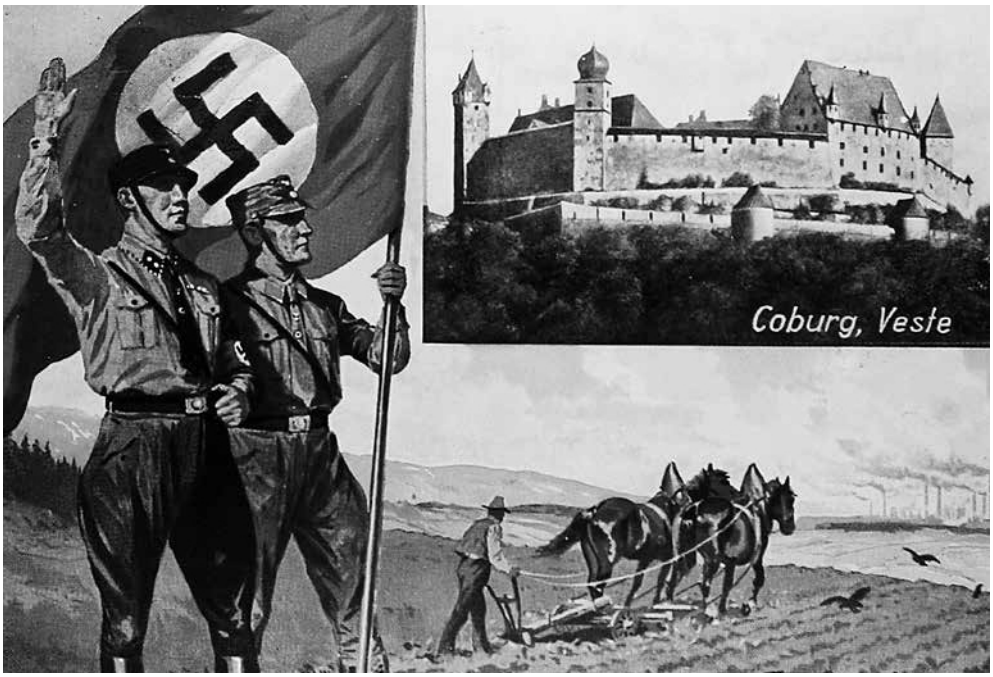


Fig. 26: Propaganda postcard from the NSDAP showing an SA and SS man, a farmer, and the Veste Coburg

landscape beauty."[32] Erich Probst confirmed: "Only a few chimneys, which you actually have to search for, cast narrow shadows over the hidden roofs of small industrial plants. Coburg is and remains a green residential city."[33] In the *Bayernland* edition on the city and Veste Coburg, Ernst Probst also described originality as the defining feature of the "city soul" and its inhabitants, emphasizing that

"just as the landscape determines the character of the city, it also determines the inner laws of its inhabitants, their purpose in life and their existence." Those responsible for public relations repeatedly emphasized how the entire cityscape is permeated by greenery and how, from the Veste as the Franconian crown, the city sinks into the "green sea of its gardens" and seems to lie in a large garden.[35]In his portrait of Coburg, Erich Probst described in a lyrical homage from the perspective of a first-person narrator an urban idyll that was filled not only with naturalness, but also with beauty and artistic sensibility, radiating peace, order, and tranquility. As a garden city, Coburg seemed to reconcile town and country in an ideal way, as Theodor Fritsch had envisaged in the course of the völkisch variant of the garden city movement.

32 City of Coburg (ed.): Cities of the Bavarian Ostmark: Coburg. Bayreuth 1938, p. 5.
33 Ibid., p. 10.
34 Probst: Coburg, p. 141 f.
35 City of Coburg (ed.): Cities of the Bavarian Ostmark: Coburg. Bayreuth 1938, p. 14, 18.
36 The nationalist publicist Theodor Fritsch, co-founder of the DVSTB, had reinterpreted the garden city concept, which had also been popularized by the British Ebenezer Howard, in a nationalist way. See: Fritsch, Theodor: Die Stadt der Zukunft (The City of the Future). Leipzig 1896.

The accompanying images showed landscapes and, alongside the ducal buildings, traditional half-timbered houses. [37] In the radio broadcast, Coburg spoke, in the words of Louis Walter, "to the German national community, proclaiming its culture and folklore." [38]The focus of the presentation was on the "growing together of town and country into a national community," and in order to emphasize the folk character of the former royal seat, the rural population of the Coburg area was deliberately highlighted, for example, when the Gruber Heimatbund presented a spinning room with old songs and dances in the spirit of agrarian romanticism.[39]Various letters and expressions of appreciation that reached the city after the transfer provided insight into the success of the campaign. [0]In addition, in his illustrated book about *Coburg in the first year of the Third Reich*, Louis Walter selected scenes from the visit of State Secretary Georg Luber and the President of the Upper Franconian District Farmers' Chamber Schuberth, to whom the rural population in Meeder presented "a piece of their healthy, inherited nature in play and dance."[41]Walter also documented the authenticity of the Coburg region with photos of farmers and allotment gardeners in traditional clothing and showing off their harvest carts on "National Harvest Day" on October 1. In addition to the farmers of the Coburg region, Walter also showed several pictures of workers from various guilds in traditional costumes at the May Day celebrations. The city's ducal past was immortalized in the illustrated book with pictures of the celebrations of the Johann Casimir Year and photographs of Carl Eduard and Tsar Ferdinand at Nazi events, thus showcasing their integration into the "people's community." In their portrait of Coburg, Erich Probst and graphic artist Franz Höch also contrasted the imposing ducal buildings with close-ups of a Coburg master craftsman, a bratwurst griller, and everyday life at the weekly market.[42]By combining a depiction of the ducal heritage with scenes of popular culture, they succeeded in integrating the aristocratic character of the former royal seat into the new image of a National Socialist "people's community" and continuing to exploit the city's aristocratic character for tourism. Erich Probst summed it up as follows:

> "Since that time [the arrival of National Socialism in Coburg, ed.], new life has been pulsing through the city. Alongside the old, the new is emerging and forming a harmonious whole that testifies to the vitality of a constantly aspiring city whose scenic charms and historical heritage attract tens of thousands of visitors every yearto enjoy the peaceful beauty of its existence, providing them with relaxation and joy, enriching them with many experiences of the soul and the heart, and making them reluctant to leave again."[43]

37 See, for example, Walter: Coburg; Probst: Coburg; City of Coburg (ed.): Cities of the Bavarian Ostmark: Coburg. Bayreuth 1938 and Schwede: Kampf.
38 Walter: Coburg, p. 5.
39 See ibid. and *Coburger Zeitung* of May 31, 1933.
40 See minutes of the meeting on the Duke Johann Casimir Year on June 23, 1933. StadtA Co A 6526.
41 See Walter: Coburg, p. 6.
42 See City of Coburg (ed.): Cities of the Bavarian Ostmark: Coburg. Bayreuth 1938, pp. 26–35.
43 Probst: Coburg, p. 143.

At the same time, the ducal heritage, with its imposing buildings, art treasures, and theatrical tradition, made it possible to market Coburg as a city of art and culture, where Jean Paul and Friedrich Rückert, among others, had worked.[44] In addition to the Veste as a tourist destination, the Coburg State Theater was the artistic and social center of the city and its surroundings. [45] This image policy was not only aimed at the rest of Bavaria, but also specifically at Thuringia, where Coburg was portrayed as "the most beautiful of the cities in the Thuringian region." [46] The reporting of all outstanding events in Coburg was therefore also very well received in neighboring southern Thuringia, and special trains from Erfurt with connections from Gotha, Weimar, or Eisenach brought Thuringians to the Veste city time and again.

In promoting Coburg as a "green country town"[48] and highlighting its rich art treasures and the artistic and cultural sensibilities of its inhabitants, Walter and Probst continued a tradition that had already served to shape Coburg into a "Pensionopolis" before the First World War. What was new, however, was that Coburg's originality and history were used to derive its special role in National Socialism and its status as a pioneer, thereby reinterpreting the historical development of the city in a National Socialist light. The second significant attribution that was effectively conveyed to the outside world as part of Coburg's image policy was therefore that of National Socialist pioneer and National Socialist model city. The interpretation of Coburg's history that was developed in the process also had a strong internal focus. Due to the historical development of the city of Coburg, it offered a particularly dense space for identification, since supraregional constructions of belonging were initially subordinate to local ones, particularly due to its role as a former royal seat. Neither the new Bavarian identity nor identification with the democratic Weimar system had provided the people of Coburg with sufficient points of reference for a satisfactory self-identification in the negotiation processes after the First World War and the revolution of 1918/19. Only the growing nationalism had provided a concept with sufficient integrative power beyond a backward-looking mindset and aspirations that clung to the past. However, successful long-term inclusion in the Nazi system of rule and the idealized "people's community" required the construction of an identity in which a specific Coburg mentality also had its place. The aim was to link national self-interpretation with local self-interpretation, or rather to assign the city of Coburg a role in the new National Socialist interpretation of history.

44 Erich Probst and Franz Höch in particular attempted to capitalize on this for tourism. The Coburg portrait in the magazine *Bayernland* also includes articles on Rückert's work in Coburg and the art treasures of the Veste. See Langbein, Heinrich: Rückert in Coburg. In: Stadt und Veste Coburg. Supplement to Das Bayernland 5 (1937), p. 144, and Brüschwiler, August: Die Veste Coburg mit ihren Kunstschätzen. In: Stadt und Veste Coburg. Supplement to Das Bayernland 5 (1937), pp. 149–154.

45 See Prodöhl, Heinz: Das Coburger Landestheater. In: Stadt und Veste Coburg. Supplement to "Das Bayernland" 5 (1937), p. 155 f. and City of Coburg (ed.): Städte der Bayerischen Ostmark: Coburg. Bayreuth 1938, p. 50.

46 *Thüringer Allgemeine Zeitung* newspaper, July 18, 1933.

47 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, May 30, 1934.

48 Probst: Coburg, p. 141.

National Socialist interpretation of history

In the National Socialist interpretation of Coburg's history, the aspirations of Ernst II and the formation of a nation were now fulfilled by Adolf Hitler, thereby continuing the city's grand narrative in a straightforward manner after years of uncertain identities. In this process, the city of Coburg and its citizens were given the role of pioneers, which seemed to be inscribed in the very nature of the Coburgers and was interpreted as part of the city's own identity. In his foreword to the volume on Coburg in the series Städte der Bayerischen Ostmark (Cities of the Bavarian Eastern March), Mayor Rehlein noted: "With this commitment to a new and great era, however, the city was merely following its nature and remaining true to its tradition, for even in the past it had always been open to the trends that shaped the times."[49] A brochure on the history of the city of Coburg for the soldiers stationed there, written by Wilhelm Herber, captain and company commander in Infantry Regiment No. 42 in 1935, stated: "Just as in the years before 1870, the efforts to unify the German states had found a special home in Coburg, it was now Coburg again whose citizens immediately took up the ideas of national and ethnic renewal and passionately championed them. Coburg rose to become a center of the struggle for the Third Reich."[50]*Coburg*'s pioneering status now became a *National Socialist myth*, which, with the NSDAP's increasing interpretive authority, was incorporated into the image of the city's historical significance and was able to restore Coburg's importance after its decline to a medium-sized Bavarian town. [51]The National Socialists continued Coburg's history as follows: The city where Luther stayed and preached, the city where national unification was promoted under Ernst II and where Friedrich Rückert and Jean Paul worked, was ultimately also the city where Hitler, beginning with the "German Day" in 1922, opened the "first chapter of the new German history." [52] This narrative was ultimately so successful because it meant that the grand national narrative did not have to compete with local forces of resistance, but rather that the two could harmonize with each other. In the course of the development of this *Coburg myth*, the history of the Nazi movement became closely linked to the city. Its image was thus reembedded in the tradition of its own history, and National Socialism became interwoven with the city's identity.[53]

49 City of Coburg (ed.): Cities of the Bavarian Eastern March: Coburg. Bayreuth 1938, p. 5.

50 Herber, Wilhelm: Coburg. Brief description of the history of the city of Coburg for the soldiers stationed there. Leipzig 1935, p. 14.

51 The *myth of Coburg* fulfilled the classic criteria of a political myth, which served as an intellectual frame of reference and had the effect of reducing complexity. Cf. Bizeul, Yves: Theories of Political Myths and Rituals. In: ibid. (ed.): Political Myths and Rituals in Germany, France, and Poland (= Ordo Politicus. Publications of the Arnold Bergstraesser Institute 34). Berlin 2000, pp. 15–39 and Hein-Kirchner, Heidi: Reflections on a Typology of Political Myths from a Historiographical Perspective – An Attempt. In: ibid.; Hahn, Hans Henning (ed.): Political Myths in the 19th and 20th Centuries in Central and Eastern Europe (= Conferences on East Central European Research, Volume 24). Marburg 2006, pp. 407–424.

52 See NSDAP leaflet on the National Socialist rally in Franconia and Thuringia on May 8 and 9 May 1929. BA NS 26/2266. See also: Manuscript by Heins, Walter: Coburg's significance for national unification, 1935. StACo estate of Walter Heins.

53 See Coburg's staging of the 75th anniversary of the German Gymnastics Association in June 1935. A banner was hung on the Spitaltor gate with the slogan: "Coburg has begun the work. Coburg will also complete it."



Fig. 27: Hospital gate with banner for the 75th anniversary celebration of the German Gymnastics Association in 1935

Inconsistencies, such as the international character of Coburg's history and the ducal house's connections to many countries around the world, were brought into line with German nationalism by explaining that external influences were only accepted "if they corresponded to German sensibilities, but were strictly rejected if they did not conform to German feelings and German customs."[54] In retrospect, the upheaval of 1918/19 could also be interpreted as an alien event and the work of "outsiders" rather than the actual people of Coburg:

> "Revolution? What is that, actually?" many people asked themselves. One day, they found out. A disorderly crowd marched through the streets of the city. The color red was the dominant color. The people looked haggard, wearing tattered clothes or deliberately worn-out uniforms. The destination of this demonstration of anarchism, which certainly had an air of ridiculousness about it, was the Schlossplatz, where, after shouting proclamations of the ducal abdication and the now dawning roaring

54 City of Coburg (ed.): Cities of the Bavarian Ostmark: Coburg. Bayreuth 1938, p. 20.

> freedom, a bright red scrap of cloth was hoisted on the tower of the castle. This event was called the Coburg Revolution! It was bloodless and harmless. And the bearers of this revolution? It was a persecuted poor people who only aspired to bourgeois mediocrity and nourished their belief in paradise on earth from this ideal. Of course, there were Jews among them, and lots and lots of riffraff, who no one knew where they had suddenly come from. The city's population—craftsmen and civil servants, employees, pensioners, and businesspeople—kept their distance and took no part in the glorious beginnings of the representatives of the republic. A subdued, strange mood hung over the city and the countryside like a nightmare."[55]

As the supposed archetype of a German city, Coburg first had to be liberated from "red rule" in order to realize its potential. This teleological interpretation of history allowed the introduction of democratic forms in the Weimar system in the former royal seat to be dismissed as a mere interlude alien to its nature, which had to be overcome by a National Socialist Coburg.

The "Third German Day" and Hitler's appearance in Coburg played a special role in this context, which developed into a kind of founding myth. Based on the significance that Hitler attached to the city through his visit and, above all, through his detailed description of it in *Mein Kampf*, the
"German Day" provided the ideal basis for the narrative of the National Socialist leader. Schwede wrote about this in *Kampf um Coburg* (Battle for Coburg): "But how much more so must they [the two days in October 1922, author's note] have been a fateful turning point for Coburg itself! How much more so in a city from which the historical call for German power and strength, for German unity and freedom, had already resounded more than once, must this signal of freedom from the Führer have been heard and understood?!" To describe Hitler's appearance in Coburg, Schwede quoted word for word from the relevant pages *of Mein Kampf*, thus repeating the common interpretation of events, which was always based on Hitler's catchphrases such as "breaking the red terror" and produced a homogeneous reading.[58] Other contemporary writings that sought to highlight Coburg's role in the Nazi movement, as well as chronicles of local groups, always based their narratives on the year 1922 and "German Day."[59] At the same time, the staging of the city was directly reflected in the everyday life of Coburg's population, for example when Coburg schoolchildren were required to reproduce the history and significance of Coburg in school essays according to prescribed interpretative structures and established patterns. [60]

The fact that the NSDAP party leadership and Hitler himself repeatedly praised the city of Coburg for its services was tantamount to a kind of sacred consecration, confirming and reinforcing the narrative that had developed. Hitler's statement on October 19, 1935, at Coburg City Hall during a meeting of the NSKK: "The name Coburg is more than the

55 Ibid., p. 104.
56 See Hartmann, Christian et al. (eds.): Hitler. Mein Kampf. Eine kritische Edition, vol. 2. Munich 2016, pp. 1382–1397.
57 Schwede: Kampf, p. 43.
58 See Schwede: Kampf, pp. 39–43.
59 See Faber: Coburg; Walter: Coburg and Chronicle of the Neuses Local Group. StadtACo 05.04.03.
60 See Annual Report of the German Building School Coburg 1937/38, p. 22. Archive of the Gymnasium Alexand-rinum Coburg.

Name of any other German city. It is associated with an epoch-making event in the early days of the National Socialist movement. At that time, this city was not even Bavarian, although it was always Greater German in spirit and at heart."[61] A photo of the "Führer" at the corresponding festive meeting accordingly graced the prelude to Probst's portrait of Coburg. Hitler's statement on the celebration of the 15th anniversary of "German Day" was also used confidently in advertising for Coburg. "I made politics with Coburg. Thus, the struggle for this city became a milestone in the development of our movement. Following this recipe, we cleared the way for the National Socialist idea throughout the Reich and thus conquered Germany." [62] was confidently used to promote Coburg. [63] Images of Hitler in the Vestestadt or of Coburg representatives with the "Führer" proudly adorned the city's promotional material. [64]

In addition to the "German Day" of 1922, the achievement of an absolute majority in the city council in June 1929 and the hoisting of the swastika banner in January 1931 were also developed into *places* [of remembrance] in the sense of symbolic representation as points of reference for collective memory and sentiment. These could be used as arguments for the outstanding role of the Vestestadt. Wilhelm Rehlein wrote in his introduction to Probst's portrait of Coburg: "Far beyond the borders of our homeland, the name Coburg has become a household name, closely associated with the emergence of the Third Reich. Beginning with Adolf Hitler's historic train journey to Coburg in 1922, continuing to January 18, 1931, when the swastika flag flew in front of a town hall for the first time in Germany, and continuing to the present day, Coburg has always marched alongside the Führer at the forefront of the movement."[66]

Various unique selling points and figureheads that highlighted the city's pioneering status and repeatedly reinforced it in a performative manner were staged in a way that attracted public attention. The claim to have been the first city runs like a red thread through the process of shaping the city's profile. In addition to being the first city with a National Socialist city council majority and an official building marked with the swastika in the spirit of the "Third Reich," Schwede falsely declared himself to be the first Nazi official in the mayor's office. Similarly, the NSDAP also celebrated the *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, founded in 1930, as Germany's first National Socialist daily newspaper, and Coburg boasted of being the first city to award Adolf Hitler honorary citizenship in 1932. The Coburg Labor Service and the Coburg Labor Service Camp in Wüstenahorn were stylized as the founders of the later Reich Labor Service, for which Schwede and Rehlein were the first in the Reich to receive the golden badge of honor from the Fördererverband (Supporters' Association).[67] The 1936 and 1937

61 City of Coburg (ed.): Cities of the Bavarian Ostmark: Coburg. Bayreuth 1938, p. 7.

62 *Bayerische Ostmark*, October 18, 1937.

63 In some cases, the phrase "I made history with Coburg" was also used. See City of Coburg (ed.): Cities of the Bavarian Ostmark: Coburg. Bayreuth 1938, p. 109.

64 See, for example, City of Coburg: Coburg, pp. 62, 107, and Coburg Municipal Tourist Office (ed.): Coburg. Bavarian Ostmark, North Bavarian Regional Transport Association with Bavarian Ostmark. Coburg 1936.

65 On the concept of *lieux de mémoire*, see Nora, Pierre: Between History and Memory (= Kleine Kulturwissenschaftliche Bibliothek, Volume 16). Berlin 1990 and Siebeck, Cornelia: Places of Memory, Lieux de Mémoire. In: Docupedia Contemporary History. URL: http://docupedia.de/zg/Siebeck_erinnerungsorte_v1_de_2017 (last accessed 30 January 2023).

66 City of Coburg (ed.): Cities of the Bavarian Ostmark: Coburg. Bayreuth 1938, p. 5.

67 See Schwede: Kampf, pp. 213–228 and City of Coburg: Coburg, p. 109. For information on the Coburg labor service, see Chapter IV2.1.2.1.

The subsequent redevelopment of the dilapidated Gräfsblock, which the city administration had built in the Heimatschutz style as a representative and residential building as a job creation measure, was marketed as Bavaria's first old town renovation in the spirit of a new "urban hygiene."[68] The city also praised the Hitler Youth Home on Rosenauer Straße, built in 1937, as the first in the Gau Bayerische Ostmark.[69] Other model projects, such as the construction of housing estates or the Hausen power plant, followed suit. Erich Probst summed it up in his 1938 portrait of Coburg: "'Coburg ahead!' That is the battle cry from the 'Kampfzeit' (time of struggle) that is still alive today. When the Reich came to power, the city of Coburg was ahead of many other cities. It was therefore able to achieve a great deal in a short period of time since 1933, relative to its size."

1.1.1.3 The cult practice in Coburg in symbols, rituals, and interior design

The appointment of Adolf Hitler as an honorary citizen of Coburg shortly after he received German citizenship was one of the first measures that translated the image of Nazi Coburg into concrete political action in the course of the pioneering legend. The certificate of honor presented to Hitler in this context, designed by Louis Walter and signed by mayors Schwede, Faber, and Rehlein, immortalized the image of the "German city of Coburg," which had made a name for itself as a National Socialist pioneer. The text of the certificate read:

> "In Adolf Hitler, the leader of the National Socialist German Workers' Party, the German city of Coburg honors the German people, who are destined to save the German nation from bondage, shame, and misery and lead it to freedom, honor, and new greatness. (...) If the city of Coburg is the first among all German cities to grant Adolf Hitler honorary citizenship today, this is intended as a sign of the gratitude that Coburg owes, above all other German cities, to its liberator from the red plague, and as a reaffirmation of their particularly close relationship of loyalty. For Coburg was the first German city in which Adolf Hitler completely broke the red terror in the fall of 1922, thus laying the foundation for a bulwark on which the swastika flag now flies victoriously. And since those days, the name of our city has been inextricably linked with the victorious advance of the National Socialist German Freedom Movement. Therefore, the German city of Coburg now proudly claims the right, even on the threshold of the Third Reich, to be the first among all German cities to grant its honorary citizenship to its leader, Adolf Hitler."[72]

At the same time, when creating *memorial sites* on the document, the events that, due to their early occurrence, constituted Coburg's outstanding unique selling points as a National Socialist pioneer were depicted on honorary plaques on two SA standards. The following were mentioned here: "October 14, 1922 Hitler's entry

68 See City of Coburg: Coburg, p. 117 and *Bayerische Ostmark* of October 12, 1936, and July 31, 1937. On the redesign of the Gräfsblock, see Boseckert: NS-Baupolitik, pp. 53–70.

69 See City of Coburg: Coburg, p. 118.

70 City of Coburg: Coburg, p. 109.

71 See Chapter III2.3.1.

72 Postcard of Adolf Hitler's honorary citizenship certificate. Initiative Stadtmuseum Coburg e. V., Herold photo and postcard collection. The text of the entire certificate is printed in: Habel, Hubertus: Hitler-Kult. In: Initiative Stadtmuseum Coburg e. V. (ed.): Voraus zur Unzeit. Coburg und der Aufstieg des Nationalsozialismus in Deutschland. Coburg 2004, pp. 91–98, here p. 96.

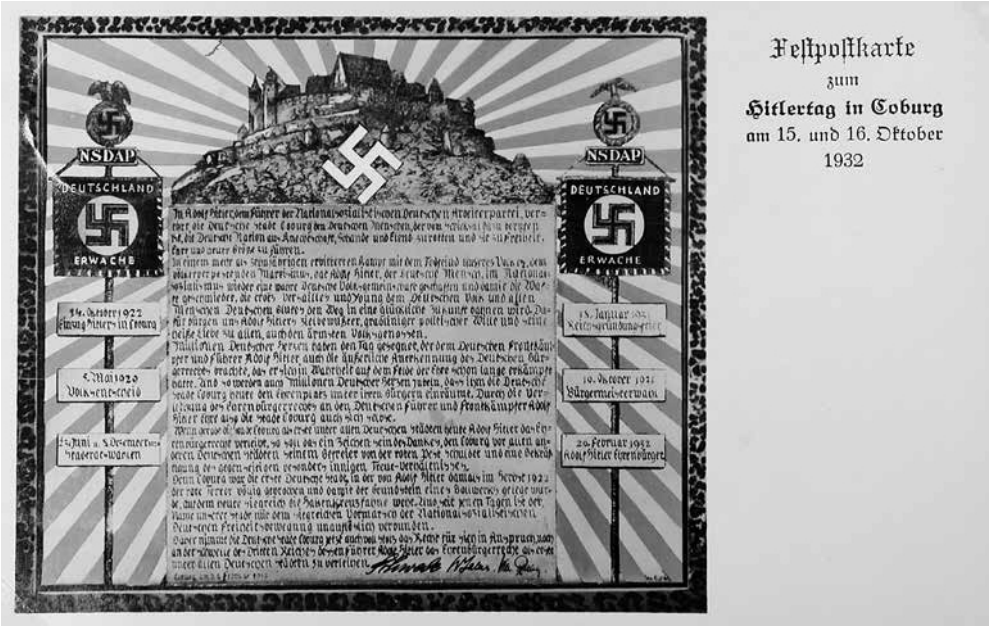


Fig. 28: Field postcard for Hitler Day 1932 with Hitler's honorary citizenship certificate

in Coburg," "May 5, 1929 referendum," "June 23 and December 8, 1929 city council elections ," "January 18, 1931 celebration of the founding of the Reich," "October 16, 1931 mayoral election," February 26, 1932 Adolf Hitler Honorary Citizen. [73]Coburg's image found its clearest visual representation in Hitler's honorary citizenship certificate, which was ceremoniously awarded to him in October 1932 on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the "German Day," and the city's services to the Nazi movement were symbolically recorded. By publicly displaying the certificate before it was presented and distributing it as a postcard, the certificate could also be distributed to the masses, effectively inscribing it in the local memory and using it as promotional material. Also on the tenth anniversary of "German Day," Louis Walter designed the "Coburg Medal of Honor" for the "old fighters" who had taken part in the "March to Coburg." Its design was modified by Hitler himself, and it soon ranked alongside the "Blood Order" and the "Golden Party Badge" as one of the highest party honors. In addition to the Veste Coburg and the lettering "Mit Hitler in Coburg, 1922–1932" (With Hitler in Coburg, 1922–1932), framed by a large swastika, the central element of the badge was an SA sword. The role of Coburg and the SA in the rise of the NSDAP was thus symbolically fused, and the myth surrounding "German Day" was enshrined in a political symbol.

73 See Figure 28. The original document was financed by Schwede's discretionary fund and by the National Socialist city council faction. See Mayor Schwede's memo dated October 14, 1932. StadtACo A 6494.

74 See also: Habel, Hubertus: Order for brute force: The Coburg Medal of Honor. In: Initiative Stadtmuseum Coburg e. V. (ed.): Ahead of its time. Coburg and the rise of National Socialism in Germany. Coburg 2004, p. 31 f.



Fig. 29: The Coburg Medal of Honor

The design of the honorary citizenship certificate and the "Coburg Medal of Honor" by Louis Walter marked the beginning of an extensive and multi-layered symbolic policy. This, together with media coverage, characterized the attributions that were intended to stylize Coburg as a National Socialist city in the urban space. Through street renaming, the rededication of central locations, and the creation of new symbols of recognition, the consolidation of *places of remembrance* was pursued, which were intended to make the significance of Coburg for the Nazi movement permanently visually tangible and iconically condensed.

The inscription of the Coburg myth in urban space

The first step was to immortalize the memory of "German Day" in urban space. On May 8, 1933, following a request by the NSDAP city council faction, the place where Hitler's "triumphal march" began in Coburg in 1922 was dedicated to the "Führer" by a unanimous city council decision, and Bahnhofstraße was renamed Adolf-Hitler-Straße.[76] In addition to the symbolic politics expressed in this way, this also fulfilled a wish that had been expressed repeatedly by the population. After the National Socialist "seizure of power," the Coburg city council had received numerous letters proposing the renaming of a street in honor of Hitler. Both the residents of Löwenstraße and Eigenheimstraße had collected signature lists of all
"German-minded residents"[77] and the residents of Eigenheimstraße

75 Karl Fiehler had already highlighted street renaming and the awarding of honorary titles and honorary citizenship as means of promoting National Socialist culture. See Fiehler: Kommunalpolitik, p. 36 f.

76 See minutes of the city council meetings of May 8 and 12, 1933. StadtACo A 8074.

77 NSDAP Coburg-West local group to the Coburg City Council, April 22, 1933. StadtACo A 15849.

They emphasized their request by raising a swastika flag together on the Eigenheimplatz. [78] The residents of Kanonenweg published their request to the city council in the *Coburger Nationalzeitung*.[79] The reason given repeatedly was the desire, born of Coburg's efforts to improve its image, that Coburg should live up to its place at the top of German cities.[80] Adolf-Hitler-Straße, which was finally created in 1933, was therefore maintained with particular care in the following years so that it would be "worthy of the name it bears." [81] The sidewalks were widened and new trees were planted as part of extensive renovation work that was part of a complete redesign of the street as
"Coburg's calling card," but which was not implemented in its entirety. The city administration planned the appearance of the street in detail in line with National Socialist aesthetics and, for example, selected trees to frame the street that grew "upwardly" in accordance with Nazi ideology. On the occasion of the 15th anniversary of "German Day" in 1937, a request from a Coburg SA standard and an expert opinion by Walter Heins also led to the renaming of *Mohrenstraße* to *Straße der SA (SA Street)* and the square in front of the Grafft block to *Platz der Alten Garde (Old Guard Square*).[83] The urban space was recoded in line with the *myth of Coburg*.

The Adolf Hitler House, inaugurated on the anniversary of German Day in 1934, was not only a party headquarters and administrative building. In particular, the hall of honor on the ground floor, where the historic banners were kept, was built in the style of a memorial hall as a monument to the success of the National Socialist tradition in Coburg.[84] In addition, it served as stone evidence of National Socialist creativity in Coburg for external representation, so that images of the house were often distributed as postcards and advertising material for the city. Schwede himself described the party headquarters as "the proud and defiant stronghold (...) of the Nazi movement in Coburg, steadfast over the decades and centuries, giving strength to the National Socialist fighters in the struggle for Germany and the future of the nation."[85] The party headquarters joined the ducal buildings and testimonies to the folksy German and idyllic garden city as a landmark and symbol.[86] Based on the "Brown House" in Munich, Franz Schwede had a Nazi cult site built in Coburg's "Adolf Hitler House," which emphatically

78 See ibid. and the residents of Eigenheimstraße to the Coburg City Council, April 20, 1933. StadtACo A 15849.

79 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, April 5, 1933.

80 A request to the city council read: "Our Coburg should always reign supreme. And—I would like to live on 'Adolf-Hitler-Allee'!" "Our beloved Coburg, crowned by the magnificent fortress, known as Hitler's city in the best sense, should always be in first place! Mr. Schwede, you will see that you can fulfill my request, won't you? We want to honor you for this, thank you and all the fathers of the city who understand Nazi wishes." (Emphasis in the original) Else Schraeter to Mayor Schwede, March 15, 1933. StadtACo A 15849.

81 Transcript of the councilors' deliberations on February 21, 1941. StadtACo A 8074 a.

82 See ibid. On the redesign of Adolf-Hitler-Straße, see Boseckert: NS-Baupolitik, pp. 103–106.

83 See SA Standard 95 to the mayor of the city of Coburg, September 20, 1937. Expert opinion by Walter Heins dated September 27, 1937. StadtACo A 15849 and transcript of the councilors' deliberations on October 6, 1937. StadtACo A 12245.

84 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, February 24 and March 22, 1934, *Bayerische Ostmark*, October 17 1934.

85 Ibid.

86 See City of Coburg: Coburg, p. 114 f.

referred to the city's already established importance in the new "Third Reich" which, from the perspective of 1934, still had room for expansion.

As part of Coburg's new public image, Walter Heins and Louis Walter also took particular issue with Coburg's coat of arms, which had featured the "Coburg Moor" since the Middle Ages. Presenting a "foreigner" as a figurehead did not fit in with the image of the model National Socialist city. In 1934, they therefore submitted a request to Mayor Schwede, in which they stated "Multiple inquiries from Coburg citizens and visitors who became familiar with the situation in Coburg during their visit have prompted the undersigned to submit a suggestion to the city council to remove the Moor's head from the city coat of arms after the beginning of the 'Third Reich'."[88] Ultimately, after a design competition with 30 entries from local and non-local artists, a design by Franz Höch was chosen, which was approved by the city council in April 1934 and then by the State Ministry.[89] Franz Schwede explained, with regard to the city's public relations work, that "the Moor's head coat of arms had been the subject of all kinds of jokes. Coburg citizens who were seen outside the Reich wearing the city coat of arms as a badge were repeatedly asked about the unnatural origin of this coat of arms. The coat of arms had therefore not served to enhance the reputation of the city of Coburg or to serve the city of Coburg." [90] Schwede also explained that the new coat of arms would "symbolically draw a line under the old era and mark a new era dedicated to the struggle for the new Germany, for the Third Reich, for Adolf Hitler's Reich, in which Coburg was at the forefront."[91] The new coat of arms, which featured a sword reminiscent of the SA's honorary dagger and a swastika curved into a sun wheel in the pommel, colored in the city's black and gold colors, made a direct reference to the SA and thus to "German Day." The visual representation of the city, both internally and externally, was thus iconized by National Socialism. In connection with the change of coat of arms, Walter Heins had explained the historical and now also symbolic connection between the city of Coburg and the symbol of the SA in his understanding: "The short sword reminiscent of the SA's honorary dagger, the sword that fought for the Third Reich in the battle against all the dark forces. And this sword with the stylized swastika in the pommel was forged here in Coburg!"[92]

In addition, the two central sites associated with Hitler's stay in Coburg in 1922, the shooting range where Hitler's hundred-strong unit had taken up quarters and the Hofbräu restaurants where Hitler had given his speech, were symbolically marked in remembrance of "German Day." The aim was to create pilgrimage sites and memorials to the NSDAP in Coburg that would "go down in history as turning points in the fate of Germany."[93] About Hitler

For his 50th birthday, he was therefore given the Schützenhaus as a gift, which

87 See *Bayerische Ostmark*, October 17, 1934, and Boseckert: NS-Baupolitik, pp. 15–33.
88 Walter Heins and Louis Walter to the Coburg City Council, February 6, 1934. StadtA CO A 1385.
89 See minutes of the city council meeting of April 13, 1934.
90 *Bayerische Ostmark*, April 14, 1934.
91 Ibid.
92 Heins, Walter: The Coburg City Coat of Arms in its Historical Development. In: Coburger Heimat 8 (1934).
93 Minutes of the council meeting on April 12, 1939. StadtACo A 8074 a.

It had already been elaborately decorated for the anniversary celebrations of "German Day," adorned with a banner and a life-size picture of Hitler. At a Führer conference in Berlin on April 19, 1939, Mayor Greim ceremoniously presented the Coburg gift in the form of a gift certificate bound in pigskin, which also contained a drawing of the Schützenhaus. In addition, the "Führer" was presented with the most important original documents from October 15, 1922, consisting of police reports and government and ministerial resolutions, which were considered to be historical documents of particular value. [94] At the festive meeting on the occasion of the "Führer's birthday," Mayor August Greim emphasized his intention to donate the building after reading the following passage from *Mein Kampf* about Coburg:

> "When one considers that this work will become the book of the German people as it progresses, that future generations will learn from it that the struggle for the preservation of the people is the most essential task of every individual, and that the eyes of the world will one day be directed not only to Nuremberg and Munich but also to Coburg, I saw it as my duty to ensure that October 15, 1922, would not pass without being commemorated, not only in the book Mein Kampf, but also by establishing a real memorial in Coburg as a reminder for future generations."[95]

Plans to establish a "Führer memorial" in the Schützenhaus were ultimately not implemented.[96]On the 20th anniversary of "German Day" in 1942, the city also installed a commemorative plaque at the Hofbräu restaurants with the inscription "Adolf Hitler forced his march through Coburg from this gate on October 14, 1922." Public space was thus transformed and shaped by the *myth of Coburg* and its dissemination, with National Socialist cartography defining new power relations and principles of inclusion and exclusion.

The symbolic glorification of Franz Schwede

Franz Schwede and his achievements, which were an integral part of *the Coburg myth* thanks to his election success in 1929 and National Socialist local politics in Coburg, were also elevated to a topos through comprehensive symbolic politics and incorporated into the urban space. In September 1933, Schwede's successful reconstruction policy was commemorated for the first time, and a new town hall bell was donated in his honor by the local community on the initiative of building officer Fischer.[97] The so-called Franz Schwede Bell was adorned with an inscription written by Louis Walter: "I call upon Adolf Hitler, my name is Franz Schwede Bell! 1933." Dean Weiß of Coburg consecrated it in a high-profile ceremony on the market square in a religious ceremony analogous to church bells. [98] Already here, the local Schwede

94 See overview of the documents presented to Hitler. StadtACo A 6494.
95 Minutes of the ceremonial meeting of the councilors on April 18, 1939. StadtACo A 8074 a. See also *Bayrische Ostmark* of April 20, 1939.
96 See *Bayerische Ostmark* of April 20, 1939.
97 The old town hall bell had been melted down during a metal collection campaign during the First World War. See Schwede: Kampf, p. 243.
98 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung newspaper* dated September 11, 1933. For more information on the Franz Schwede bell, see also: Habel: Symbole, pp. 110–112.



Fig. 30: Consecration of the town hall bell on September 10, 1933, on the market square, bell with honor guard on the speaker's platform in front of the town hall

For the first time, cult was ritually linked to the secular "holy" veneration of Hitler, and the transcendence-oriented act underscored the impact of Nazi ideology. Although Reich Minister of the Interior Wilhelm Frick had called on cities in 1934, in an instruction to the German Municipal Council, to refrain from naming streets after living persons for reasons of "modest restraint, which every party member and especially every subordinate leader should observe in public, following the example of the Führer" [99], the city named the *ring road* after him on the occasion of his
50th birthday. A delegation of "old fighters" from Coburg traveled to Schwede in Stettin for the ceremonial presentation of the certificate. In addition, a marble plaque in honor of Schwede was to be installed in the town hall and his name immortalized in the bay window of the new town hall building.[102] By requesting the name change to Schwede-Coburg when Schwede left Coburg and awarding him honorary citizenship on the 10th anniversary of the events of 1929, the Coburg City Council made the "extraordinary historical connection" [103] between the city and its hero permanently visible and reinforced it performatively.[104]

99 Excerpt from the German Municipal Council's news service No. 14 dated May 1, 1934. StadtACo A 15849.
100 Formal meeting of councilors and deputy mayors on March 1, 1938. StadtACo A 12247.
101 See *Pommersche Zeitung*, March 5, 1938.
102 See minutes of the councilors' meeting on June 16, 1939, StadtACo A 8074 a. On the planned new town hall building, see: Boseckert: NS-Baupolitik, pp. 80–90.
103 Minutes of the extraordinary confidential city council meeting on July 7, 1934; minutes of the councilors' meeting on June 16, 1939, StadtACo A 8074 a. On the name change, see: Albrecht: Avant-garde, p. 192.
104 See minutes of the councilors' deliberations on June 16, 1939, StadtACo A 8074 a.

Street renaming

Street renaming was an effective political tool for Coburg's image policy, and not only in relation to the commemoration of "German Day" and the homage to Schwe-des. As early as 1935, the symbolic effect of street names was exploited and, following the sudden death of Gauleiter Hans Schemm, Steinweg was renamed Hans-Schemm-Straße.[105] In March 1936, to honor deceased "old fighters" with whom Coburg, as the self-proclaimed stronghold of National Socialism, took particular pride, the councilors decided to rename a number of streets, including those named after "blood witnesses of the movement." In doing so, the city deliberately contributed to the cult of martyrs and heroes of National Socialism, created corresponding pilgrimage sites in Coburg through ritual practices, and commemorated the founders of the Coburg NSDAP local group. Named after one of the most successful Jewish Coburgers of the early

The street named after Jakob Freiherr von Mayer, a 20th-century commercial councillor, was renamed after Otto Schmidt, who had recently passed away and had served as Coburg's district leader from 1929 to 1933. Karl-Türk-Straße was renamed Hermann-Behringer-Straße in memory of the founder of the Coburg SA. Neue Heimat [106]was renamed Von-Batzko-Straße. This was done in honor of the

February 5, 1935, special commissioner and SA leader Fritz von Baczko. Friedrich-Rückert-Straße was also renamed Horst-Wessel-Straße, after the Berlin SA leader who, after his assassination by KPD members in 1930, had become a martyr of the movement and whose name was used in the NSDAP party anthem. At the same time, a "blood witness" from Coburg was commemorated by renaming Röstenweg as Adolf-Höh-Straße. Alfred Höh, an electrical engineer born in Coburg, had helped found the Coburg local group of the NSDAP and was murdered by a shot to the head while serving in the SA or SS in Dortmund.[107] In August 1936, the road connecting Lauterer Straße and the new barracks was also named Ewald-Eckardt-Straße after the co-founder of the Coburg SA, who was stabbed to death as an assistant sergeant of the state police during a search in Waldsachsen near Rödental. [108]

In line with the city coat of arms, the city also sought to change the names of Judengasse, Judentor, and Judenberg. At the latest, a circular decree issued by the Reich Minister of the Interior on July 27, 1938, which stipulated that streets named after "first-degree Jewish Mischlinge" (half-breeds) were to be renamed, triggered a corresponding discussion in the city administration.[109] Although the circular did not explicitly target streets that contained the word "Jew" in their names and were thus linked to historical events involving the expulsion of Jews and "were therefore always considered undesirable by the Jews themselves"[110] , as stated in a circular from the German Municipal Council and a note from the

105 See minutes of the meeting of the Administrative and Police Senate on March 10, 1935. StadtACo A 15849.
106 See Chapter IV2.1.1.2.
107 See Thieme: Märtyrerkult, p. 498 f.
108 See minutes of the consultation with the building advisory boards of August 20, 1936. StadtACo A 15849 and The Lord Mayor to the Coburg Army Garrison Administration, September 2, 1936. StadtACo A 15849.
109 See Circular from the Reich Minister of the Interior dated July 27, 1938. StadtACo A 15855.
110 Circular from the intelligence service of the German Association of Municipalities dated October 11, 1938. Stadt ACo A 15855.

Reich Minister of the Interior specified.[111] Nevertheless, the administrative advisory boards, among whom Councilman Kuhn submitted the motion for renaming, were of the opinion that the corresponding names were no longer acceptable for Coburg. [112] As early as March 1933, the city council had received a motion from the residents of Judengasse to rename Judengasse Adolf-Hitler-Straße.[113] In 1938, a resident of Judenberg also wrote to Mayor Rehlein, saying that the name would brand the neighborhood around the hill as "sleazy and offensive" and that "people would be ashamed to put their full return address on letters."[114] Another asked the mayor to change Judengasse to Hermann-Göring-Straße, as he no longer wanted to say the old name.[115]Although district cultural officer Otto Schilling pointed out that Judenberg in particular had no Jewish origins and that the name should therefore be retained, unlike Judengasse, and that the population should be informed about the Germanic cultural and tribal site that could be traced there, all names with Jewish connotations were ultimately replaced. The expert opinion requested by the administrative advisory boards from archivist Walter Heins emphasized that, from a purely historical point of view, Judengasse had long since ceased to be justified.[116] The mayor finally arranged for Judengasse to be renamed Marktgasse, Kleine Judengasse to be renamed Untere Marktgasse, Judentor to be renamed Markttor, Judenbrücke to be renamed Itzbrücke, and Judenberg to be renamed Saarlandstraße.[117] In this context, the *Bavarian Ostmark* asked: "With the decision by the Coburg councilors to finally remove all traces of the Jews' presence in Coburg, a long-held wish of many Coburg residents has been fulfilled (...) There is no longer a Jewish question in Coburg today. Why should we not therefore also erase the last historical traces of their activities?" [118]In addition to the historically inspired names chosen for the city center, the reference to the Saarland alluded to the success of the National Socialists in their fight against the "shame of Versailles" and the "return" of the Saarland in 1935. Historical politics through street renaming was also pursued with the establishment of Scharnhorst Street in 1935 and the renaming of Löwen Street to Ludendorff Street in 1938.

Under the direction of the new mayor Greim, and in accordance with the decree of the Reich Minister of the Interior, Raststraße, which wasnamed after the benefactor and founder of the Freiherr-von-Rast Foundation for destitute apprentices' sons, Ferdinand Martin Freiherr von Rast[120], was renamed Ludwig-Siebert-Straße.

111 See ibid. and note from the Reich Minister of the Interior dated October 29, 1938. StadtACo A 15855.
112 See minutes of the administrative advisory board meeting of August 22, 1938. StadtACo A 15855.
113 See Letter from the residents of Judengasse to the Coburg City Council, March 6, 1933. StadtACo A 7870.
114 Erich H. to Mayor Rehlein, December 8, 1938. StadtACo A 15855.
115 See: A party member to Mayor Rehlein. November 18, 1938. StadtACo A 15855.
116 See expert opinion by Walter Heins dated October 5, 1938, and letter from district office manager Schilling to the mayor dated September 5, 1938. StadtACo A 15855.
117 See minutes of the meeting of the administrative advisory boards dated December 7, 1938. StadtACo A 15855.
118 *Bayerische Ostmark*, December 9, 1938.
119 See minutes of the meeting with the building advisory boards, November 9, 1936; Paul Bockardt to Mayor Coburg, November 14, 1936; minutes of the meeting with the administrative advisory boards on November 23, 1936. StadtACo A 15849. The renaming of Ludendorff Street was also initiated by the population. See Mayor Rehlein to senior teacher Fritz Höhn, December 23, 1937. StadtACo A 15849.
120 Ferdinand Martin Liebmann had taken the name Rast when he was ennobled by Ludwig I. The vocational school in Coburg still bears the name Freiherr-von-Rast-Schule today.

Karl - Coburg ahead #8.indd 360 Nov. 4, 2024, 6:13 p.m.

In this context, district cultural officer Schilling emphasized that the name no longer corresponded to the current image of the city: "Unfortunately, there was a time in our old German city of Coburg when Jews were able to gain prestige, fame, and dignity through foundations and apparent charity."[121]Mayor Greim advocated dedicating the street to Bavarian Prime Minister Siebert.

"to express the many ties between the city of Coburg and the state of Bavaria, as well as the city's gratitude to the Minister President for his consistent and energetic advocacy for local interests."[122] The naming thus followed direct political calculations and illustrated the concrete realpolitik claim associated with the dedication of a street. The fact that Greim asked the Minister President to visit Coburg and stay there in return revealed his hope that this would ultimately result in advantages for the Vestestadt. A preliminary draft of the letter to Siebert explicitly requested that the city continue to receive favorable treatment. [123]A Fritz-Wächtler-Straße planned with the same expectation was no longer realized in Coburg. [124]

Planned Nazi architecture in Coburg

Demands could thus be derived from the practice of honoring the city's image. At the same time, the image also entailed a certain pressure to represent the city to the outside world, which was closely linked to competition between cities under National Socialism. The municipal building authority, headed by Mayor Rehlein, was therefore faced with the task of reinterpreting the urban space, which was still designed in the ducal style, in terms of National Socialist architecture. National Socialist representative buildings, which were juxtaposed with the ducal buildings, counterbalanced them in their spatial effect or towered above them, had to be part of the image cultivation of the

"Germany's first National Socialist city." This aspiration became clear in the redesign of the town hall, which was intended to transform the most central location in the city center, Coburg's market square into a political stage for the National Socialists. As part of the expansion of the savings bank building next to the town hall, architect Reinhard Claaßen designed a building complex that mirrored the appearance of the chancellery building opposite, built by Duke Johann Casimir, and was to occupy the entire south side of the market square. Part of the plans was also to create a new "Coburg bay window" parallel to the bay windows of the ducal chancellery on the town hall on the side facing Rosengasse, depicting key events in the National Socialist movement from 1922 to 1933, reliefs of the "Führer" and Franz Schwede, and the coat of arms of the city.

"Coburg bay window" parallel to the bay windows of the ducal chancellery on the town hall on the Rosengasse side, which was to contain key events of the National Socialist movement from 1922 to 1933, reliefs of the "Führer" and Franz Schwede, and Hitler's aphorisms, such as "On October 14/15, 1922, the Führer and his men broke the

121 District Office Director Schilling to the Mayor, September 5, 1938. StadtACo A 15855.

122 The mayor of the city of Coburg to the representative of the NSDAP, Gauinspektor Dr. Müller, May 4, 1939. StadtACo A 15855.

123 See draft letter from Mayor Greim to Minister President Ludwig Siebert; Mayor Greim to Minister President Ludwig Siebert, June 12, 1939. StadtACo A 15855. See also: Hilgert, Daniel: The Honorary Citizens of the "Capital of the Movement." Munich's practice of honoring citizens from the perspective of gift exchange logic. In: ibid. (ed.): Munich under National Socialism. Image politics of the "capital of the movement" (= Munich under National Socialism. Local government and urban society, vol. 4). Göttingen 2017, pp. 29–47.

124 The mayor of the city of Coburg to the representative of the NSDAP, Gauinspektor Dr. Müller, May 4, 1939. StadtACo A 15855.

125 On the town hall renovation and the following, see Boseckert: NS-Baupolitik, pp. 71–90.

red terror in this city." "I was involved in politics in Coburg. Coburg, October 15, 1937." "The primary purpose of life is work. Those who want to live must fight. Work conquers all." and "Blood and soil are the foundations of the nation. Adolf Hitler."[126] Symbolically, Coburg's history was to be united with the national history, Adolf Hitler and Franz Schwede were to be commemorated with another monument, and the image of Nazi Coburg was to be powerfully carved in stone. The neoclassical facade of the town hall represented the new "Third Reich" and symbolically incorporated its historical significance into the representative overall image of the market square. In line with the aspirations associated with the practice of honoring, the Vestestadt hoped that Coburg would be given its rightful place among the cities specially honored by the "Führer" and that this would result in political and economic advantages. On the 15th anniversary of "German Day," Hitler was therefore presented with a painting of the town hall during a visit to Coburg, alluding to the flag-raising ceremony in 1931. At the same time, Carl Eduard, Gauleiter Wächtler, and Mayor Rehlein presented Hitler with the plans for the town hall renovation, which included the "Führer homage." As a result the "Führer" wanted to be directly involved in further planning and invited Schwede, Rehlein, architect Claaßen, Göring, and Speer to a meeting at the Reich Chancellery in March 1938. However, the outbreak of war made it impossible to realize the project beyond the redesign of the savings bank.

Plans by Reinhard Claaßens and August Greims for a district forum on Coburg's Judenberg, which would have dissolved Coburg's existing spatial planning and reshaped the majority of the urban space into a place of worship designed in the National Socialist style, also failed to materialize. Once again, this clearly reflected the march to Coburg and the associated *myth of Coburg*. A festival hall with a capacity of up to 4,000 spectators for mass events was to form a monument to the "march to Coburg."[128] An adjoining fairground with two victory columns, designed for 20,000 visitors, a youth hostel surrounding it, and a district and police school would have complemented the festival hall on the site to form a district forum. The area was to be bordered by a park on the old town side and accessible via a southern access road connecting to the new Reichsstraße 4 and the old town. Overall, the district forum would have provided a counterpart to the Veste Coburg and contrasted the city's ducal heritage with a National Socialist self-staging. [129]

1.1.1.4 Limits and function of symbolic politics

However, it was not only the Second World War, which made it necessary to pool resources, that marked the limits of such National Socialist megalomania. Questions of financing had always been an inevitable limitation on extravagant staging projects. Particularly in the tense fiscal situation before 1933, Franz Schwede had to defend the costs of his image policy to the outside world. Not only did he constantly reassure and justify himself by pointing out that a celebration was necessary due to the

126 Habel, Hubertus: Rathausneubau. In: Initiative Stadtmuseum Coburg e. V. (ed.): Voraus zur Unzeit. Coburg und der Aufstieg des Nationalsozialismus in Deutschland. Coburg 2004, p. 97 f, here p. 97.
127 See *Bayerische Ostmark*, March 4, 1938.
128 See minutes of the council meeting on June 11, 1942. StadtACo A 8074 a.
129 See Boseckert: NS-Baupolitik, pp. 91–108.

The fact that the finances had to be modest was a clear indication of this. When the elaborately designed honorary citizenship certificate for Hitler was issued, criticism spread, and Schwede had to publicly prove the financing of the certificate plaque. Ultimately, the funds had to come from the party coffers, so that there were still limits to the mixing of party and local politics in the cultural sphere.[130] Even after 1933, however, the limits were clearly drawn in the architectural implementation of the National Socialist image of the Vestestadt, where the new National Socialist identity no longer wanted to tie itself exclusively to the city's ducal past and existing knowledge structures, but instead attempted to supplant them with National Socialist meaning. This was hardly more impressive than the attempts to remove the ducal statues of Prince Consort Albert and Ernst I, as well as the roundabout around the Ernst monument, in order to create parade grounds on the market square and castle square. The Albert monument on the market square, which symbolically occupied the entire square due to its central location, was a disruptive element in any National Socialist staging. In a redesign of the square, it was therefore to be removed and banished to the edge of the castle square. The monument had also become the subject of debate because the *Stürmer* had falsely claimed that Albert was of Jewish descent, so that the matter ultimately had to be clarified by the Reich Office for Genealogical Research in an expert opinion.[131] However, resistance to the planned renovation measures quickly arose, particularly among long-established citizens of the city who wanted to preserve their traditions. The plans to remove the roundabout on Schlossplatz, which were to be made accessible to the Coburg population in the course of a public exhibition and had even received Carl Eduard's approval, were met with similar restraint and rejection.[132] The 1935 renaming of Steinweg, which was reminiscent of the medieval settlement of the city and was part of urban custom, to Hans-Schemm-Straße had already caused dissent and showed that many businesses had not made the switch to the new name.[133] Incidentally, due to the high degree of habitualization, the population of Coburg continued to adhere to common usage even in the case of other renamings, so that the National Socialist neologisms and the old customs coexisted. [134]

The image that was created for Coburg in terms of image politics and used for brand advertising ultimately fulfilled the Nazi-ruled city's

130 See memo from Mayor Schwede dated October 14, 1932. StadtACo A 6494.

131 See Boseckert: NS-Baupolitik, p. 78.

132 See ibid., pp. 41–43.

133 See minutes of the consultation with the provisional municipal councilors on June 4, 1935. StadtACo A 15849. The city council subsequently had the legal background of renaming a street with historical significance examined and submitted a request to the DGT and the government of Upper and Middle Franconia. See letter from the mayor of Coburg to the government of Upper and Middle Franconia,
June 21, 1935, and German Municipal Council to the mayor of the city of Coburg, June 24, 1935. StadtACo A 15849. Legal advisor Vollmuth also conducted a survey among businesspeople in the former Steinweg to determine the extent to which they had adopted the new name in their everyday business. See Legal Counsel Vollmuth to the Central Administration, July 1, 1933. StadtACo A 15849. Archivist Dr. Heins explicitly opposed the renaming. See Dr. Heins to the Mayor, July 22, 1935. StadtACo A 15849.

134 See Boseckert: NS-Baupolitik, p. 61. The same can be observed with regard to the *Coburg Mohren*, for example. See Habel: Symbole, p. 118 f.

several specific functions.[135] The interpretation conveyed by the city's image created a framework for integration and participation, provided common points of reference for a collective identity, and thus conveyed certain ideas about the past, present, and future. With the help of a strong emotional component, the promise of the National Socialist "people's community" was used to promote not only national advancement, but also the resurgence of the city of Coburg itself, which was once again stylized as a pioneer of an emerging era in German history. According to this diction, after an eleven-year democratic interlude, the city of Coburg was able to once again become an object of identification and rediscover its true essence. In the Nazi interpretation of history, the past and the present were thus merged into a single entity, and the palpable decline of the city after 1918/19 was countered by a glorious interpretation of the present and the future. The argumentative strategy, according to which the citizens of Coburg had drawn their self-legitimation, identification, and dignity primarily from their association with Ernest II, found its ultimate realization in the role of "Germany's first National Socialist city." The strongly pronounced urban identity could thus be integrated into the national identity by giving the city a concrete role in the larger structure of the German nation. Coburg's image as a pioneer, unassailable thanks to the associated myth, provided a catchy identity and a straightforward interpretation of the world. In the complexity of a period of upheaval, this offered points of reference for social self-assurance. By compensating for the costs of social rationalization, the myth created in the process structured reality, provided orientation, and eliminated any possibility of contingency from the course of history. In the course of the new urban grand narrative, alterity was thus able to generate identity.[136] The visual and architectural anchoring of the city's National Socialist profile made it omnipresent in urban space and permeated it with the symbolism of the "Third Reich." The creation of *places of remembrance* had a decisive influence on the discourse of identity and memory and prescribed a straightforward interpretation of history.

This national exaggeration of Coburg's role also allowed the local Nazi movement to claim historical legitimacy by aligning itself with the great successes of Coburg's past and, for example, continuing the traditions of the Herzogs in its building policy. This ideological misuse of history created continuities that contributed to the acceptance of the NSDAP, especially in a society that was still very monarchist in character. At the same time, symbolic politics in particular made it possible to stage a consensus and a power-political status that soon no longer corresponded to the real influence of the Vestestadt. For although Coburg's position in the
"Third Reich" steadily declined and Hitler's attention consisted more of reminiscences than concrete political and economic advantages, the image politics served to consolidate power both externally and internally. Compared to Munich or Nuremberg, the economic capital that grew out of the self-invented honorary title and the city image that was spread around it was extremely low in Coburg's case. Even in terms of tourism, economic gains could not be realized.

135 See Saldern: Stadtpolitik, pp. 11–13.
136 See ibid., p. 31.

fully realized, as the number of overnight stays in the city continued to decline. Hitler himself visited the city for the last time in 1937.

1.1.2 Integration: Festival and celebration culture

1.1.2.1 Adaptation of the traditional culture of celebration

Festivals and celebrations served as focal points for self-expression, providing a locally bound, integrative community experience in which meaningful ceremonies, symbols, rituals, and collective actions coalesced into a cult of remembrance. They provided the ideal setting for performatively creating the vision of a National Socialist "people's community" in everyday life and thereby forming a community of remembrance. Celebrations and rituals made it possible to create opportunities for integrative participation, bring "people's community" norms and values to life, and make the realization of what they promised seem tangible. A culture of festivals and celebrations, in which communal action was staged and made perceptible, could thus simultaneously serve as a means of domination and promote the internal cohesion of the urban community and its identity construction. As staged urban pride, which was the "presentation and creation of a collective self-esteem brought into the public eye" [138], it was a central element of municipal image politics.

With the Nazi takeover of the Coburg city council in 1929, a series of celebrations began, some of which were initiated or exploited by the new city administration. Initially, traditional celebrations were taken up, restructured through the selection and design of selected elements, and exaggerated in a National Socialist manner. With elaborate festive meetings in the city council, for example, an inclusive offering was created for the Coburg public that was intended to recall the glory of old times and tie in with bourgeois celebration culture, but always contained a reference to a glorious National Socialist future. Before 1933, the Coburg NSDAP around Franz Schwede, mostly in collaboration with the Schwarz-Weiß-Rot civic and economic bloc, used the ceremonial meetings in the city council as a stage for staged protests against the existing system and for self-promotion.[139] The glamour and excitement of high-profile celebrations, which filled entire pages of daily newspapers and were accompanied by exuberance, also served to cover up the real political mistakes and abuses of the National Socialist city administration. At the same time, as the regime's rule grew longer, a new culture of festivals and celebrations was established and shaped, along with new forms of self-representation. The attributions as a genuine and original German city and as a National Socialist pioneer also formed the core of National Socialist festival and celebration design, which aimed to politicize history and indoctrinate the population.

137 See Boseckert: NS-Baupolitik, p. 142.

138 See Saldern, Adelheid von: Introduction. In: ibid. (ed.): Staged Pride. City Representation in Three German Societies (1935–1975 (= Contributions to City History and Urbanization Research, Volume 2). Stuttgart 2005, pp. 11–27, here p. 11.

139 See, for example, the memorial service on June 28, 1930, marking the tenth anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Versailles. *Coburger Zeitung*, June 28, 1930.

The 600th anniversary of Coburg's self-government

In June 1931, for example, a 600th anniversary celebration of Coburg's self-government was held, dating back to the transfer of Schweinfurt city rights to Count Berthold VII of Henneberg by Emperor Louis the Bavarian in 1331. Walter Heins derived from this event the symbolic granting of the right to free self-government and its own jurisdiction.[140] In collaboration with Dr. Heins, Louis Walter, and archivist Hans Krausert, Schwede ultimately initiated and constructed an anniversary celebration that offered the opportunity to convey political messages through extensive festivities and references to Coburg's history.[141] Schwede and the NSDAP thus misused the event to attack the existing parliamentary rule and the Weimar system, against which he pitted German cities as "Bastions of the German will to live, (...) rich centers of flourishing German industry and (...) proud strongholds of pure German customs and traditions"[142] . Schwede saw the jurisdiction as currently endangered by dependence on "un-German powers," which was expressed among other things, in the "unprecedented terror against Adolf Hitler's German freedom movement." He wanted to destroy the self-government of the city of Coburg through the "fulfillment madness of the Dawes and Young plans" and have it taken away by the government of Upper Franconia. Arguing that "debt bondage, forced budgets, and tax dictatorship threaten to turn Coburg, like all other once-flourishing German cities, into ruins of decay"[144], Schwede used the anniversary as a political move. The staging of his National Socialist policies, which had resulted in such a deficit budget due to tax breaks that the government of Upper Franconia was to withdraw the city's tax sovereignty, in the form of a seemingly historic holiday, aimed to emotionally involve the people of Coburg in political events. An exhibition compiled by Walter Heins and Louis Walter featuring seals, documents, engravings, and paintings on the history of the city's development was intended to "awaken and strengthen the feeling of home as the strongest factor of the fatherland"[145], according to Nazi city councilor Wilhelm Frühwald at its opening. A festive meeting in the colorfully decorated town hall, at which Schwede recounted the heyday of the city under Johann Casimir and Ernst II as well as its decline in 1918 and received words of praise from the Bavarian Association of Cities, served to legitimize the city's own position. The ritualized passing of a city council resolution, which was publicly announced from the town hall balcony to the sound of fanfare following the ceremonial meeting and rounded off with a concert in the square, ceremonially involved the public in the event. The resolution also opposed, among other things, the "fulfillment policy" of the Weimar system, the compulsory budget that squeezed the citizenry, the ban on uniforms, and consumer associations and department stores, and the city council thus launched a political broadside against the backdrop of a city anniversary.

140 The sources did not indicate any actual legal basis for the transfer of self-government that was thus carried out. See Habel: Symbole, pp. 102–105, and Andrian-Werburg, Klaus v.: Rat und Stadtregiment im spätmittelalterlichen Coburg. In: Jahrbuch der Coburger Landesstiftung 23 (1978), pp. 83–106.

141 See Franz Schwede to the Coburg City Council, May 22, 1931. StadtACo A 6522.

142 Schwede, Franz: Coburg 1331–1931. In: Commemorative publication marking the 600th anniversary of Coburg's self-government. In: Aus der Heimat, June 14, 1931, p. 1.

143 Ibid.

144 Ibid.

145 *Coburger Zeitung*, June 15, 1931.

An appeal to other German cities to live up to their great historical mission, to follow the National Socialist German city of Coburg and to put a stop to current developments, directly referred to the pioneering status of the Vestestadt and the intention to win over one city after another, following Coburg's example, until power was seized throughout the Reich. A slide show by Dr. Heins on the history of the city, followed by the illumination of the fortress and a gala performance of Der Freischütz at the Landestheater, formed the ritual framework, which was aimed in particular at involving the Coburg bourgeoisie, which "should be made particularly aware of the city's cultural heritage and beauty" [146]. The large crowds of Coburg residents who visited the exhibition, which had to be extended as a result, clearly demonstrated the need to confirm the city's pride and self-assurance, which Schwede had anticipated [147].

The Sweden Year 1932

After comprehensively commemorating Coburg's Protestant and folk traditions during Luther Year in 1930, this was seamlessly continued in 1932 during Sweden Year, which was celebrated in many German cities. Immediately following the successful 600th anniversary celebrations in July 1931, Schwede initiated plans for the anniversary of the unsuccessful siege of the Veste. The festival was intended to serve as further proof that German history had been written more than once in Coburg. The main committee of the Coburg Sweden Year, chaired by Mayor Schwede, was headed by Louis Walter and supported by Director Dr. Lenz from the Veste art collections, Director Walleck from the State Theater, Dr. Heins from the State Archives, City Councilor Güntzel from the Oratorio Association, Dean Weiß as the church representative, and merchant Albert Jakob as chairman of the transport committee. In addition, a representative of the Physical Education Association and teacher Weißenborn from the Coburg Singers' Association were also involved. [150] In his welcoming speech at the opening of the Sweden exhibition at the Veste, Deputy Mayor Faber emphasized the National Socialist significance of the festival as follows:

> "Just as 300 years ago, a cry for freedom is once again sweeping through our people. But whereas 300 years ago it was merely a matter of asserting the freedom of the German spirit and conscience from the shackles of outdated and rigid views, today the German people must not only erect a protective wall against the alienation of their own views, but also fight against an external bondage that they have never tolerated in such severity in their two thousand years of history. May our people emerge victorious from this tremendous struggle, just as our defiant fortress of Coburg withstood Wallenstein's assault." [151]

146 Report on the local history exhibition on the occasion of the 600th anniversary of the self-government of the city of Coburg for the Coburg City Council, for the attention of Mayor Schwede, by Dr. Walter Heins, Louis Walter, and Hans Krausert, dated July 8, 1931. StadtACo A 6522.

147 The exhibition was visited by around 6,000 people. Cf. ibid., *Coburger Zeitung*, June 15, 1931; *Coburger Nationalzeitung newspaper* dated June 15, 1931, and *Thüringer Allgemeine Zeitung newspaper* dated September 7, 1932.

148 See Mayor Schwede to the Coburg City Council, July 18, 1931. StadtACo A 6523.

149 See *Coburger Zeitung*, September 5, 1932.

150 See resolution of the Administrative and Police Senate of December 21, 1931, and Louis Walter to Mayor Schwede, May 24, 1932. StadtACo A 6523.

151 *Coburger Zeitung* newspaper, June 20, 1932.

Once again, history was blatantly misused and reinterpreted for the National Socialist cause. The population was successfully involved through a large market festival in the form of a mass twilight gathering with a historical theme. With the participation of gymnastics, sports, singing, and cycling clubs, this event took on a folk character, as did the open-air plays staged by the Landestheater, which featured *Taupadel* by the Coburg poet Hans von Lepel, written especially for the commemorative year and dealing with the defense of the fortress by Colonel Georg Christoph von Taupadel during Wallenstein's siege in 1632.[152] The typical combination of politicized and, at least superficially, non-politicized, convivial elements of the celebration was already clearly evident here. At the opening ceremony of the Swedish exhibition in the congress hall of the fortress on
June 18, 1932, which marked the official start of the celebrations, the ducal family was present alongside the leaders of the Coburg authorities.[153] Particular importance was also attached to bringing together the entire former duchy for the celebrations and fostering a sense of unity, which is why special efforts were made to involve the Sängergau, one of the strongest associations in the Coburg district, which ultimately organized a Gausingen (choir festival) on June 12, 1932. [154]

On September 4, Swedish Sunday commemorated the siege of the fortress and its defense by the Coburg militia and Swedish soldiers during the Thirty Years' War with a large festival program that highlighted the city's popularity and underscored its historic role. Nazi formations naturally joined in the celebrations. After a wake-up call by the city guards, a parade marched through the city, which included flag bearers, the SA band, and a group of maidens, the city guard, the marching band, and the city association for physical exercise in historical costume, and was repeated every hour. This culminated in an even larger parade in appropriate costumes, which began with a horsemanship display on the village green and led to the market square, where it ended with colorful festivities. The grand finale consisted of an open-air play by the state theater, Swedish folk dances, and fireworks with a simulation of the capture of the fortress. The entire city was decked out in richly decorated houses, gardens, and shop windows.The Sweden celebration held on September 25 in the market square was also decorated with colorful flags and featured a speech by Mayor Schwedes, performances by various choirs in the market square, and a Swedish program at the State Theater.[156]Although many Protestant German cities commemorated the Thirty Years' War and the Swedish King Gustav Adolf in 1932, Coburg used the festival primarily to present the city's importance and its role in history to the outside world. Looking back, Mayor Rehlein summed up the event as a successful exercise in image cultivation for the city: "It was a celebration of our homeland that can take its place alongside those of earlier and better times. The good reputation of our beautiful city was once again carried out into the German

152 See ibid.
153 See ibid. The duke's children took part in the market festival from the window of the court pharmacy. See Hans von Schack to Mayor Schwede, July 8, 1932. StadtACo A 6523.
154 See Mayor Schwede to the board of the Coburg singers' association, May 7, 1932. StadtACo A 6523.
155 See program for Sweden Sunday on September 4, 1932. StadtACo A 6523; *Coburger Tageblatt* of September 5, 1932, and *Coburger Zeitung* of September 5, 1932.
156 See *Coburger Zeitung*, September 26, 1932.

Home, thousands of strangers took home with them the satisfaction of having experienced something beautiful and unforgettable in Coburg."[157] The tradition of historicism served here had proven to be tremendously compatible.

However, the Swedish Year was overshadowed by another event that once again put Coburg in the international spotlight. A few days before the opening of the Swedish Year, Carl Eduard's eldest daughter, Sibylla of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, and the Swedish Crown Prince Gustav Adolf announced their engagement. Mayor Faber interpreted this coincidental encounter, which turned the Swedish Year into a double media event, as a sign of the lucky star under which the anniversary was taking place.[158] One of the reasons why the engagement attracted so much interest and enthusiasm in Coburg was that, after the end of the monarchy in the German Empire, the daughter of the Duke of Coburg was once again promised to a heir to the throne and thus, in keeping with the international tradition of the House of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, a member of the dynasty could return to the throne of a reigning royal house. Since Sweden, from a contemporary perspective, as the *Coburger Zeitung* pointed out, was "of Germanic origin and thus kindred to us Germans," the Gustav Adolf commemorative year in Coburg could be highlighted in the spirit of former greatness to celebrate the new dynastic connection with the parliamentary monarchy of Sweden. The celebration was therefore "not only about the past, but also about the present," as "a new bond was added to the old one that has connected Coburg with Sweden for thirty decades."

The Swedish Wedding

The municipal pride that was staged in many ways at the Swedish wedding in Coburg had two decisive catalytic functions for the National Socialist government of the city. On the one hand, Franz Schwede was able to present himself as a statesman throughout the Reich and to an international audience. As acting mayor, he performed the civil wedding ceremony for the couple on October 19 in the Hornzimmer of the Veste. Contrary to previously expressed fears, he did not appear in party uniform, nor did he use the ceremony for vague party speeches. Schwede performed the wedding ceremony in a cutaway coat, which was adorned not with a party badge, but only with the Iron Cross. In his wedding speech, he pointed out the historical significance of the Veste and interpreted the defense of the Veste by the Swedes and Coburgers as a good omen for the marriage.[162] Schwede also used the opening of the gala performance at the State Theater on the evening of the wedding exclusively to thank the ducal house.[163] At the same time, the Coburg NSDAP was able to present itself to the media with the invited nobility and representatives of other royal houses, such as crown princes and princesses from Norway, Denmark, and Great Britain, or Rupprecht of Bavaria, who attended the wedding celebration under swastikas surrounded by SA and SS men.

157 Mayor Rehlein to Louis Walter, September 9, 1932. StadtACo A 6523.
158 See *Coburger Zeitung*, June 20, 1932.
159 *Coburger Zeitung* newspaper, June 16, 1932.
160 *Coburger Zeitung*, September 5, 1932.
161 See *Coburger Zeitung*, October 18, 1932.
162 See *Coburger Zeitung*, October 20, 1932, and *New York Times*, October 20, 1932. The newspaper explicitly praises him, saying: "He [Franz Schwede, author's note] was very businesslike."
163 See *Coburger Zeitung*, June 21, 1932.

In particular, by displaying flags bearing the colors of the ducal house, the city, Sweden, and the empire or national forces (black, white, and red), the city made a political statement to the rest of the empire and abroad. By hoisting Bavarian flags on government buildings, the actual imperial flag in black, red, and gold was completely avoided.[164]While Schwede himself publicly emphasized party political restraint, the driving force behind the staging of Coburg as a völkisch and National Socialist city was Carl Eduard himself, who wanted to show off his affiliation with the *Stahlhelm* and the NSDAP.[165]Adolf Hitler himself was on the guest list for the wedding, but canceled after receiving his honorary citizenship certificate in Coburg a few days earlier. The fact that the groom had already participated in National Socialist rallies and that other invited guests, such as Rupprecht of Bavaria and Carl Eduard's cousin, Prince Friedrich Josias zu Waldeck und Pyrmont, who appeared at the wedding in SS uniform, sympathized with the NSDAP and its ideas, underscored the symbolic solidarity between the nobility and the National Socialists in Coburg.[166]In addition, prominent National Socialist and German nationalist figures, including Adolf Hitler, Hermann Göring, Hjalmar Schacht, Alfred Hugenberg, Franz Seldte, and Theodor Duesterberg, sent official letters of congratulations to Coburg. [167]

On the eve of the wedding ceremony, a tribute celebration followed by a torchlight procession on the castle square combined the self-promotion of Nazi Coburg with a performative glorification of the "good old days." The NSDAP, the *Stahlhelm*, the Coburg Warriors' Association, several regimental associations, the Coburg marksmen and singers, and many other clubs and associations marched between Ehrenburg Castle and the State Theater to welcome part of the wedding party and unite in a tribute procession of 4,000 to 5,000 torchbearers accompanied by marching music. The entire Schlossplatz was surrounded by illuminated areas and lit up by the Ehrenburg, which was illuminated by spotlights, and the roundabout. The people of Coburg crowded into the surrounding streets and arcades to take part in the ceremony, which invoked and affirmed the unbroken loyalty between the people of Coburg and their ducal house. In addition to the Stahlhelm band, the Coburg Singers' Association and the girls' and boys' sections of the City Association for Physical Exercise also performed. Afterwards, the bride and groom received the participating nationalist and patriotic clubs and associations to express their gratitude. [168]

Attempts by the Foreign Office to tone down the strong symbolic effect of the unanimous union of European aristocracy and National Socialists in Coburg in the run-up to the wedding, to ban program items such as the torchlight procession and thus prevent a foreign policy scandal with social democratic Sweden in particular, ultimately failed. The groom's grandfather, King Gustav V of Sweden, and the British Crown Prince Edward therefore did not attend the celebrations.

164 See *Coburger Zeitung newspaper* dated October 20, 1932.
165 See Büschel: Herzog, p. 112 f.
166 See ibid., pp. 112–120.
167 See *Coburger Zeitung newspaper* dated June 21, 1932.
168 See *Coburger Zeitung*, October 20, 1932.

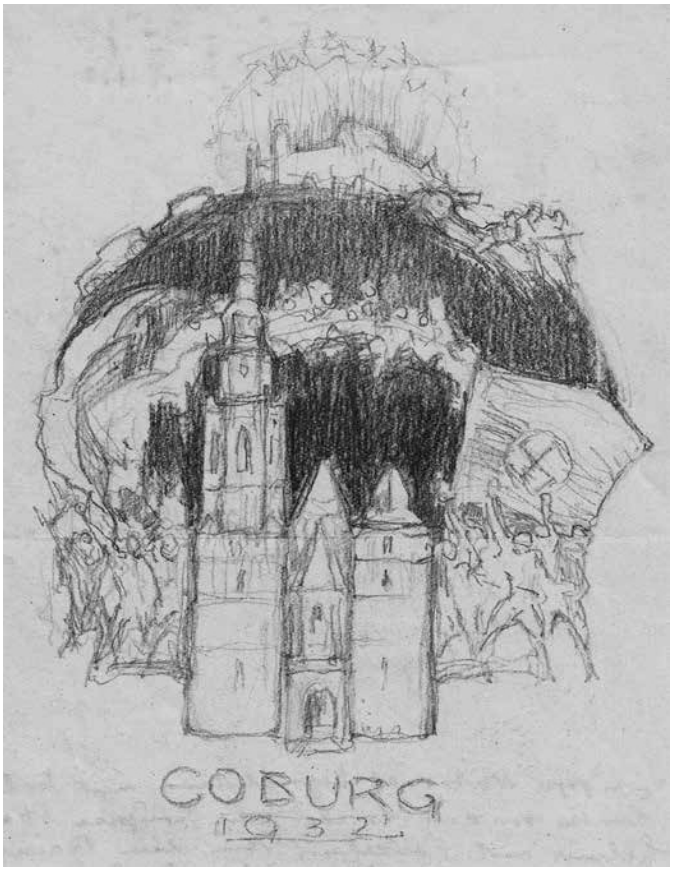


Fig. 31: Sketch of a commemorative booklet for the year 1932 by Heinrich Höllein with illustrations of the Swedish Year, the Swedish Wedding, Stahlhelm and SA men

who stayed away in protest. [169]After the foreign press had spread horror stories about Coburg in the run-up to the event, reporting that body parts were lying around and the gutters were full of blood following anti-Semitic Nazi rallies in the city, it was at least possible to avoid showing swastikas in the official photos of the event. However, an agreement with Carl Eduard that no National Socialists were to attend the church wedding was not honored, and the SA, together with other nationalist and patriotic associations, were allowed to march and stand in formation.

In addition, the Swedish wedding proved to the people of Coburg that the glory of the old days, with its pride in dynastic connections and highly valued nationalism, was still possible even under Nazi rule. The event once again gave the people of Coburg a lasting emotional connection to the

169 See Büschel: Herzog, pp. 112–121.

170 See ibid., p. 119 and *Coburger Zeitung* newspaper dated June 21, 1932. A sketch by Heinrich Höllein for the year 1932 shows how much SA and Stahlhelm members were already part of the city's self-image in 1932, prominently featuring SA and Stahlhelm members alongside illustrations of the Swedish Year and the Swedish Wedding. See Figure 31.

The *Coburger Zeitung* wrote in this context: "Everywhere, the undisputed fact is evident of how deeply the ducal house is rooted in the population, how, despite all the subversive ideas of the past, the ruling house and the population have found themselves in a community of destiny whose profound significance lies in its permanence and which found spontaneous expression in these days."[171] The homage paid to the bride and groom and their wedding party on the eve of the church wedding, as well as the accompanying torchlight procession, became the central event at which the city and the ducal house were ceremonially reunited in their old loyalty and solidarity. The *Coburger Zeitung* reported: "The square was densely surrounded by the population; the first die-hards had already gathered on the arcades before 5 a.m. and were soon joined by so many others that the slope resembled a wall of people. Many thousands lined the square, where the wedding procession arrived in elegant motorcars at 7 o'clock, becoming a social event of the first order beyond its historical significance."[172]As before 1918, the newspaper had informed everyone about the stay of the various noble guests in Coburg and the exact sequence of events for the wedding. At the same time, numerous clubs and associations sent their congratulations to the bride and groom via the press, and the population prepared a grand reception for the aristocratic guests at the train station. Coburg was once again the center of the world, after numerous guests and members of the press from Germany and abroad had gathered here days earlier to report on the city.[173] In keeping with the tradition of earlier celebrations of the ducal house, the wedding was turned into a kind of folk festival for the people of Coburg, who donned their Sunday best and for which the Coburg court brewery brewed a special *Gustav Adolf Sibylla wedding beer.* As with receptions before 1918, the cityscape had a festive atmosphere, as many streets, alleys, and shop windows were specially decorated. [174]The population was able to secure tickets for the wedding ceremony in St. Moriz Church itself, so that a few lucky Coburg residents were able to witness the ceremony. Crowds of people had also gathered around the church and greeted the bride and groom with cheers and jubilation. In order to capture the impressions of the day for the long term and for everyone, a commemorative album was available for purchase after the celebrations. Here, as well as through the sale of pins and badges, the practice of producing mementos, which also penetrated the private sphere, was successfully established.

Ultimately, the Swedish wedding proved to be an integrative element that should not be underestimated, one that had a lasting and positive impact on the image of the city and thus also on its National Socialist administration, especially internally. The symbolic effect of this major aristocratic event under Nazi direction also impressively demonstrated to revisionist forces within the bourgeois milieu that their goals could be achieved with the Nazis. The symbiosis of National Socialist rule with the Coburg ducal house and the city's glorious past could hardly have been demonstrated more impressively, practically, and effectively to the public. The political signal sent out by the celebrations in Coburg was

171 Ibid.
172 *Coburger Zeitung*, October 20, 1932.
173 Cf. *Coburger Zeitung*, October 19, 1932.
174 See reports on the city's festive decorations in the *Coburger Zeitung* of October 19 and 20, 1932.

with concern both within the German Reich and internationally. Erich Kästner wrote a political couplet on the subject:

> "My name is Sleeping Beauty, and I am the longest sleeper by day and by night. You know that I was in a state of suspended animation for many years. But now I have awakened! What is there to say about how it happened? A prince came from Sweden—and he kissed me awake. He gave me a kiss. That was the end of my sleep. We were married in Coburg. I was the bride and sang very loudly: 'I have slept for many years and do not want to sleep anymore. And things must be as they were before, because otherwise they would not be as they were before.' It was a celebration for young and old. And everyone began to shout as if it were their own business. They shouted: 'Germany, awake!' And then they fell asleep.
> It was a celebration for young and old alike. They raised their arms and legs and shouted "High!" and "Hail!" The poor stood in rows and wished each other bon appétit instead of the opposite. They came from all provinces of the empire and knelt before the prince—every single one of them. You don't want to free yourselves. Lackeys are lackeys. You sleep with the past! And everything is silent. And no one shouts:
> "You have slept for many years and shall sleep no more. And it must never be as it was before, because otherwise it would be as it was before!" You are lackeys. You remain lackeys. You are. And you want to be. It is not your business to cry out: "Germany, awake!" When you call out, it falls asleep! [175]

The Casimir Year 1933

After the dawn of the "Third Reich," two anniversaries were approaching, during which the nation and the municipality ritually merged in the organization of the celebrations, creating an opportunity to combine the newly gained or revived pride in Coburg's homeland with the exaltation of the "Third Reich" and the glorification of the German nation. The celebrations, now organized under National Socialist direction, referred to local Coburg traditions, which were extremely compatible with the new political symbolism with which they were now imbued, and conveyed the image of the German city of Coburg to the outside world.

1933 was officially declared the Year of Casimir, marking the 300th anniversary of the death of Duke Johann Casimir of Saxe-Coburg in 1633, and Franz Schwede made the organization of a commemorative year his pet project. The planning was in the hands of art historian Walter, who was supported by Walter Heins, among others. Once again, the connection between the ducal past and popular culture was performed in a large parade with a traditional costume show, linked to the celebrations of the Swedish Year, thus creating historically legitimate identifications.[176] In addition to a memorial service in St. Moriz and a memorial session in the city council, the traditional bird shooting was also included in the celebrations with a large parade in honor of Duke Johann Casimir, as Casimir was considered a special patron of hunting and shooting. In this way, a comprehensive remembrance practice was developed in the course of the commemorative year, in which, in addition to politics and administration, the Protestant Church, the State Theater, various associations, and

175 In a later publication, the following addition was made: "Back then, in Coburg, the monarchist idea believed that Hitler wanted to marry her. But he left the stupid bride sitting there."

176 For the exact lineup of the parade, see *the Coburger Nationalzeitung newspaper* dated July 24, 1933.

All Coburg schools were also involved. Hans Dietrich had obtained permission from the Ministry of Culture to hold special commemorative ceremonies for the instruction of the pupils.[177]Traditional figures of representation and representatives of Nazi organizations mingled here to form a unified picture. [178]The ducal house also took an active part in the celebrations, appearing side by side with Franz Schwede and other Nazi officials and laying wreaths in the princely crypt alongside the city council. Carl Eduard, Viktoria Adelheid, their sister, and Prince and Princess Gustav Adolf of Sweden also watched the parade from the town hall balcony alongside Schwede and other Coburg Nazi officials.[179] Franz Schwede invoked the closest ties between the royal house and the city. [180] The colorful parade and a large folk market festival created a moment of integration for the entire population, and the inclusion of "Fox Tönende Wochenschau" in the planning was intended to guarantee the greatest possible resonance beyond Coburg.[181] The intertwining of the festival's design and National Socialist symbolic politics through the uniformed appearance of the mayor and Nazi city councilors at the festive service, as well as the ritual placement of a green wreath with a swastika ribbon by four SA men on the altar, allowed the Nazi regime to seemingly blend into the everyday life of the population without any problems. The promotion of the Casimir Year repeatedly emphasized the fact that National Socialism was linked to the past celebrated here and would then create something new.[182]By including the consecration of the Franz Schwede Bell in the program of events for the Johann Casimir Year, Franz Schwede used the festivities and reflection on a glorious period in Coburg's history to place himself and his National Socialist development work in Coburg in the tradition of the Duke. In a ceremonial address at the town hall, Schwede announced:

> Johann Casimir left his mark on the spirit of his time. This spirit of a great past still lives on today, even in this house where he loved to spend time. During his era of great development, there was no party state, only one people under his leadership. The party state of the recent past was overcome by a man of his spirit, Adolf Hitler. We honor Duke Johann Casimir by vowing in this solemn hour, also in this house, in his city, in his spirit, to serve with all our strength, sacrificially and devotedly, to live and work for honor and freedom for the good of the people and the fatherland."[183]

In his speech at the opening of the Johann Casimir Shooting Festival, Schwede declared that Casimir's spirit had not died in the hearts of the people of Coburg, but lived on there.

177 See minutes of the meeting on the Duke Johann Casimir Year on June 23, 1933. StadtA Co A 6526.

178 See: Saldern, Adelheid von: "Sinfonie der Festtagsstimmung" (Symphony of Festive Mood). City representation in three German societies. In: ibid. (ed.): Staged pride. City representation in three German societies (1935–1975 (= Contributions to city history and urbanization research, volume 2). Stuttgart 2005, pp. 409–459, here p. 416.

179 Carl Eduard was represented by Marcel von Schack at the wreath-laying ceremony, as he was in Berlin at the time; King Ferdinand of Bulgaria was represented by General von Massow.

180 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung* of July 31, 1933.

181 See minutes of the meeting on the Duke Johann Casimir Year on June 23, 1933. StadtA Co A 6526.

182 See, for example, the remarks by Dr. Kühn in the *Coburger Nationalzeitung* newspaper dated July 15, 1933.

183 Manuscript of Schwede's speech of July 16, 1933. StadtA Co A 6526.

had been dormant and was reawakened by the "people's leader" Adolf Hitler. [184]At the same time, Schwede himself published a long article in the *Coburger Nationalzeitung* in which he highlighted the achievements of Johann Casimir, reinterpreted them in a National Socialist context, and drew analogies with the policies of the NSDAP.[185] The fact that Casimir had banned the imitation of foreign fashions, for example, could be taken up in line with the Nazi regime. In addition, Schwede wanted to recognize National Socialist principles in the policies of the Duke of Coburg, such as the Führer concept as the basis of state authority or the idea of "public benefit before private interest." [186]

The ceremony was also part of a larger cultural policy strategy by Sweden to promote the idea of homeland. As early as 1931, on his initiative, the Coburg Local History Museum was refurbished in the town hall's side hall and reopened to the public. [187]Under the management of city administrator Sauerteig, a special commission comprising members of the city council was also convened for the museum, including two members of the Nazi faction and one each from the SPD and the National Citizens' Bloc.[188] With a low admission price of 30 pfennigs on weekdays and 20 pfennigs on Sundays, as well as 10 pfennigs for children, the museum was intended to be accessible to as large an audience as possible.[189] In the museum, art dealer, later Nazi city councilor, and Schwede confidant Kuno Popp had voluntarily assembled works of art by local artists, a Biedermeier room with a doll's house, exhibits from the old guilds, and portraits of well-known Coburg personalities and cityscapes. [190]

Luther Memorial Day 1933

The second anniversary, the Luther Memorial Days from October 29 to November 2, 1933, was, in contrast to the Luther Year 1930, completely under National Socialist influence. Together with Eisleben and Wittenberg as united Luther cities, a representative of the Coburg Tourist Office had helped plan the event. However, when planning the Luther festival weeks, the city primarily relied on the offer of the Martin Luther Federation to celebrate its 50th anniversary in Coburg with a three-day conference and to organize the commemorative days in this context.[191] Under the patronage of Carl Eduard and conceived by the Martin Luther League, they served above all as an impressive demonstration of the connection between National Socialism and Protestantism. The honorary committee appointed to plan the event consisted of

184 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung* of July 31, 1933.

185 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung* newspaper dated July 15, 1933. The article was also published in a special supplement of the *Thüringer Tageszeitung* Hildburghausen.

186 See *Coburger Tageblatt* of July 17, 1933, and *Fränkischer Kurier* of July 18, 1933.

187 See memo dated April 20, 1931. StadtACo A 6040. See also Fiehler: Kommunalpolitik, p. 36.

188 See memo dated May 22, 1931. StadtACo A 6040.

189 See *Coburger Tageblatt*, June 3, 1931.

190 See draft press release dated May 22, 1931. StadtACo A 6040. Kuno Popp ultimately moved with Schwede to the Gau Pommern, where he served as Gau propaganda leader and head of the Pomeranian regional office of the Reich Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda in 1934. See Kuno Popp to the Coburg City Council, September 20, 1934. StadtACo A 6424.

191 See Küllmer, Björn: Die Inszenierung der Protestantischen Volksgemeinschaft. Lutherbilder im Luther-jahr 1933. Berlin 2012, p. 60. The fact that Franz Schwede himself did not have a statement printed in the commemorative publication for the Luther Days and that, from the political side, only Franz Dehler did so also points in this direction. See the Luther festival edition of *the Coburger Tageblatt newspaper* from October 31, 1933.



Fig. 32: Celebration of the Luther Year in front of St. Moriz Church on October 31, 1933: Gauleiter Hans Schemm at the lectern with the group of official participants from the party and administration, including Franz Schwede.

alongside the chairman of the Martin Luther League, Dr. Friedrich Ulmer Erlangen, Franz Schwede, Wilhelm Rehlein, Dean Weiß, and Court Marshal Carl Eduards, Marcel von Schack. The actual planning, which was coordinated by Louis Walter, involved close cooperation between the Nazi city administration and church representatives. The commemorative publication accompanying the event, a special supplement to *the Coburger Tageblatt newspaper*, which featured an excerpt from *Mein Kampf* and greetings from the newly elected church president and Bavarian bishop Hans Meiser, district administrator Dehler, and Dean Weiß, expressed in black and white the alliance that had been publicly proclaimed in Coburg in the fall of 1933.[193] The festive service, the highlight of the event, also became a key political event after Regional Bishop Meiser made his first significant appearance in Coburg since his election and Gauleiter Hans Schemm gave a speech following the service, while the Coburg SA and members of the Nazi faction of the city council marched in the Morizkirche.[194]

Meiser's sermon focused on the connection between Christianity and folklore. Although Meiser also emphasized in his sermon the importance of the church asserting itself against the political system, he clearly supported the National Socialist project of a "people's community" and wanted to see the Protestant Church included in it.[195] The Coburger Heimatglocken published excerpts from Meiser's speech, but only selected those passages that had a clearly nationalistic tone and not those in which Meiser indirectly opposed a

192 See agenda of the Martin Luther League meeting on September 19, 1933. StadtACo A 6524.
193 See the Luther Festival edition of *the Coburger Tageblatt newspaper* from October 31, 1933.
194 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung* of November 1, 1933. Reich Bishop Müller, who had appeared as a speaker in the other Luther cities, sent only greetings to Coburg. See Küllmer: Inszenierung, p. 66.
195 See ibid., pp. 84–87.



Fig. 33: Celebration of the Luther Year in front of St. Moriz Church on October 31, 1933, with Carl Eduard, Wilhelm Rehlein, and Dr. Otto Schmidt

In his contribution to the commemorative publication, the regional bishop also wrote that the German state could only survive "if, in the spirit of Luther, the authorities were once again recognized everywhere as a gift from God." Through the appearance of Hans Schemm, who liked to present himself as a "Christian National Socialist," he was able to demonstrate that the party also wanted to guarantee the church a place in the "people's community."
"Christian National Socialist," he was able to demonstrate that the party also wanted to guarantee the church a place in the "people's community." In his speech, Schemm compared the situation before the Reformation with that in the Weimar Republic, thereby stylizing Luther and Hitler equally as key figures in the formation of the German "people's community." In doing so, he took up Meiser's ideas, which drew a historical line from Luther to the present day and became a kind of recurring topos of the Coburg Luther Festival. Not least by emphasizing the Lutheran rejection of the "Jewish and liberal spirit," Schemm succeeded in using the celebrations for propaganda in the spirit of the NSDAP, linking them to national Protestant ideas and thus appealing to Protestants loyal to the church.[198] Franz Dehler too had directly juxtaposed Luther, the "champion of freedom of belief among the German people," and Hitler, the "leader in the struggle for the honor of the German people," in the Luther Festival edition of *the Coburger Tageblatt*. Hans Preuß, professor of church history at Erlangen University, who was also an orator, took the same line when he concluded the event with a comparison of the lives and works of Luther and Hitler.[200] The comparison of the two national heroes Luther and Hitler ultimately provided an ideal template for propagating Coburg's significance for the historical transformations initiated by both.

196 See ibid. and Weber: Handlungsspielräume, p. 135 f.
197 Luther Festival edition of *the Coburger Tageblatt newspaper* from October 31, 1933.
198 See Küllmer: Inszenierung, pp. 93–96.
199 Luther Festival edition of *the Coburger Tageblatt newspaper* dated October 31, 1933.
200 See Weber: Handlungsspielräume, p. 137 f.

The "Gleichschaltung" (enforced conformity) of associations and their participation in Nazi festival and celebration culture

The inclusion of the broad range of clubs and associations in National Socialist festival and celebration culture was achieved after the "Gleichschaltung" (enforced conformity) of all clubs and associations, for example by ritually reinterpreting and staging large singing, gymnastics, and shooting festivals and traditions. As elements that radiated continuity and familiarity, they acted as a link between the old and the new, illustrating how bourgeois culture could be transformed through "folk community" staging and how bourgeois associations continued to participate in representing the city. Just as the shooting and gymnastics flags were redesigned with the swastika as a matter of course, their festivals were also incorporated into the Nazi calendar of celebrations. Coburg celebrated the 75th anniversary of the German Gymnastics Association in June 1935 with Reich Sports Leader Hans von Tschammer und Osten, who gave a speech at the State Theater. In addition to ritual wreath-laying ceremonies at the monument to Ernst II and at the riding hall, which linked the historical tradition of gymnastics in Coburg to the present, the central celebration took place on the Anger, surrounded by grandstands, where gymnastic performances and military competitions by young gymnasts were held. A congratulatory telegram from Hitler impressively underscored the usurpation of the gymnastics association by the National Socialist Reichsbund für Leibesübungen (Reich Association for Physical Exercise). Schwede-Coburg and Reich Governor Ritter von Epp also took part in the celebrations. A closing ceremony on the market square, a parade to the village green, a gymnastics display, and a subsequent folk festival gave the event a comprehensive character that was intended to inspire and emotionally captivate both the Coburg population and visitors from outside the city.[201] The town hall, decorated with elaborate garlands, was adorned with an oversized gymnasts' cross, in the center of which a swastika was emblazoned. Adolf-Hitler-Straße was also framed with a banner linking the national tradition of gymnasts with Hitler's invoked struggle for freedom. In the same vein, the Judentor gate was adorned with a banner bearing the inscription "Coburg has begun the work, Coburg will also complete it," referring to the continuation of the Coburg tradition by the Nazi movement.

The Coburg bird shooting festival was also continued as a local tradition in the Nazi state, seemingly seamlessly combining centuries-old customs with National Socialist celebrations. Above all, the contribution of the marksmen to military training could be reinterpreted as a commitment to the "Führer and the Fatherland," emphasizing the militarization of urban society and the widespread enthusiasm for weapon technology. The festival allowed the NSDAP to celebrate popular culture and position it against bourgeois narrow-mindedness.[202]Representatives of the party, the authorities, the marksmen, who were also members of the Reichsbund für Leibesübungen (Reich Association for Physical Exercise), and the population of Coburg used the annual shooting festival for ceremonial self-affirmation and mutual reassurance. At the same time, the festival served to promote the image and external advertising of the city. The Reichsbahn

201 See *Bayerische Ostmark* from June 9 and 10, 1935.

202 When "Gurken Alex," a Coburg original, took to the podium in the shooting club tent, attempted to conduct, and was subsequently removed from the stage, the *Bayerische Ostmark* announced:
"We say this with complete openness, because at folk festivals that serve and are supported by the community, there is no room for such narrow-mindedness. We National Socialists celebrate folk festivals in cheerful camaraderie, which we want to give free rein to within appropriate limits." *Bayerische Ostmark*, August 11, 1937.



Fig. 34: Shooting festival 1934: Ceremony on the market square with groups in historical costumes, photographer: Franz Höch Coburg

On the main Sunday alone, it transported around 9,000 visitors to Coburg.[203] The city administration also recognized the special importance of the marksmen for the city by making the village green available to them free of charge for bird shooting from 1939 onwards, as it had been before 1922.[204] The singing tradition was equally described as "cultivating German thought and German art," stylized as "service to the fatherland and cooperation in the new Germany,"[205] and in September 1937, with 4,000 singers, as well as

203 See *Bayerische Ostmark* from August 9 and 11, 1937.

204 The new arrangement came about in exchange for the sale of the old shooting clubhouse to the city. See Coburg Shooting Club to Mayor Rehlein, July 11, 1938, and purchase agreement with transfer of ownership dated April 15, 1939. StadtACo A 6515.

205 *Coburger Nationalzeitung* newspaper, June 30, 1934.

the 75th anniversary of the German Singers' Association with rallies, a market festival, and a parade. [206]These anniversaries also served to impressively reinforce the city's self-confidence and emphasize its pioneering role.

1.1.2.2 A new calendar of celebrations

Parallel to the continuation and appropriation of traditional festivals and anniversages steeped in tradition, a genuinely National Socialist festival and celebration calendar also became established. The National Socialist festival calendar, introduced throughout the Reich, which included the Reich Foundation Day on January 18, the Day of National Uprising on January 30, the "Führer's birthday" on April 20, the national holiday of the German people on May 1, as well as harvest festivals and heroes' memorial days, was explicitly intended to replace the canon of church celebrations. In Coburg, this was supplemented by a tradition that referred to the city's role as Germany's first Nazi city.

Several elements were used in Nazi celebrations to create an ideal festive space that enabled a communal experience and conveyed a political message through symbols and forms. The use of radio, for example, brought the speeches of Adolf Hitler and other high-ranking Nazi officials, characterized by their polemical tone and rhetorical sharpness, to a large audience, which merged into an apparent unity. This not only made the "Führer" and other Nazi leaders accessible, but also made the promised "people's community" tangibly experienceable at the moment of transmission. Through the targeted use of performative and staging techniques, such as lighting elements, the venue of the celebration could be illuminated and brought into the center of attention. At the same time, the clear lines created in this way made it possible to geometrically structure the celebration space as a space for action and communication, thereby emphasizing the orderly military character of the marches themselves in the predefined urban space. The penchant for the monumental, which sought in particular to emulate the staging of the Nuremberg Reich Party Rallies, became increasingly apparent. On behalf of the municipal utilities, an elaborate lighting concept was therefore always part of the preparations for celebrations. The flag decorations, which were expanded for Nazi celebrations by adding additional flagpoles, also served to structure and enclose the celebration space. The festively decorated houses hung with flags blended seamlessly into the meticulously arranged spatial design. The city administration had public spaces decorated with particular elaboration. On Coburg's market square, the castle square, and in front of the train station as central gathering places, the gaze of those present was directed and symbolic communication and spatial representation were controlled. Festively decorated grandstands bordered with swastika flags and the platform specially created for this purpose in front of the arcades on the castle square further reinforced this effect. They elevated the speakers onto a podium and expressed a clear hierarchy. In particular, Coburg's town hall and market square, which were dominated by the chancellery building and symbolically appropriated by the Albert monument, were brought into focus through targeted lighting. Here, the

206 See *Bayerische Ostmark* from August 30 and September 20, 1937. However, despite the efforts of the Coburg singers, the official celebrations of the German Singers' Association were held in Breslau.

The town hall was illuminated and the monument was covered with flags. The official photographs of the celebrations, which were used for external advertising, often showed a skewed perspective, which visually removed the Albert or Ernst monuments from the center and seemingly casually pushed them to the edge or removed them from the picture altogether.

Choreographed marches, parades, and processions, with uniformed participants filling the urban space, embodied the imagined and idealized "people's community" through precise specifications regarding meeting points, clothing, and marching order, radiating order, community, and enthusiasm. Ultimately, the celebrations always consisted of recurring festive elements such as political speeches, large marches, parades, and a stereotypical musical program that never failed to include the Deutschlandlied and the Horst-Wessel-Lied. In addition, the performances of popular marches and the Grand Tattoo incorporated familiar and timeless elements into the events and emphasized their military character. The communal singing was usually accompanied by an oath of allegiance to Hitler, which was accompanied by the "Führer salute," a gesture of honor and submission. Individuals could hardly escape the celebrations, as all existing and "aligned" associations, businesses, schools, and authorities, as well as Nazi organizations, were involved in them, and enormous social pressure was built up, especially in the organization of the celebrations. The long preparations for the celebrations, the ritual decoration of houses and gardens, and the cleaning of streets and alleys alone involved the urban population in the events and were intended to express their support for the city administration as the organizer of the celebrations through their participation. At the same time, as extraordinary events, the celebrations also offered numerous opportunities for interaction in their preparation and follow-up, which had an integrative effect even without any direct connection to the ruling powers. The commitment to a common mentality worked so well primarily because prevailing *mental maps* in the sense of habitual orientation patterns were used and reinterpreted and integrated in accordance with National Socialist ideology. As a tool for stabilizing power, celebrations were thus able to close the legitimacy gap that had arisen due to the lack of elections, especially after 1933. The new "people's community" political-cultural practice could be practiced through regular celebrations and rituals, whereby the imagined and the lived world merged in symbolic action. Thus, everyday life in the sense of the Volksgemeinschaft ideology, which was to be put into practice and lived out in the form of festivals and celebrations, ultimately consisted of a series of highlights that primarily had an emotional impact and offered opportunities for communitarian integration.

207 See, for example, several examples in: Walter: Coburg.

208 If the flag decorations were insufficient or if individual streets were not festively decorated enough, this gave rise to immediate complaints. See *Bayerische Ostmark*, August 12, 1937.

209 See Szöllösi-Janze, Margit: In der Wettbewerbsspiral. Imagepolitik und Stadtgesellschaft im nationalsozialistischen München. Eine Einleitung. In: ibid. (ed.): München im Nationalsozialismus. Image-politik der "Hauptstadt der Bewegung" (= Munich under National Socialism. Local Government and Urban Society, Volume 4). Göttingen 2017, pp. 7–27, here p. 20; Freitag, Werner: Der Führermythos im Fest. Festfeuerwerk, NS-Liturgie, Dissens und "100 % KdF-Stimmung" (The Führer Myth in Celebration. Fireworks, Nazi Liturgy, Dissent, and "100% KdF Spirit"). In: ibid. (ed.): The Third Reich in Celebration. Führer Myth, Festive Mood, and Refusal in Westphalia 1933–1945. Bielefeld 1997, pp. 11–77.

environment

The "Day of Potsdam"

The "Day of Potsdam," which began on March 21, 1933, as a national holiday in Coburg, showcased the new National Socialist celebration liturgy, which encompassed all aspects of urban life and took over the urban space. The festival, like the other celebrations in 1933, represented a kind of social rite of passage, solemnly marking the final transition to the "Third Reich." The entire city was decorated with flags, and flagpoles had been erected around the entire market square so that as many Coburg residents as possible could follow the state ceremony broadcast via loudspeaker from the Garrison Church in Potsdam at 11 a.m. to mark the opening of the first Reichstag under the National Socialist government in an impressive setting. Most shops were closed on that Tuesday or took a break at lunchtime to mark the occasion. Many different parties had been working towards this day for a long time. The Ernestinum secondary school, the Casimirianum grammar school, and the Ernst Albert Seminary also used the morning for national celebrations, in which, in addition to the radio broadcast, teachers highlighted the achievements of Hindenburg and Hitler, and everyone sang the German national anthem together with the party anthem of the NSDAP, the Horst Wessel song. The lectern at Ernestinum was decorated with a swastika flag, and city councilor and teacher Frühwald appeared at the Ernst Albert Seminary in the uniform of a political leader of the NSDAP. A ceremonial roll call was held at the city's youth labor service camp in the presence of Mayor Rehlein, at which a new black, white, and red flag with a swastika diamond was hoisted for the first time, which was also reflected in the uniform attire of the inmates introduced here.

The festive meeting of the city council, held in parallel with the broadcast on the market square, was also choreographed around the radio broadcast, with Mayor Schwede and his fellow mayors seated in the meeting room in front of flag bearers who held up the symbols of the Nazi movement and the *Stahlhelm*. In addition to numerous veterans and guests of honor, the auditorium of the meeting room was also filled to amplify the resonance of the meeting. In the evening, another festive event was held in the market square, at which all formations of the NSDAP, the *Stahlhelm*, patriotic associations, and higher educational institutions and elementary schools marched in with songs ringing out. After a radio broadcast of the speech by the Reich Commissioner of Bavaria, General Ritter von Epp, they listened to a speech by Schwede on the balcony of the town hall, which was illuminated by spotlights. The newspapers reported that 10,000 people had gathered in the market square alone, which would have been slightly less than half of all Coburg's inhabitants.[211] The communal singing of the German national anthem, which was concluded with a salute and a final torchlight procession through the city, rounded off the communal experience and mass gathering in a ritual manner. In particular, the torchlight procession, "in which all those who stand on national soil had lined up," and a subsequent march past the three mayors of the city and the leaders of the NSDAP in front of the train station were intended to

210 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, March 22, 1933, and *Coburger Tageblatt*, March 22, 1933. The uniform consisted of a cap with a black, white, and red cockade.

211 See ibid. The figure of 10,000 visitors was always used to describe a well-filled market square.

military character and the equality and discipline of those involved. The *Coburger Nationalzeitung* described the parade further:

> "First and foremost, the National Socialists, the SA, SS, Hitler Youth, National Socialist Schülerbund, Bund deutscher Mädchen, then the Stahlhelmer, the Arbeitsdienst, the war veterans' associations, the gymnasts, singers and marksmen, the sports clubs, the scouts, the railway workers; the schools marched along, followed by the state police and the municipal police, the latter carrying a swastika flag. Around 100 flags were carried in the procession. Never before had the people of Coburg seen such a large, powerful, and impressive torchlight procession. The streets were black with people, standing in rows. Every window was occupied." [212]

While political opponents and Coburg Jews were already being mistreated and tortured in one part of the town hall, the so-called "Alte Herberge" Old Hostel, a considerable part of the rest of Coburg celebrated a community that was supposed to unite everything that divided them. The opportunities for participation in the event were thus clearly defined shortly after the Reich-wide "seizure of power" and ritually implemented and spatially marked in the course of the celebration.

Labor Day

May Day, celebrated on May 1, was also marked by the now stereotypical sequence of festivities. Individual streets, such as Leopoldstraße, had been decorated by the citizens themselves into a *Via triumphalis*, where a banner in the colors of the NSDAP lit up at night.[214] While Dean Weiß proclaimed the rebirth of the great German fatherland through the cultivation of the German soul by the National Socialists and God's blessing for this project during a festive service in St. Moriz in the morning, the speeches of Reich Minister Dr. Goebbels and Reich President Hindenburg were broadcast on the radio in the Anger. The highlight of the celebration was once again a parade, which the *Coburger Nationalzeitung* estimated to have had around 10,000 participants and which was intended to represent and involve the entire population of Coburg. In addition to mounted SA men and the standard band, the parade included the state police, the auxiliary police, court and judicial officials, bank clerks, and, led by Mayor Schwede, the city council, all municipal employees, and the teaching staff. There was also a procession of industrial workers, led by the Brose & Co. metalworks, the voluntary labor service, and the railway association. Various craft groups, the Reichspost, various breweries, the state theater, and a group of graphic arts professionals, which included the three Coburg daily newspapers, as well as all Nazi organizations, associations, and schools were also part of the procession. In preparation for this, floats had been designed, built, and decorated over months of preparatory work, with which various professional groups wanted to present themselves, emphasize their importance, and receive the spectators' tribute. [215] Gleich-

212 *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, March 22, 1933.
213 See chapter IV3.1.2.
214 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, May 2, 1933.
215 The carpenters had carried out extensive renovation work on the tower of St. Maurice's Church that year and proudly presented a model of the unique scaffolding designed for this purpose on their float. See ibid.

At the same time, the floats symbolized, in the spirit of a rite of passage, initiation into the "people's community" when they were draped in swastika flags or when the Rütli Oath "We want to be one united people of brothers" adorned the Landestheater's float. Schwede, who subsequently gave a speech on the village green, was aware that some of those marching "appeared to be participating, but in their hearts were still opposed to the great movements among the German people" [216], but he promised that even they would soon come to realize the truth. The day ended with sports and singing performances, the broadcast of Hitler's speech on the village green, fireworks, and the ringing of bells from all the churches in Coburg.[217] Once again, the Nazi state and the "people's community" it promised were ideally portrayed, ritually exalted, and made tangible as a community-building experience through the celebration that spanned space and time. With company parties, family and community evenings from 1934 onwards, at which informal get-togethers with concerts and dancing as well as special children's programs were organized, another ritualized community experience in the spirit of the "people's community" was established on May 1. The entire company workforce was treated to food and drink on this occasion and those celebrating anniversaries were honored, so that the celebrations ultimately had a more personal impact than the large parades.

While "National Labor Day" was primarily aimed at the urban population, the harvest festival, which was celebrated as "National Harvest Day" with a large parade and a festival on the colorfully decorated Schlossplatz, was able to include the rural population in the same manner. Self-designed floats with slogans such as "Back to the soil," "Produced on German soil," and "Milk creates blood" provided insight into the national community's interpretation of the festivities. [219] Approximately 20,000 people gathered in Coburg to pay homage to the farming community and dressed in traditional costumes emphasized the folk character of the Coburg region.

Fundamental changes to the festival after 1933

After the successful establishment of National Socialist celebrations and the completion of society's transition to the "Third Reich," however, some changes in the organization of celebrations occurred after 1933. While the role of the churches in the planning and ritualistic execution of celebrations was significantly reduced, especially after the *Kirchenkampf (church struggle)*, the Reichswehr and Wehrmacht took on a dominant role. After Coburg had once again become a garrison town, Infantry Regiment 95 and later Machine Gun Battalion 6 seamlessly integrated themselves into the celebrations. Above all, the Heroes' Memorial Days, into which the days of national mourning had been converted by the Public Holidays Act of February 1934,[221]stood out for their military character, with honor guards and marching parades. Here, the *myth of the Führer* and the commemoration of those who had fallen in the First World War were combined with

216 Ibid.
217 Cf. ibid.
218 See invitations and programs for family and entourage evenings. StadtACo A 6527.
219 See Fo._02.01._E_1933_00027, Fo._02.01._E_1933_00028, Fo._02.01._E_1933_00029. StadtACo Picture collection.
220 See Walter: Coburg, p. 7 f.
221 See RGBl. I, 1934 p. 129. Heroes' Memorial Day was subsequently celebrated on the fifth Sunday before Easter.

Ideas of discipline, an aggressive foreign policy, and advocacy for rearmament. The *song "Der gute Kamerad" (The Good Comrade)* became a ritual element of remembrance. The establishment of the Coburg War Memorial in the castle arcades, which bore the names of the 917 Coburg citizens who had fallen in World War I and which Hitler consecrated with his visit in 1935, also created a central place of remembrance.[222] The processions in front of the memorial transformed the commemoration of the victims into hero worship in the spirit of Goebbels and restored the Schlossplatz to its military tradition. Parades were also held here on Hitler's birthdays to impressively showcase the resurgent Wehrmacht. [223]

At the same time, after 1933, the exact form of the celebrations was more strictly regulated, so that from 1935 onwards, for example, the Reich Flag Law[224] prohibited the hoisting of black, white, and red flags, allowing only the swastika flag. Jews were forbidden to fly flags on their houses, thus making their stigmatization strikingly clear in the festive space. [225]In addition, the party and the Wehrmacht increasingly took center stage in the carefully planned celebrations, and references to traditional festive culture disappeared. The social character of the celebrations was increasingly lost in favor of ritual staging and monumentality, and the pressure to participate in events such as those on May 1 was increased. Pictures of the rally on the market square on the occasion of Hitler's 50th birthday in 1939 show that participation by the population had declined considerably.[226] Absence from the May celebrations was therefore only possible by reporting sick and providing a doctor's certificate; otherwise, according to the legal situation, this could have resulted in loss of wages and dismissal. Factory managers were able to monitor the participation of their employees very closely using lists that had been handed out in advance. [227]

1.1.2.3 Creation of a National Socialist anniversary tradition

In addition to the Nazi holidays celebrated throughout the Reich, Coburg also created its own anniversary tradition, which staged Coburg as the first Nazi city and a reminiscence of the "German Day" of 1922. Since the 10th anniversary in 1932, the city has regularly organized the return of "German Day" as an elaborate celebration. The anniversary celebrations were conceived as a meeting of "old fighters" and Nazi officials from all over the Reich, at which Adolf Hitler himself also appeared in 1932 and 1937. Peppered with a multitude of ideologically charged symbolic acts, they represented the high point and culmination of the promotion of *the Coburg myth* and were linked to the cult of personality surrounding Hitler. From 1937 onwards, the city celebrated the anniversary of the "March to Coburg" every year except 1939, and also used it outside of the major anniversaries to stage events such as the appointment of Schwede as First Mayor in 1931 or the inauguration of the "Adolf Hitler House" in 1934. The date thus became a fixed point in Coburg's annual calendar. Both the grandly staged anniversaries and the smaller-scale celebrations of the anniversary

222 For the soldiers' memorial, see Boseckert: NS-Baupolitik, pp. 38–47.
223 See *Bayerische Ostmark* of October 21, 1935, March 9, 1936, February 22, 1937, March 14, 1938, and March 13, 1939.
224 See RGBl. I, 1935, p. 1145.
225 See Freitag: Führermythos, p. 34.
226 See Fo._02.01._H_1930_00001. StadtACo image collection.
227 See several sick notes from members of the State Theater. StACo Theater 67.

In October, ceremonial speeches, marches by Nazi formations, wreath-laying at the memorial, and the sending of a telegram of greeting to Hitler were ritualized and served to regularly bring the myth to mind. This repeatedly reminded both the city's residents and the outside world of the city's pioneering role and made it a sensory, visual, and emotional experience for the participants. The event that was at the origin of the myth was ultimately symbolically inscribed in the urban space through ritualization and the design of a comprehensive celebration space. This allowed the collective knowledge relating to the constitutive narrative of Coburg based on "German Day" to be constantly reactivated, guaranteeing the perpetuation of the myth. In addition, the ritual staging functioned as an element that secured and stabilized power.

The anniversary celebrations of "German Day"

In 1932, the events and, in particular, the celebration venue were still subject to strict regulations on the part of the district office and were therefore primarily limited to closed rooms and the VfB stadium. All marches with music and flags were prohibited, as was street music within the city and the reveille on the morning of
October 16 and a requested propaganda march through the streets of the city. Simple trips with trucks or buses were only permitted for the transportation of participants and not for attracting public attention.[228]Nevertheless, the event was elaborately staged as the "Coburg Hitler Days," especially in the media, particularly in view of the 1932 election campaign and the propaganda organized in conjunction with the first Nazi city of Coburg. The municipal transport office had worked closely with the propaganda department of the Coburg NSDAP to organize special trains, accept accommodation requests, and procure festival badges in order to make the major event attractive to many visitors from outside the city.[229] In a special edition of *the Coburg National Newspaper*, Hans Dietrich, under the motto "Adolf Hitler in Coburg 1922 and 1932," and Franz Schwede, under the headline "Coburg, the Franconian Crown in National Socialism," took stock of the National Socialist reconstruction work on a total of eight pages. On the one hand, a direct line was drawn from Hitler's "March on Coburg" to the local success of the NSDAP. On the other hand, the pioneering status of the Ves-testadt was once again justified with its history and its model and exemplary character was emphasized. The party leadership also paid extensive tribute to Coburg for its services. Joseph Goebbels sent the following battle greetings from Berlin:

> "The name Coburg will be of lasting significance for the National Socialist movement and its history. It was in this city that Adolf Hitler, at the head of his heroic SA, broke the red terror for the first time. Just as National Socialism prevailed here, so it began its triumphal march throughout the Reich. But that's not all. In Coburg, the National Socialist movement achieved an absolute majority for the first time and, in all subsequent elections, proved through steady growth and expansion that a wisely conducted policy, just like a radically deployed opposition to the NSDAP, will always win over new people and fighters."[230]

228 See Dr. Fritsch to the Coburg Police Department, October 8, 1932. StACo State Police Headquarters 30.
229 See memo dated September 28, 1932. StadtACo A 6494.
230 *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, October 15, 1932.

The Hitler Days thus served primarily to reassure and promote the image of the "German city of Coburg" and the local party elite, even if the other mayors, district leader Karl Amberg, district leader of the National Socialist Women's League Marie Riechers, legal advisor Franz Dehler, leader of the youth labor camp Franz Hammer, and the *National Socialist students of Upper Franconia* also contributed to the significance of the day and their work. By awarding Hitler the honorary citizenship certificate, the bond between the "Führer" and the city, which stylized itself as "Hitlerstadt."

The event began with a special performance of *Die Meistersinger* at the Landestheater, followed by a rally for "young and old fighters" in the Hofbräusaal, where Hitler had appeared in 1922 and where Saxony's Gauleiter Martin Mutschmann, Hans Dietrich, and Franz Schwede now spoke. At the same time, a concert by the Standartenkapelle was performed in the Gesellschaftshaus, where lawyer Schmidt, General von Massow, and Mayor Rehlein also gave speeches. On Sunday, various SA, SS, and HJ troops marched through the city singing, bypassing the official restrictions, to the VfB sports field. Meanwhile, in the garden of the community center, the "old fighters" who had participated in the "German Day" in 1922 gathered in their old formations under their former leaders with their old flags to receive the "Coburg Medal of Honor" from Group Leader Colonel Hoffmann on behalf of Hitler and to march together to the festival grounds. According to *the Coburger Nationalzeitung*, 18,000 participating men gathered there in front of about 40,000 spectators for a very large rally, for which several special trains had brought SA, SS men, and civilian party members to Coburg. After a welcome and tour of Coburg City Hall, Adolf Hitler also appeared on the sports field. After inspecting the formations and presenting the honorary citizenship certificate, Hitler addressed those present and called on them to fight relentlessly. [233]It had been Hitler's express wish that the presentation of the certificate take place not in the town hall, but in front of the crowd of spectators in the VfB stadium. [234] The Hitler cult, which was already being celebrated and staged in 1932, found clear expression in the reporting of *the Coburg National Newspaper*: "Suddenly there is movement in the crowds, a roaring cry at the entrance to the sports field: The Führer is coming! The cries grow to a hurricane, arms stretch out toward him, flowers are thrown. The enthusiasm knows no bounds. The barrier chains are broken through in various places. Everyone wants to see the Führer. Some have tears in their eyes. This adoration is deeply moving, this enthusiasm is contagious."[235]

In 1937, the entire urban space was once again taken over for the anniversary celebrations. The renaming of Mohrenstraße to Straße der SA (Street of the SA) and the square in front of the Gräfsblock to *Platz der Alten Garde (Square of the Old Guard)* on the eve of the 15th anniversary already heralded the expansive effect of the celebrations. On October 15, 1937, the party formations present marched from the train station to the Schützenhaus.

231 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung newspaper* dated October 17, 1932.
232 See overview of special trains for Hitler Day in Coburg. StadtACo A 6494.
233 See ibid.; *Coburger Tageblatt newspaper* dated October 17, 1932, and *Coburger Nationalzeitung newspaper* dated October 19, 1932. The national press also reported on the event: See, for example, *Der Freiheitskampf*. Official daily newspaper of the NSDAP Gau Sachsen dated October 18, 1932.
234 See memo by Franz Schwede dated October 14, 1932. StadtACo A 6494.
235 *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, October 18, 1932.

which Hitler and the SA had taken in 1922 when they marched into Coburg. Speeches and the reception of Hitler took place in the market square, wreaths were laid ceremoniously at the memorial on Schlossplatz, marches were organized, and rallies were held in the town hall. The cemetery was also included in the celebrations and commemorations with wreaths laid at the graves of former district leader Otto Schmidt, SA leader August Behringers, and SA senior leader Franz von Baczko. After the festive meeting in the town hall, at which Carl Eduard was also among the guests of honor, the entire "old guard" of the NSDAP gathered together with the co-founder of the NSDAP, Anton Drexler, in the town hall, where 76 recipients of the "Coburg Medal of Honor" signed the city's Golden Book. Before his speech on Coburg's market square, Adolf Hitler was personally welcomed at Coburg train station by Gauleiter Wächtler, Schwede-Coburg, Nuremberg's mayor Liebel, Mayor Dr. Schmidt, district leader Greim, and Carl Eduard.

The "Führer speech," now staged centrally in the market square in front of an audience of around 10,000, was particularly notable for Hitler's statement: "I made politics with Coburg. Thus, the struggle for this city became a milestone in the development of our movement," which was to become an eloquent expression in the city. Hitler's renewed appearance and the pioneering status celebrated by the anniversaries emphatically illustrated the far-reaching appeal and integrative effect that the social practice of *the Coburg myth*, established in the anniversaries, was able to develop. Through its communicative and instructive function, it created a collective memory within the city that could be used to derive a special responsibility for Coburg and make it an instrument for mobilizing the population and a medium for community building. The myth thus took on a function that guided action and shaped reality, not only referring to the past, but always pointing to a direct and appealing connection to the present. In the chronicle of the Neuses local group, local group leader Wilhelm Schulz noted after Hitler's appearance: "'Coburg will always hold a special place in my heart, because this is where I made history in 1922.' That is what the Führer said when he left, and that means a commitment for us! May all Coburgers be aware of this!"[238]

The celebrations for the Nazi Party's majority in the city council

It was not only the outbreak of World War II that was to change the anniversary tradition. The celebrations in June 1939 marking the tenth anniversary of the day on which the National Socialist city council faction had gained an absolute majority in the Coburg city council already showed the beginning of Coburg's decline in importance, which, with its backward-looking tradition of commemoration, had lost its power throughout the Reich, especially on the eve of the outbreak of war. The entire ranks of high-ranking Nazi officials, such as Reich Minister Dr. Goebbels, Field Marshal Göring, Reich Governor Ritter von Epp, Gauleiter Dr. Helmuth, Gauleiter Julius Streicher, Reich Minister Dr. Frick, State Secretary Esser, and Munich's Mayor Fiehler, who had been invited to the celebration, declined. Even though Hermann Göring emphasized his special attachment to Coburg,

236 See *Bayerische Ostmark*, October 15 and 16, 1937.
237 See Hein-Kirchner: Typologisierung, p. 420.
238 Chronicle of the Neuses local group.
239 For the celebrations marking the 20th anniversary of the "train to Coburg," see Chapter V1.3.1.



Fig. 35: Speech by Adolf Hitler in front of Coburg Town Hall on the 15th anniversary of "German Day" on October 15, 1937, postcard

The rejections had a significant political impact. Despite initially declining, Franz Schwede attended the celebrations and, together with Ludwig Ruckdeschel, the deputy Gauleiter of the Bavarian Ostmark, signed the city's Golden Book. At the same time, Schwede-Coburg was awarded honorary citizenship of the city. Carl Eduard also took part in the ceremony, which included a large rally, a torchlight procession, and a wreath-laying ceremony at the memorial. Adolf Hitler sent a short telegram of greeting to the city in this context. In the wake of the Schwede cult that had spread, the consolidation of *the Coburg myth*, and a standardization of the narrative of the National Socialist rise in the Vestestadt, Mayor Greim also presented Schwede's newly published work *Kampf um Coburg* (Battle for Coburg) as a memento to the honorary city councilors who had already worked with Schwede. In addition, all members of the city administration were given a copy of Schwede's biography *Schwede-Coburg: ein Lebensbild des Gauleiters und Oberpräsidenten von Pommern* Schwede-Coburg: A Portrait of the Gauleiter and Chief President of Pomerania by the Gau press spokesman for Pomerania, Herbert Gaede, which was also published in 1939 and contributed to a further expansion of the cult of Schwede.

Overall, the National Socialist organization of festivals and celebrations can be highlighted as one of the most important integrative elements that contributed to the inclusion of the Coburg population in the National Socialist model of society. At the beginning of Nazi rule, the organization of various festivities succeeded in integrating the monarchist and revisionist sections of the bourgeoisie. The

240 See Adjutant Görnnert to District Leader Greim, June 19, 1939, and Mayor Coburg to the NSDAP Gauleitung Bayerische Ostmark, June 12, 1939. StadtACo A 6555.

241 See *Bayerische Ostmark*, June 24/25, 1939.

National Socialist-influenced festival and celebration arrangements were based on the values of the urban bourgeois milieu and celebrated not only national exaltation but also solidarity with the ducal house and Protestantism. By linking up with the old ducal splendor, National Socialism could be seamlessly integrated into Coburg's history, completing it and bringing it to a predetermined conclusion. The performative symbiosis with the ducal house therefore had an integrative potential that should not be underestimated, but which pointed not only to the past but also to the future, and thus gained in charisma. Ultimately, the National Socialist reinterpretation of festivals succeeded in penetrating an existing traditional and popular culture of celebration in the local area, optimizing it, and imbuing it with a völkisch-National Socialist meaning. While Jewish festivals and celebrations were increasingly relegated to the private sphere and disappeared from public consciousness in the wake of "folk community" exclusion, a seemingly unanimous urban society was staged in the streets and squares of the city. The culture of festivals and celebrations thus made a decisive contribution to the continuous and ritual "people's community" permeation and recoding of urban space. Through the instrumentalization of interpreted history, this process served to create a spatially anchored sense of identification.

By connecting with the prevailing *mental maps* and unfolding a time- and space-encompassing effect in everyday life, the genuinely National Socialist celebration design, which was developed and refined after 1933, enabled the action-oriented image policy to achieve long-term integration into and attachment to the imagined "people's community." Celebrations had the power to become moments of acceptance and confirmation of the legitimacy claimed by the Nazi regime. The meaning they conveyed had a positive effect on everyday life, providing extraordinary moments with a broad resonance, and could also generate motivation for future action. Through a strongly pronounced emotional component, the grand promises of the Volksgemeinschaft ideology could be made tangible and experienced in everyday life during the moment of celebration, and thus also played an important role in consolidating power, which Franz Schwede and, to a limited extent, his successors recognized. Ultimately, the city's image policy entered into a symbiosis with Nazi propaganda. The city's self-image was shaped by its image policy and its implementation in the design of ceremonial spaces, and the city's obstinacy was mostly successfully transferred to the Nazi way of thinking. Through distinctive festival and celebration design, the city of Coburg repeatedly succeeded in placing itself at the center of attention, concealing the city's actual decline in importance through a backward-looking policy of remembrance, and ritualizing the self-assurance of the Nazi leadership and the population of Coburg.

1.2 Cultural policy: The creation of a "people's theater"

Another medium that was used to shape and pursue image politics was municipal cultural policy, which had to be redesigned in Nazi society. By equating culture with propaganda,

National Socialist cultural policy inevitably had an instructive and indoctrinating function. As a focal point of Coburg's identity, the Coburg State Theater was the main focus of attention, and its function in the overall social structure had to be redefined. As part of the independence it had retained after 1920, the theater had a highly symbolic effect on the city's self-image and accordingly played an important role in the city's everyday life and self-image, as well as serving as a prestige object for its bourgeois elite. Coburg's inherent sense of prestige, which had been legitimized through the negotiation of the state treaty with Bavaria and the codification of certain special rights, found visible expression above all in the existence of the Landestheater. In order to build a serious alliance with the bourgeoisie, National Socialist cultural policy had to place the Landestheater at the center.

As part of urban self-confidence and urban representation, embedding the theater was therefore of crucial importance for establishing the "people's community." The focus was on the intention to transform the theater, which had already changed from a court theater to a state theater, into a "people's theater" and to stage experiences for the "people's community" there. As a central urban communication space, the theater, with its own traditions and models, provided a performative dimension for catalogs of rules for social behavior, which inevitably had to be renegotiated in Nazi society. In addition to the exclusion of Jewish citizens from theater operations and a program adapted to Nazi ideology, the ideal-typical "people's community" also had to be staged culturally and, as a communal experience, was intended to have an inclusive and community-building effect. In the process, interactions between a prevailing context and the observance of social norms and conventions became visible, which will be highlighted below.

1.2.1 Ideologization: The cultural staging of the "people's community"

1.2.1.1 Organizational framework

Two areas of theater organization and Coburg-specific factors ultimately had a decisive influence on the external and internal design of the cultural institution. In addition to the administrative structure of the theater system, the economic promotion of stage operations was also decisive for its nature. The formation of the Coburg State Theater was closely linked to its organization as laid down in the 1920 state treaty. The court theater, founded in 1827, which already looked back on a long theatrical tradition, was jointly supported by the state of Bavaria and the city of Coburg since its transition to the Coburg State Foundation, thus becoming municipalized. In terms of administration and financial policy, this posed an enormous challenge for a city the size of Coburg. Initially, in August 1919, the Free State of Saxe-Coburg and the municipality of Coburg had concluded an agreement on the continuation of the former court theater, in which joint financial subsidies for the maintenance of the Coburg State Theater were stipulated. The Free State of Coburg guaranteed an annual subsidy of 50,000 Reichsmarks and coverage of 40% of the remaining shortfall. When the Free State of Coburg merged with the Free State of Bavaria, the state

242 For the Coburg State Theater, see Erdmann: Theater.

Bavaria ultimately assumed the financial obligations of the Free State of Coburg. [243]In addition, Bavaria guaranteed in an inter-party declaration by the state parliament that it would maintain and ensure the artistic quality of the theater, which has since been run as the Coburg State Theater, even if Coburg were unable to do so.[244]During the years of financial crisis in the Weimar Republic, Bavaria had to steadily increase its share of the theater's deficit and its subsidies to the theater in order to meet Coburg's financial needs. In 1926, the Bavarian state's share of the deficit was increased to around 65% and fluctuated between 60 and 67% until 1944.[245] Another financial burden was posed by theater officials who, after disputes with the Bavarian state, were ultimately not taken on as civil servants and whose pensions had to be covered first by the state budget and then by the municipal budget, which placed an additional strain on the city's finances. The fact that, due to the poor economic conditions and the decline in living standards after 1929, going to the theater became a luxury for parts of the Coburg population and declined accordingly, exacerbated the financial misery. As a result, the city of Coburg itself had to subsidize the theater with between 150,000 and 200,000 RM annually since the stabilization of the mark in the 1924/25 budget year.

The Landestheater as a controversial issue in local politics

The preservation of the state theater therefore became one of the biggest issues and problems in local politics in Coburg after 1920. In 1927, Franz Dehler put it as follows: "For decades, the duchy and the city of Coburg have been the center of artistic and national thought in the German fatherland—and that is no exaggeration."[247] For the people of Coburg themselves, the theater was the intellectual and spiritual center of the city. [248] At the same time, it was undisputed within the city's society that Coburg would "sink into the insignificance of a small town after the loss of this venerable and highly significant cultural institution." [(249)] The theater was of considerable economic importance to the Vestestadt. In addition to the artistic staff, the city employed more than 150 people in theater operations, and the stage, actors, and audience also supported industries and an estimated 1,000 people outside the stage who depended on theater operations. In addition, the theater and its good reputation beyond the region stimulated tourism.

243 See agreement on the continuation of the Coburg State Theater dated May 17, 1924/July 2, 1924, URL: https://www.coburg.de/Portaldata/2/Resources/dokumente/r1-rechtsamt/stadtrecht/A-333-landes theatervertrag.pdf (last accessed September 15, 2021).

244 See Fritsch, Ernst: Bavaria and the Coburg State Theater. In: Deutscher Theaterdienst, January 6/7, 1932. On the negotiations between Coburg and Bavaria regarding the theater issue, see Erdmann: Coburg, pp. 66–68.

245 See administrative report for the 1926/27 season. StACo Theater 72.

246 See Coburg City Council to the Reich Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, January 7, 1935. StACo Theater 73. The subsidies amounted to: 1924/25: RM 142,740, 1925/26: RM 212,400, 1926/27: 136,850 RM, 1927/28: 195,289.89 RM, 1928/29: 192,342.40 RM, 1929/30: 191,602.76 RM, 1930/31: 192,098.48 RM, 1931/32: 146,323.63 RM, 1932/33: 15,422.74 RM, 1933/34: 145,962.05 RM, 1934/35: 168,020.48 RM, 1935/36: 187,779.43 RM, 1936/37: 181,233.38 RM, 1937/38: 170,000 RM, 1938/39: 175,174.18 RM, 1939/40: 172,559.96 RM, 1940/41: 180,900.55 RM, 1941/42: 185,000 RM, 1942/43: 185,000 RM, 1943/44: 185,000 RM.

247 *Coburger Zeitung* newspaper, May 28, 1927.

248 See *Coburger Zeitung* newspaper dated September 17, 1929.

249 *Coburger Zeitung* newspaper dated May 28, 1927.

sustainable traffic and encouraged many visitors to spend an evening in Coburg. The theater was also an important factor for the large number of pensioners who moved to Coburg, encouraging them to spend their retirement here. Closing the theater, on the other hand, would have burdened the city with pension payments of around RM 100,000, the theater would have been lost as a consumer of electricity and gas, and an expenditure budget of around RM 800,000 would not have been implemented in Coburg.

The NSDAP was thus able to use the Landestheater and its extraordinary burden on the city budget as a bargaining chip in its propaganda and fiscal policy efforts before 1933 in its fight against the Weimar system. The constant struggle and discord that the theater issue brought between the city and the Bavarian state, which went so far that the city council investigated the possibility of taking legal action against the state government,[251] was a populist opportunity in the course of the National Socialist struggle for power. On the one hand, the issue of the state theater and the intra-factional declaration of the state parliament guaranteeing its existence served to make horrendous financial demands on the Bavarian state. On the other hand, the miserable National Socialist financial policy after 1929 could be blamed on the special expenses for the theater. The NSDAP itself always presented itself as a champion of the theater and, in this sense, as a defender of the interests of the Coburg population. The NSDAP was also able to act in this regard in the Bavarian state parliament, where the National Socialist deputy Rudolf Buttmann consistently advocated for higher subsidies from Bavaria for the Coburg State Theater. [252]Franz Schwede in particular skillfully used the fight for the State Theater as a bridge to the bourgeois circles of Coburg. A rescue merger of the Coburg stage with the theater in Gotha, as in the pre-war period, or with the theaters in Bamberg, Bayreuth, Würzburg, Schweinfurt, or Meiningen, therefore became one of Schwede's main cultural concerns during his term as mayor and was on the agenda of his successors.

Nazi cultural policy and the Coburg theater

When Hitler seized power, the NSDAP ultimately also promised to enhance cultural values and, to this end, to promote national theater in particular. The National Socialist desire to rebuild was to be demonstrated by increasing Reich funding for borderland theaters from 200,000 to 2,000,000 RM, which were responsible for cultural propaganda in border areas. The willingness to subsidize theaters was intended to end the austerity policy of the Weimar years, so that in some cases new theaters were founded or financially motivated mergers of two stages were reversed. Apart from propaganda, however, after 1933 Coburg also began a tough annual struggle to maintain subsidies from the Bavarian state and additional grants from the Reich subsidy pot. The argument was that it should be unthinkable that "a cultural institution that emerged during a time of internal strife in Germany should, in a system hostile to culture...

250 See Schwede, Franz: The economic significance of the Coburg State Theater for the city of Coburg. In: Deutscher Theaterdienst, January 6/7, 1932.
251 See Franz Dehler to Mayor Unverfähr, November 1, 1928. StACo Theater 71.
252 See *Bayerische Staatszeitung* and *Bayerischer Staatsanzeiger*, May 9/10, 1929.
253 See Mayor Schmidt to the State Ministry of Education and Culture, January 14, 1935. StACo Theater 3430.

could be accepted in a Germany rebuilt by National Socialism" was always thrown into the political balance by those responsible in Coburg. Since Coburg's theater had been state-subsidized since 1920, the new National Socialist fiscal policy in the cultural sector initially had far less impact in the Vestestadt. Despite grand promises, the Bavarian state government was unable to increase its subsidy to the theater in 1933 and even wanted to reduce it. Despite the vehement opposition of Coburg officials to a reduction in funding, Schwede tried to justify this to the outside world in the interests of preserving the system, citing Hitler's fight against unemployment and the associated strain on state finances.[254]Although Joseph Goebbels had allegedly acknowledged in a meeting with Mayor Dr. Schmidt that Coburg and its population had probably contributed the most to their theater in percentage terms, the fiscal reality, especially in the wake of war preparations, did not allow for unrestricted distribution of funds, even on the part of the German Reich. In the competition between cities, the Vestestadt therefore had to throw all its weight into the political balance several times in order to maintain the artistic level of the Landestheater through financial contributions.

In January 1935, the Coburg City Council also submitted an application for Reich subsidies to the Reich Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda. In March 1935, Mayor Dr. Schmidt and Franz Schwede personally approached Reich Minister Goebbels to explain the financial situation of the Coburg theater, and as a result of the Reich Minister of Propaganda's direct approval, Coburg was granted additional Reich subsidies.[255] On condition that both the Bavarian state and the city of Coburg itself would maintain the level of their subsidies, the Landestheater initially received 70,000 RM from the 1935/36 season onwards.

60,000 RM and 75,000 RM for the cultural advancement of the theater and the social improvement of artists, without these figures being allowed to be made public. The individual payments always had to be fought for in lengthy negotiations with the Propaganda Ministry and the Reich Theater Chamber. With the decision of the Reich Minister for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda on April 20, 1938, a complete cancellation of Reich subsidies for the Landestheater was announced once again. Only through the mediation efforts of Carl Eduard and his adjutant, as well as the intervention of Gauleiter Wächtler and his cultural advisor Max Metzger of the Bavarian Ostmark Regional Office of the Reich Propaganda Office, was a subsidy of RM 50,000 granted once again for the 1938/39 season. Despite Gauleiter Wächtler's previous rejection, the Reich Chancellery again promised a one-time subsidy of RM 40,000 for the 1939/40 season, with Duke Carl Eduard contributing RM 10,000 and the Propaganda Ministry RM 25,000.[256] Directly linked to the financial participation in the Landestheater was ultimately also a say in its administration and organization. The highest administrative authority

254 See Franz Schwedes' circular letter of August 10, 1933. StACo Theater 3512.

255 See memo dated February 8, 1935. StadtACo A 6912.

256 See Franz Heimberger to NSKK Brigade Leader North, April 27, 1938; Franz Heimberger to Senior Government Official Untermann, May 2, 1938; Mayor Greim to Reich Office Director Cnyriem, November 17, 1939; Mayor Greim to the Führer's Chancellery, March 14, 1939, and meeting of the administrative committee of the Landestheater on April 9, 1940. StACo Theater 73.

The administrative committee, which consisted of the mayor, three representatives of the city of Coburg, and three representatives of the Bavarian government was the highest authority in municipal theater matters. The director of the Landestheater was also invited to attend the committee meetings in an advisory capacity. Although the Bavarian state ultimately contributed more financially to the State Theater than the city itself, it left the majority and the chairmanship of the theater's administrative committee to the city. Concrete supervision of the theater was therefore in the hands of the theater committee consisting of the four city representatives, so that the theater was under the direct control of the city administration and the mayor. Until 1933, the state representatives on the committee were District Administrator Ernst Fritsch, Franz Dehler, and Franz Klingler. After the "seizure of power," Hans Dietrich replaced SPD member Franz Klingler, and Senior Government Official Dr. Schuhmann from Ansbach replaced former District Administrator Fritsch as representative of the state government. In addition, the administrative inspector of the State Theater, Oskar Grambs, was brought in. Since the reorganization in 1929, the three municipal members had been various city councilors: Wilhelm Frühwald from the NSDAP, Karl Güntzel from the Schwarz-Weiß-Rot faction, and Hermann Bätz from the SPD. After 1933, the NSDAP held all municipal seats with city councilors Frühwald and Künzel. In December 1932, it also made it clear that it wanted to preserve the courtly tradition of the theater and offered Carl Eduard honorary membership in the administrative committee of the State Theater, which the former duke accepted.

In 1933, the establishment of the Reich Theater Chamber as a single chamber of the Reich Culture Chamber finally brought about "Gleichschaltung" (enforced conformity) in the theater industry throughout the Reich. Now an organization had been created under which all those working in the theater had to be brought together.It was headed by Otto Laubinger and, from 1935, Rainer Schlösser, and as the central National Socialist theater organization, it was subordinate to Goebbels' Ministry of Propaganda and Public Enlightenment. From 1934 onwards, the directors of the Landestheater appointed by the city council, as well as the principal conductors, had to be additionally confirmed by Goebbels and were accountable to both the city council and the respective Gauleiters.[260] In addition, Bavarian Interior Minister Adolf Wagner created the Supreme Theater Authority in Bavaria in 1936, which was established as a special department directly within the Interior Ministry and headed by former Coburg theater director Oskar Walleck.

Administration and organization of cultural life

In the day-to-day administration, a triumvirate of officials emerged in the polycratic power structure in cultural matters, who had to work alongside and with each other. In May 1934, HJ Bannführer and senior teacher Franz Heimberger was appointed municipal theater director. He was also chairman of the

257 See agreement on the continuation of the Coburg State Theater dated May 17, 1924/July 2, 1924, URL: https://www.coburg.de/Portaldata/2/Resources/dokumente/r1-rechtsamt/stadtrecht/A-333-landes theatervertrag.pdf (last accessed September 15, 2021).

258 See *Coburger Zeitung* dated December 15, 1932.

259 See RGBl. I 1933, p. 661.

260 See Dahm, Volker: Beginnings and Ideology of the Reich Chamber of Culture. In: VfZ 34,1 (1986), pp. 54–84.

261 See Euler, Friederike: Theater zwischen Anpassung und Widerstand. Die Münchner Kammerspiele im Dritten Reich. In: Broszat, Martin; Fröhlich, Elke: Bayern in der NS-Zeit, Volume II: Herrschaft und Gesellschaft im Konflikt. Munich 1979, pp. 91–173, here pp. 106 f. See below for Oskar Walleck.

He was a member of the administrative committee of the state theater and representative of Minister of Culture Schemm, which gave him extensive authority over cultural affairs in the city, particularly the state theater. Born in Bödigheim in Baden in 1892, Franz Heimberger trained as a teacher and served in World War I with the rank of first lieutenant. After his discharge, he became a member of the Würzburg Freikorps. In 1923, after working as a training teacher in Würzburg, he was transferred to the Ernst Albert Seminar in Coburg and in 1928 was appointed director of the newly opened public library. In 1929, Heimberger joined the NSDAP and soon rose to become a sought-after speaker in the Coburg district, as well as an SA troop leader and, from 1933, a HJ Bannführer. In 1935, Heimberger was appointed deputy member of the Coburg city council and initially became acting director and, after a promotion in 1936, senior director of studies and finally director of the Deutsche Aufbauschule Coburg [German Reconstruction School Coburg]. At the same time, Heimberger was appointed district training speaker.

In addition to Heimberger, the party had appointed teacher Otto Schilling as cultural officer of the district leadership, who influenced cultural life in Coburg. Otto Schilling was born in Coburg in 1889 and, after completing his training as a teacher, moved from the elementary school in Scherneck to the elementary school in Coburg as head teacher in April 1928. He had already been active in the German People's Protection and Defense League in 1920, organizing the "German Day" of 1922 together with his colleague Hans Dietrich, and in 1923 he was ready to march to Berlin with the Itzgrund troop. Partly through his connection to Dietrich, he found his way to the NSDAP by 1929. On January 1, 1934, he was appointed district cultural director of the NSDAP, and in 1938 he also became district music representative and district representative of the KDF (League of German Women) as well as director of the German People's Education Association. At the same time, he was promoted to senior teacher in 1938 and, after the express intercession of district leader and mayor Dr. Greim, was appointed headmaster in April 1941 in October to district school inspector, and in 1942 to school inspector, thus succeeding in combining his activities for the party with his professional advancement and profiting from his party membership. In his role as district cultural officer, he reported to the Gau cultural officer Dr. Moll. Schilling's actions formed a corrective in the negotiation processes of everyday cultural life in Coburg, steering it toward a strictly National Socialist course in terms of administration and art. He wanted all his educational and training work to be based on the principles laid down in *Mein Kampf*. He made it his mission to align the Landestheater's repertoire and the city's cultural activities with the ideal of the
"first National Socialist city in Germany."

In 1934, the managing president of the German Association of Municipalities and the president of the Reich Chamber of Music agreed to establish municipal schools.

262 The German Secondary School in Coburg for boys and girls was formed in 1935 from the Alexandrinenschule girls' high school and the Ernst Albert Seminary. Here, girls and boys were taught together from the
7th grade were taught together and the school term was shortened to 12 school years until the Abitur.

263 See questionnaire Franz Heimberger, StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg City H 114 and Nowak, Lara; Petkov, Christo, Schindler, Franz; Flach, Yvonne: Franz Heimberger and the German Reconstruction School Coburg (1935 to 1945). In: Coburger Geschichtsblätter 28 (2020), pp. 82–90, here p. 83.

264 See transcript of Otto Schilling's political résumé and transcripts from his personnel file. StACo Spruchkammer Coburg Stadt Sch 102. Schilling was initially classified as a minor offender in a ruling dated January 27, 1949, and as a follower on January 30, 1950.

265 See transcripts from the closing remarks of the training director dated February 2, 1938, and March 16, 1939. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg City Sch 102.

music commissioner in cities with more than 5,000 inhabitants. Appointed by the mayor and with the consent of the Reich Music Chamber, he was to represent the Reich Music Chamber in order to promote local music life. In Coburg, the office was held in conjunction with the directorship of the Landestheater, so that the Landestheater was even more closely integrated into the municipal administrative apparatus and its dominance in the cultural life of the city was emphasized, even vis-à-vis influential associations. Although the music commissioner was supposed to act as an extension of the Reich Music Chamber, in Coburg he remained more committed to the city administration and local conditions. As an honorary city official, the music commissioner was responsible for regulating local concerts and supervising them in accordance with the Reich Music Chamber, for which he was assisted by a concert advisory board. However, when Hans Abrell was appointed in July 1934, the Coburg Administrative and Police Senate stipulated that the municipal music commissioner could only make important decisions with the consent of the municipal theater representative, the city council, and the study councilor Heimberger.[266] Even under Abrell's successor Dietrich, the municipal cultural administration continued to be controlled by Heimberger. The concert advisory board convened in March 1936 consisted of the municipal music commissioner and representatives of the city of Coburg in the form of the district leader and mayor Dr. Schmidt, the deputy study councilor Heimberger, district cultural officer Schilling as representative of the district leadership, state chamber music director Kubasch, the city bandmaster, the principal conductor of the state theater, and representatives of the Society of Music Lovers (bank director Cronemeyer, court bandmaster Fichtner), the Ernst Albert Oratorio Association (professor Güntzel), the Teachers' Singing Association (senior teacher Zapf), the Concert Association (teacher Weißenborn, head teacher Weschenfelder), and the Nazi organization Kraft durch Freude in the form of DAF representative Hochberger. This committee was also dominated by Franz Heimberger, who was responsible for its composition in consultation with Otto Kubasch and who was able to convene a meeting of the concert committee.

This same orchestra musician, Otto Kubasch, who was born in Berlin in 1878, was known as First flutist in the state theater orchestra, he rose to become a chamber musician primarily due to his party activities and also played an important role as a liaison between the city council and the state theater. Kubasch had already been artistically involved in the program of the 1922 "German Day" event, joined the NSDAP in 1925, and was therefore praised as the "oldest political fighter of the German musicians' association." In addition to the "Golden Party Badge," he was also the recipient of the "Golden Service Award," the "Gau Honorary Badge," the "Nuremberg Party Badge" from 1929, and the "Coburg Badge" from 1922. From 1929, Kubasch was also one of 13 NSDAP members on the city council and, with interruptions, was a municipal member of the administrative committee of the State Theater. From 1934 to 1937, he also served as honorary regional director of the Reich Music Chamber in the Bavarian Ostmark district.

In order to unite the organizational aspects of cultural life under the aegis of the NSDAP, the cultural sector was "brought into line" in 1933 in the

266 See circular letter from the intelligence service of the German Municipal Council dated February 1, 1934. Municipality of Coburg to the German Municipal Council, July 1, 1934. StadtACo A 6441.

267 See memo dated March 20, 1936. StadtACo A 6441.

268 See Otto Kubasch's denazification file. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg City K 287; Prieberg, Fred: Handbook of German Musicians 1933–1945. Auprès de Zombry 2009, p. 4290.

In line with Alfred Rosenberg's ideas, the *Volksbund für die Coburger Kultur (People's Association for Coburg Culture)* was founded. [269] To counteract the fragmentation of the many cultural endeavors in the city, the majority of cultural associations were brought together under this umbrella organization.[270] As the *Kampfbund für Deutsche Kultur* (Fighting League for German Culture), headed by Otto Schilling as local group leader, the league was transformed into the *NS-Kulturgemeinde (National Socialist Cultural Community)* in 1934 and, through Schilling's dual role as district cultural officer, worked closely with the district leadership's cultural policy office on public cultural work and cultural preservation. Otto Schilling headed the cultural community as district chairman and local association leader. He was responsible for the theater ring at the lower level. [271]The Nazi cultural community had made it its main task to contribute to the preservation of the state theater, which is why it only included events in its work plan that did not interfere with the cultural work of the state theater. It therefore devoted itself primarily to lectures. At the same time, in line with the National Socialist motto "the common good comes before self-interest," it called on individual organizers, clubs, and societies to hold their public cultural events only in conjunction with the National Socialist Cultural Community, so that these too would not be detrimental to the State Theater.[272] In addition, Schilling made it her mission to attract visitors from the circle of the Nazi cultural community to the theater. In 1937, the Nazi cultural community was finally absorbed into the KdF. [273]

The National Socialist organization Kraft durch Freude (KdF), a sub-organization of the German Labor Front (DAF), initially appeared as a subsidiary organization in the cultural sphere with its Amt für Feierabend (Office for After-Work Activities), which, under the leadership of district administrator Hochberger, repeatedly came into direct competition with the Landestheater and its desired monopoly position in Coburg.[274] Especially after the incorporation of the Nazi cultural community in the summer of 1937 and the KdF's takeover of a large number of performances by the Landestheater, the KdF became increasingly self-confident, making fruitful cooperation indispensable for the theater representatives despite all the past inconsistencies.[275] As a sign of the "close ties between the former court theater and all creative compatriots and (...) as the strongest proof that the artistic performance and program design of the Landestheater was lively, popular, and diverse" [276] the KdF purchased closed performances at the Landestheater, which ultimately also gave it a certain say in the matter. In addition, Hochberger was able to express his wishes regarding the program and select individual works from the current program in agreement with the theater management. The DAF thus followed in the tradition of the trade unions, which, on the initiative of SPD city councilor Bätz, had organized closed union performances since 1924, and made it its particular task to introduce the rural population to the theater.

269 For more on *the Rosenberg Circle* and its internal disputes with the Propaganda Ministry and the KdF (Leisure Service of the People and the Army) over cultural policy in the so-called "Third Reich," see Dussel, Konrad: Provinztheater in der NS-Zeit. In: VfZ 38,1 (1990), pp. 75–111, here pp. 98–108.

270 See Walter: Coburg, p. 9.

271 See Address Book of the City of Coburg from 1937, Part 4, p. 2.

272 See *Bayerische Ostmark*, September 24, 1935.

273 See minutes of the administrative committee meeting of October 5, 1937. StACo Theater 3430.

274 See letter from Director Dietrich to Mayor Schmidt, April 2, 1937. StACo Theater 424.

275 See: The administration of the Landestheater to the Gaudienststelle der KdF, October 29, 1943. StACo Theater 424.

276 Press release from the KdF, October 1938. StACo Theater 425.

1.2.1.2 Ideological appropriation: The program

The Coburg State Theater's program played a central role in shaping public opinion and cultural discourse. The plays performed and their reception had a significant impact on the city's social interaction. Political influence on the program therefore had far-reaching consequences for the social fabric of Coburg. Looking back, Mayor Greim rightly concluded: "It can be said that the rapid acceptance of National Socialist ideas in the Coburg region can be attributed in part to the fact that the Coburg audience had been intellectually opened up by the theater and is still strongly influenced by it today."[277] The program design, which was the responsibility of the artistic director, always had to give the Landestheater its very special character. [278] At the beginning of the 20th century, securing influence over the program was not only a political but also an economic issue in local politics. While the 1919 theater contract limited the powers of the administrative committee primarily to financial oversight of the theater management, the 1924 contract was expanded to include the administrative committee's oversight of the theater's "artistic conduct" in addition to its economic control.[279] This directly curtailed the artistic freedom of the artistic director and established a tradition that could be continued after 1933. The rules of procedure of 1936 also included a passage stating that the selection of plays should be made in agreement with the theater committee, which gave the city an essential say in granted artistic freedom.[280]

The Wagner tradition in Coburg

At the beginning of the 20th century, Richard Wagner's work was a recurring theme in Coburg's theater programs. The connections between Coburg and Bayreuth had laid the foundation for this. Hereditary Prince Ernst zu Hohenlohe-Langenburg, who had assumed the regency of the duchy between 1900 and 1905, was an avid visitor to the Bayreuth Festival and a close friend of Houston Stewart Chamberlain, one of Wagner's sons-in-law. [281]Hohenlohe-Langenburg

277 Mayor Greim to the Führer's Chancellery, March 14, 1939. StACo Theater 73.

278 Since 1919, when the theater no longer alternated between Coburg and Gotha, the Coburg State Theater had been faced with a particular challenge in terms of its program. The management was forced to stage a full year's program on its own. This task could only be accomplished by placing the State Theater at the center of the city's cultural activities and encouraging the population to contribute to its preservation through subscriptions. Regardless of its size, the State Theater had to put on a program with numerous new productions in a short period of time, which were explicitly geared towards the audience. Due to the large number of subscribers, most plays could only be performed four to six times, meaning that around 60 works had to be rehearsed in one season.

279 See agreement on the continuation of the Coburg State Theater dated May 17, 1924/July 2, 1924, URL: https://www.coburg.de/Portaldata/2/Resources/dokumente/r1-rechtsamt/stadtrecht/A–333-landes theatervertrag.pdf (last accessed September 15, 2021).

280 See Rules of Procedure for the Coburg State Theater from 1937. StACo Theater 73.

281 The writer and son-in-law of Richard Wagner was considered one of the most important pioneers of radical anti-Semitism and racial ideology. See, for example: Bermbach, Udo: Houston Stewart Chamberlain. Wagner's son-in-law – Hitler's pioneer. Stuttgart, Weimar 2015; Large, David Clay: A reflection of the master? The racial doctrine of Houston Stewart Chamberlain. In: Borchmeyer,

also maintained a lively correspondence with Cosima Wagner, to whom he constantly reported on the immense effect the Bayreuth performances had on his feelings and thoughts. The letters clearly reveal a nationalistic and anti-Semitic interpretation of Wagner's works that revered Germanic culture.[282] The opera lover Ferdinand of Bulgaria also maintained particularly close ties to the Bayreuth circle and provided financial support for the Wagner Festival there. It was therefore no coincidence that Houston Stewart Chamberlain's funeral and memorial service took place in Coburg in 1927 and that, in addition to Hitler, the two aforementioned aristocrats were among the prominent guests.

Alfred Lorenz ultimately had a decisive influence on the development of the Wagner tradition in Coburg, the cultivation of a loyal and very discerning Wagner audience, and a nationalistic, populist interpretation of Wagner. Lorenz was born in Vienna in 1868, the son of historian Ottokar Lorenz from the University of Vienna. In 1885, through the intercession of Ernst II of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, his father received a call to the University of Jena, where he devoted himself intensively to questions of genealogy, which also strongly influenced his son's thinking and work. At the same time, Ottokar Lorenz did most of the work on the memoirs of Ernst II, which the duke later claimed for himself.[283]While studying musicology and conducting in Berlin, Alfred Lorenz became chairman of the Academic Wagner Association and engaged intensively with Wagner and his work, which was decisive for his later career. After several minor engagements as a répétiteur and kapellmeister, Lorenz was appointed second court kapellmeister by Duke Alfred of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha in 1898, rose to first court kapellmeister in 1904 under the reign of Crown Prince Ernst zu Hohenlohe-Langenburg, and finally became generalmusic director of the Landestheater. He also worked as conductor of the music associations in Gotha and Coburg. Lorenz shared Carl Eduard's nationalistic to völkisch worldview. Later, Lorenz boasted that he had been a member of *the* völkisch-anti-Semitic *Deutschbund* before the start of World War I and had been its standard-bearer in Coburg during the war. His son Ottokar Lorenz, born in Coburg in 1905, joined the NSDAP and SA in 1923, took part in the "Hitler Putsch" in Munich, and rose to become head of the economic policy department of the Reich Youth Leadership.

Alfred Lorenz's artistic work in Coburg focused primarily on the works of Richard Wagner and the operas and tone poems of Richard Strauss, thereby establishing a musical tradition in the Vestestadt that would shape the first decades of the 20th century.[284] He established a strong Wagner tradition in Coburg with cyclical performances of the Ring cycle at the court theater.

Dieter (ed.): Richard Wagner und die Juden. Stuttgart 2000, pp. 144–159 and Stolberg-Wernigerode, Otto Graf zu: Chamberlain, Houston Stewart. In: Neue Deutsche Biographie 3 (1957), pp. 187–190.

282 Ernst II zu Hohenlohe-Langenburg himself published the correspondence after joining the party in 1936. Cf. Correspondence between Cosima Wagner and Prince Ernst zu Hohenlohe-Langenburg. Stuttgart 1937.

283 See Backs, Silvia: Lorenz, Ottokar. In: Neue Deutsche Biographie 15 (1987), pp. 170–172.

284 See Alfred Lorenz to the Prussian Ministry of Science, Art, and Education on June 19, 1933. BA R 9361-II/652836; Schlötterer, Reinhold: Lorenz, Alfred. In: Neue Deutsche Biographie 15 (1987), p. 174.

After 1907, Lorenz Wagner's *Ring des Nibelungen* was performed 17 times under his artistic direction until the end of the court theater era, becoming part of the regular annual repertoire. Despite the alternation of the court theater between Coburg and Gotha, Coburg clearly ranked first in terms of Wagner premieres. His wife Marie Lorenz, the daughter of pathologist Prof. Wilhelm Müller, also founded the first Richard Wagner Association in Coburg in 1911.

In 1920, after almost 20 years, Alfred Lorenz's work in Coburg came to an end when he fell out with the artistic director Anton Ludwig.[286] Lorenz subsequently stylized his suspension as an act of persecution by the "November system" and portrayed himself as its victim, claiming that he had been forced to make way for a Jew because of his nationalist views, referring to the principal conductor Dr. Martin Friedmann, with whom he coordinated.[287] Shortly after Friedmann's appointment in Coburg, Lorenz had provoked disputes over authority, in which Lorenz, invoking his title of general music director, wanted to extend his powers of disposal over the state theater orchestra, and from which a personal enmity arose. [288]

Following his work in Coburg, Lorenz continued his musicological studies in Munich and received his doctorate in Frankfurt am Main in 1922 with a thesis on the formal problems in Wagner's *Ring des Nibelungen*. He now used the practical work he had done in Coburg as the basis for his theoretical considerations and wrote a Wagner exegesis with which he had shaped the reception of the music dramas in Coburg.[289] The publication of his dissertation as a manuscript reproduction was financed by grants from Wagner enthusiast Ferdinand of Bulgaria and Jewish factory owner and chairman of the Coburg Society for Music Lovers Richard Löwenherz. In 1931, Lorenz and his wife finally joined the NSDAP and rose to become general music director and honorary professor of musicology at the University of Munich in the Nazi state. His studies, which were strongly influenced by his father's generational theory, combined nationalistic and biological perspectives.[290] In 1902, Lorenz published the essay "Parsifal als Übermensch" (Parsifal as Superhuman) in the magazine *Die Musik*, in which he, drawing on Nietzsche's doctrine of the superhuman, advocated a new interpretation of Parsifal that introduced harshness as a central concept and laid the foundation for

285 See Jubiläumsschrift des Richard-Wagner-Verbands e.V. Coburg. Coburg 2001, pp. 21–27.

286 See *Coburger Zeitung*, March 4 and 13, 1920.

287 See Alfred Lorenz to the Prussian Ministry of Science, Art, and Education, June 19, 1933. BA R 9361-II/652836.

288 Dr. Martin Friedmann moved to Nuremberg in 1921 because he was temporarily unable to work due to mental distress. It is difficult to say to what extent anti-Semitic sentiment in his environment was responsible for this. After various engagements, he was denied the right to practice his profession in 1935 by the Reich Chamber of Culture because of his Jewish ancestry. He emigrated to the Netherlands and was deported from there to Sobibor and murdered. See Gottfried Mahling to Anton Ludwig, February 24, 1920. StACo Theater 4250; Medical report by Prof. Hermann Königer dated January 30, 1921. StACo Theater 1944. On Martin Friedmann, see Beck, Hans-Jürgen:
"Kissingen was our home for centuries..." A chronicle of Jewish life in Bad Kissingen. Bad Kissingen 2022, pp. 3159–3220.

289 Lorenz himself wrote in the preface to his dissertation: "It is the fruit of my work as a conductor at the ducal court theater in Coburg-Gotha, where I first introduced The Ring of the Nibelung at the beginning of the century and have since performed it every year, often as a complete cycle." Inaugural dissertation by Alfred Lorenz. Coburg State Library Q 51 206.

290 Lorenz was also in correspondence with Ludwig Schemann, the translator of Gobineau, who had graduated from high school in Coburg. For more on Schemann, see Chapter IV2.2.2.

provided an interpretation of Wagner that was compatible with National Socialist interpretations. [291] In Parsifal, for example, he wanted to recognize Wagner's ideas of leadership and resurgence, as well as the mission "to march to victory as a racially superior people."[292] He also wrote treatises on topics such as "Richard Wagner's 'Parsifal' and National Socialism," "Musicology and Hereditary Biology," and "Musicology and the Jewish Question."[293] Ultimately, his Wagner theories contributed decisively to the National Socialist reading and interpretation of Wagner's works and to the stylization of Wagner as a central aesthetic figure, reinforcing the effect of an ideology aimed at exclusion. [294]During his lifetime, Lorenz was considered one of the foremost Wagner experts and was celebrated as an intellectual pioneer of National Socialism.[295]

Shortly after Lorenz's departure, Parsifal was performed for the first time in Coburg on December 25, 1920, at his instigation. This was made possible by a Parsifal fund to which art-loving corporations and personalities such as Ferdinand of Bulgaria contributed.[296] The cultivation of Wagner continued to be a recurring theme in the Landestheater's repertoire. By 1944, the Ring cycle had been performed 21 times, so that during the Third Reich it could be claimed:

> "The dangerous post-war era, when influential forces of an international intellectualism working towards the destruction of all national art waged war against the national art of Richard Wagner, is finally behind us. Here in Coburg, we can boast with particular pride that the cultivation of Wagner in our art institute never really suffered seriously under the struggle led by a certain big-city clique."[297]

Since the sets for the Bayreuth Festival came from the Brückner workshop in Coburg, where a duplicate was always made for the Vestestadt, The *Ring of the Nibelung* could be staged here in a similar production to that in Bayreuth, allowing Coburg to proudly declare itself the center of Wagnerism.[298] The

291 See Lorenz, Alfred: Parsifal als Übermensch. In: Die Musik 20/21 (1902), pp. 1876–1882; Lorenz, Alfred: Das Geheimnis der Form bei Richard Wagner, 4 volumes. Berlin 1924–1933 and McClatchie, Stephen: Analyzing Wagner's Operas. Alfred Lorenz and German Nationalist Ideology. Rochester 1998.

292 Lorenz, Alfred: The Musical Structure of Richard Wagner's Parsifal. Berlin 1933, p. 153.

293 See Kinderman, William: The Institute for Musicology during the Nazi Era. The Case of Wagner Scholar Alfred Lorenz. Lecture at the Institute for Musicology at LMU Munich on February 3, 2010. URL: https://lmuwi.hypotheses.org/alfred-lorenz–2 (last accessed April 12, 2023). Lorenz worked on his book together with the National Socialist philosopher Hans Alfred Grunsky, who later wrote effusive reviews of Lorenz's analyses and based his musical reflections on Lorenz's work. Grunsky's father, the publicist Dr. Karl Grunsky, was an active supporter of Lorenz. See file note on Dr. Heiber's visit to Professor Hans Grunsky on October 19, 1959, October 21, 1959. IfZ Archive ZS 1874.

294 On Wagner's anti-Semitism, cf. Fischer, Jens Malte: Richard Wagner's "Das Judentum in der Musik" (Jewry in Music). Frankfurt 2000.

295 See *Bayerische Ostmark*, July 11, 1938.

296 See administrative report of the Landestheater 1920 to 1921. StACo Theater 72.

297 See *Coburger Zeitung*, November 12, 1934.

298 See Schwede, Franz: The economic significance of the Coburg State Theater for the city of Coburg. In: Deutscher Theaterdienst, January 6/7, 1932. On the Brückner theater family of Coburg, see Kern, Fabian: Just Seen. Bravo, Bravissimo. The Brückner Family of Theater Painters of Coburg and Their Relationship to the Bayreuth Festival. Berlin, 2010.

Wagner's works guaranteed every artistic director a full house when planning the repertoire, even though the audience always judged the performances and the work of the artistic directors in this area by particularly strict standards.[299] Karl Theilaker, senior director at the Landestheater for several decades, acted as a "reliable guardian of a high-quality Wagner tradition" and ensured that the tradition established by Lorenz was continued.[300] An enthusiastic Wagner lover and theater subscriber ranked the performances as "acts of divine consecration"[301]. Lorenz himself later returned to his former place of work in Coburg to give a lecture on Wagner's work in October 1934 at the invitation of the Nazi cultural community. Ultimately, the Vestestadt proudly proclaimed: "It can therefore rightly be said that Coburg and its theater, like hardly any other city before and after the death of the Bayreuth master, was always closely connected to Richard Wagner's artwork through personal and intellectual relationships."[302] The emphasis on the nationalistic and heroic elements within Wagner's operas ultimately promoted an attitude that was considered exemplary for the cultural sector in nationalist circles.

Increasing nationalist influence on the state theater

Even outside of Wagner's influence, it had already become clear under artistic director Gottfried Mahling that ethnic nationalism had taken hold at the Landestheater. Born in Prague in 1867, Gottfried Mahling attended the German Commercial Academy in Prague before completing his vocal and dramatic training with Johann Nepomuk Fuchs in Vienna. After his stage debut in 1888 at the Zurich State Theater, he was appointed to the Coburg Court Theater. Appointed court councilor there in 1915, he served as deputy director from February 1920 to May 1920 and finally took over the position of director from May 1920 to September 1928. In 1925, Court Councillor Mahling, together with General Superintendent Dr. Georg Kükenthal, signed the appeal "German art for the German people!" by the nationalist-minded Professor Dr. Reinhold Freiherr von Lichtenberg, who wanted to establish a German artistic working group, a stage for German art with festivals in Coburg, and an *association called "German art for the German people*." A "proof of Aryan descent" was required for membership. Ultimately, Mahling withdrew his participation in the project, partly in response to criticism from Ernst Prince of Saxe-Meiningen, but he reiterated that he had been particularly attracted to the idea of German art without the use of Jewish capital.[304] Nevertheless, Mahling, a Freemason, ultimately came under criticism from the NSDAP, which demanded his dismissal in February 1928 and agitated against him in *the Weckruf* after Mahling, in their view, had failed to understand "under the changed circumstances of the times, the

299 See, for example, Review of the 1936/37 season. StACo Theater 73, where the artistic director Dietrich had noted the success of individual plays in his own handwriting.
300 See *Coburger Zeitung* newspaper dated November 12, 1934.
301 See Ferdinand Meyer to artistic director Dietrich, November 26, 1937. StACo Theater 67.
302 *Coburger Nationalzeitung* newspaper, February 12, 1943.
303 See personnel file of artistic director Gottfried Mahling. StACo Theater 684. Mahling died on March 29, 1931.
304 See brochure Deutsche Kunst dem deutschen Volke! (German Art for the German People!) and Gottfried Mahling to Ernst Prince of Saxe-Meiningen, March 16, 1925. StACo Theater 64.

Maintaining the interest of influential and authoritative circles of citizens in the theater."[305] Shortly thereafter, Mahling applied for retirement, which took effect in September 1928.[306]

Under Mahling's successor, Hanns Schulz-Dornburg, the administrative committee of the State Theater, headed by Mayor Unverfähr, announced in October 1928 that the theater was to be regarded as a purely artistic institution, free from politics, after objections were raised by unknown parties to the staging of plays by the expressionist or Jewish authors Franz Werfel, Ernst Barlach, Walter Hasenclever, and Hans José Rehfisch were being performed.[307] Schulz-Dornburg had fully fulfilled the wishes of many Coburg residents for a young, ambitious, and committed artistic director. With him, a spirit of optimism temporarily swept through the Landestheater, and he successfully captured the liberal forces in the audience who were also open to more modern plays. He was born in Würzburg in 1890, the son of Cologne singing teacher Professor Richard Schulz-Dornburg, who also trained him as an opera singer. After studying at the Cologne Conservatory, he became assistant director at the Deutsches Theater in Cologne in 1912. In addition to his military service as a battery commander and regimental adjutant, he worked as a stage singer and director in Plauen, Erfurt, Hanover, and Gera in the following years. In Leipzig and Vienna, he also studied theater history. His last position before moving to Coburg was at the State Opera in Berlin.Schulz-Dornburg took up his post in Coburg with great enthusiasm and brought "momentum and tempo, life and fire"to the theater.[311] He made a great effort to appeal to the Coburg audience, staging *Lohengrin* in a modern way, for example, and thus fulfilling his desire to offer something new to the people of Coburg, who had been presented with the old court theater repertoire for decades.[312] Ultimately, he was able to increase the number of visitors and subscribers to the Landestheater again and achieved record visitor numbers in the 1929 season he planned. However, pressure from the NSDAP to reduce the number of plays by foreign authors staged by the Landestheater's artistic director became increasingly vocal. Franz Klingler tried to preempt the attacks on the theater and demanded that Schulz-Dornburg provide a detailed list of the foreign authors in his program after Franz Schwede had informed the Nazi state parliament representative Dr. Buttmann about the events at the Coburg State Theater. In this context, Schulz-Dornburg claimed: "I claim to be as good a German as

305 NSDAP faction to Coburg City Council, February 2, 1928. StACo Theater 684. As early as 1922, DVP city councilor Max Brose had strongly criticized Mahling against the backdrop of the tense economic situation, which the director took as a personal attack. See Gottfried Mahling to the administrative committee of the Landestheater, February 21, 1922. StACo Theater 684.

306 As early as 1924, Mahling had negotiated with Ministerialrat Daxenberger in Munich about his pension entitlements and retirement from February 1927 after his 60th birthday, which the administrative committee had approved. See Director Mahling to the Administrative Committee of the State Theater, November 17, 1924. StACo Theater 684.

307 See minutes of the meeting of the administrative committee of the Landestheater on October 8, 1928. StACo Theater 64.

308 See Schulz-Dornburg to the Coburg City Council, December 18, 1928. StACo Theater 71.

309 See *Coburger Zeitung* of May 24 and May 26, 1928.

310 Friends of the Coburg State Theater to the City Council, July 1, 1929. StACo Theater 685.

311 See also various letters of praise to the theater management. StACo Theater 64.

312 See Director Schulz-Dornburg to Franz Klingler, January 5, 1929. StACo Theater 71.

someone on the right – but I attach great importance to being among those who recognize the international nature of art at the beginning of the 20th century" [313] and insisted that foreign composers and authors were necessary for a varied program.[314] As a result of various accusations and hostilities, the artistic director, who was very popular with theater audiences, left the Coburg Theater in June 1929. The city council had left his salary demands unanswered, and Mayor Unverfähr had admitted to him that the NSDAP-dominated city council would not be very sympathetic toward him. Schulz-Dornburg therefore moved to the Anhaltisches Theater in Dessau and was appointed artistic director of the Städtische Bühne in Kiel in 1935.

The new artistic director, Dr. Hans Erdmann von Kutzschenbach, who took up his post in August 1929, announced immediately after his introduction that he wanted to focus mainly on works by German authors and that some of the plays by foreign authors planned by Schulz-Dornburg would be canceled. Kutzschenbach, who had already been shortlisted as a candidate for the position of artistic director in 1928, was born in Berlin in 1884 and had worked in Metz, Lübeck, Gotha, Stuttgart, and Kaiserslautern before taking up his post in Coburg. His aim in Coburg was to focus primarily on the classics, while also regularly staging new and contemporary plays.[316] Under his directorship, with the help of Carl Eduard, the court conductor Fichtner brought the conductor of the Bayreuth Wagner Festival, Karl Elmendorff, and the Bayreuth Festival cast to the Landestheater for performances of *Tristan and Isolde* and Die *Walküre*. However, even Kutzschenbach's work did not satisfy the NSDAP, so that the Nazi faction in the city council openly declared its intention to censor the theater, ultimately announcing measures in line with the Reich Theater Law of 1934. Schwede repeatedly attempted to influence Kutzschenbach's program, threatening him in April 1930, for example, that he should align himself more closely with the will of the people, i.e., with Schwede's interpretation of the National Socialist will, or his faction would cut funding for the Landestheater.[317]Among other things, Schwede criticized that too many plays were morally questionable, thus serving the völkisch topos of "cultural decline" in modernity. Works such as Bertolt Brecht's The *Threepenny Opera*, which Kutzschenbach had included in his program and which was already one of the most successful plays of the Weimar Republic in 1930 and was being performed on all German stages, could not be performed publicly in Coburg for party political reasons. A decisive factor in this was the scandal surrounding the opera *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* by Bertold Brecht and Kurt Weill, whose premiere at the Neues Theater Leipzig was massively disrupted by National Socialists.[318]Carl Zuckmayer's socially critical play *Der Hauptmann von Köpernick (The Captain of Köpernick)* was also not allowed to be included in the subscription program, but only performed as a single performance, following a request by the city council and teacher Frühwald to remove it from the repertoire.

313 Manuscript by Schulz-Dornburg for his speech at the city council meeting on June 7, 1929. StACo Theater 685.
314 See Schulz-Dornburg to state parliament representative Klingler, January 5, 1929. StACo Theater 71.
315 See *Coburger Volksblatt*, August 24, 1929.
316 See personnel file of Dr. Hans Erdmann von Kutzschenbach. StACo Theater 686.
317 See minutes of the city council meeting of April 11, 1930. StadtACo A 8073.
318 See letter from director von Kutzschenbach to Erich Büttner and Alfred Faber, March 25, 1930. StACo Theater 64.

be held as a closed event, even though it would have been a secure source of income.[319] Ultimately, Kutzschenbach's contract was not renewed in the spring of 1931, even though the three state representatives on the administrative senate of the State Theater had vehemently advocated for the director.[320] Already in the confidential meeting of the city council in February 1931, it had been decided by a majority vote of the Nazi faction that the municipal members of the administrative committee of the State Theater had to request and advocate that the contract with director Dr. von Kutzschenbach not be renewed.[321] The reason for Kutzschenbach's forced departure was primarily the prospect of a candidate who would act entirely in line with the NSDAP.

Premature Nazification of the State Theater

Further Nazification of the theater was ultimately carried out by Oskar Walleck, who was appointed director in July 1931 and was supported by the NSDAP. Born in Brno in 1890, Walleck studied law and, after interrupting his studies to serve as a one-year volunteer and act in Essen, Königsberg, and Vienna during World War I, he eventually became a senior director in Frankfurt am Main and Nuremberg. He moved to Coburg from the Dortmund Municipal Theater, where he had been employed since 1925.[322] Oskar Walleck, who joined the SS in 1932 and the NSDAP in 1933, now redesigned the program according to nationalist principles. National Socialist theater was to differ from the liberal and pluralistic theater of the Weimar Republic, counteract the alleged cultural decline of modernity, and therefore exclude everything that was not national. In August 1932, Walleck proudly reported to the North Bavaria-Franconia regional leadership of *the Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur* (Fighting League for German Culture) that his program of 54 authors included only four foreigners, thus proving that it was possible to put together an artistically valuable program even without foreigners. Walleck's work was received with great appreciation by the Kampfbund, which emphasized: "Finally, German theater is no longer being used as a showcase for foreign trash." In order to underscore his success

319 See minutes of the administrative committee meeting of June 8, 1931. StACo Theater 72. The play was only performed as a closed union performance, as the unions decided on the choice of plays. See minutes of the administrative committee meeting of June 15, 1931. StACo Theater 72.

320 See *Coburger Volksblatt newspaper* dated January 21, 1931, and meeting of the administrative committee of the State Theater dated March 12, 1931. StACo Theater 686. Kutzschenbach became theater director in Liegnitz in 1934.

321 See minutes of the city council meeting of February 13, 1931. StadtACo A 8074.

322 See personnel file Oskar Walleck. BayHStA MK 45388; Lilla, Joachim: Walleck, Oskar. In: ibid.: State ministers, senior administrative officials, and (Nazi) functionaries in Bavaria from 1918 to 1945. URL: http:// verwaltungshandbuch.bayerische-landesbibliothek-online.de (last accessed March 16, 2023) and Euler, Friederike: Theater zwischen Anpassung und Widerstand. Die Münchner Kammerspiele im Dritten Reich. In: Bros-zat, Martin; Fröhlich, Elke (eds.): Bavaria in the Nazi Era, Volume 2: Rule and Society in Conflict. Part A. Munich. Vienna 1979, pp. 91–173, here pp. 106 f.

323 The *Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur (Fighting League for German Culture)* was a Nazi organization founded in 1928, headed by Alfred Rosenberg, which opposed modern art. See: Piper, Ernst: Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur (KfdK), 1928–1934. In: Historisches Lexikon Bayerns. URL: http://www.historisches-lexikon-bayerns. de/ Lexikon/ Kampfbund_für_deutsche_Kultur_(Kfd K), _1928 –1934 (last accessed 08.03.2023).

324 Felix Dahn to Oskar Walleck, August 15, 1932; Oskar Walleck to the Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur Landesleitung Nordbayern-Franken, August 11, 1932. StACo Theater 65.

Walleck had the Kampfbund's letter about the Nazi city councilor Frühwald and the editor of the *Coburger Nationalzeitung* Kuhn distributed in various nationalist publications. Walleck felt particularly committed to contemporary dramatic works that were intellectually oriented toward "eternal works."[325]Coburg was therefore able to boast a series of world premieres by contemporary artists such as the Austrian playwright Josef Wenter with his play *Spiel um den Staat* (Game for the State), which marked his breakthrough, and Paul Boeddinghaus with his World War II drama *Kampfstaffel 303 (Fighter Squadron 303)*. The former was based on Mussolini's "March on Rome" and dealt with a leader's seizure of power, his fight against external enemies, and his domestic political victory. Richard Duschinsky's drama *Kaiser Franz Joseph I. von Österreich* oder *Die Adler von Aquileja* (Emperor Franz Joseph *I of Austria* or The Eagles of Aquileia) and Francesco Malipiero's Die *Raben von San Marco (*The Ravens *of San Marco)* also celebrated their world premieres in Coburg.[326] The play *Die endlose Straße (The Endless Road)* by Carl Ernst Hintze and Sigmund Graff fit in with the tenor of the plays with a national character by idealizing Graff's experiences in World War I.[327] The proportion of plays by right-wing theaters with politicizing, national conservative, nationalist, or völkisch tendencies was therefore significantly higher in Coburg before 1933 than in other provincial theaters. [328]

At the same time, Walleck attempted to establish open-air performances of the opera in the courtyard of the Veste Coburg, which he described as a "true festival grounds for the people."These performances were not only intended to promote tourism in Coburg, but also to satisfy the demand for a theater experience in the open air that had arisen in the Thing movement. This was intended to evoke the spirit of the German "people's community" and provide a counter-model to the proscenium stage, which was said to promote individualism. Efforts to integrate Coburg into the Thing theater movement also included plans to establish a Thing site below the Bismarck Tower on the southern Judenberg as the second Thing venue in Bavaria. In this context, Coburg had to join the *Spielgemeinschaft für nationale Feiergestaltung* (Playing *Community for National Celebration Design*) with a capital contribution of 2,000 RM, which was approved by the city council. In 1934, architect Fritz Schaller, who had played a key role in designing such sites for the Thing play movement, submitted designs, but these were ultimately not implemented.[330] In the same vein, Coburg joined the *Reichsbund der Deutschen Freilicht- und Volksschauspiele* (Reich Association of German Open-Air and Folk Theater), which was dedicated to the Thing movement, in 1933. [331]

325 See Coburg State Theater 1932. StACo Theater 65.

326 See ibid.

327 See Pinnow, Imke: Sigmund Graff – the poet of trench warfare. In: Düsterberg, Rolf (ed.): Poets for the Third Reich. Volume 4. Biographical studies on the relationship between literature and ideology. Bielefeld 2018, pp. 213–246.

328 See Dussel: Theater, pp. 303 f. In his analysis of provincial theater, however, Dussel only conducts a quantitative evaluation of the repertoires of theaters in Bielefeld, Coburg, Dortmund, Ingolstadt, and Karlsruhe.

329 See memo from artistic director Walleck dated September 19, 1932. StACo Theater 65.

330 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung* dated June 14, 1934, and *Coburger Zeitung* dated June 30, 1934. The Thing movement set itself the goal of presenting folk theater as a communal experience to large audiences in alternative outdoor theaters. After 1936, however, the Nazi leadership abandoned the idea of building hundreds of such Thing venues throughout the German Reich. See Dussel: Theater, pp. 121–131.

331 See meeting of the administrative committee of the Landestheater on December 20, 1933. StACo Theater 72.

Ultimately, Walleck thus fulfilled the requirements for the theater's repertoire as described by Nazi city councilor and teacher Wilhelm Frühwald with regard to the youth he supervised and in the spirit of establishing a "people's theater":

> "What was once highly regarded because it was the foundation of the nation's life, what has always been the content of great peoples and timeless stage poetry – honor, love, freedom, homeland, fatherland, virtue, duty, heroism – is what the vast majority of today's youth want to see presented on the stage of the German theater. If German youth is won back to the arts, then German theater, which belonged to the nobility in the 18th century and to the bourgeoisie in the 19th century, can become the common property of the entire people in our century."[332]

Walleck thus contributed significantly to the early Nazification of the Coburg State Theater. In 1935, the city council retrospectively stated: "Even in the courtly era, [the Landestheater] was a center for the finest German art, and shortly after November 9, 1918, following brief concessions to the un-German art practices of the interim government, it was brought back onto the path of German art by the early emergence of National Socialism and accomplished many things, especially in times of decline in the field of cultural policy."[333]Nevertheless, under Walleck, the Landestheater was still a theater in transition. On the one hand, the Landestheater and its artistic director were involved in the planning of all National Socialist celebrations. Walleck himself took the initiative and designed a multi-part program loyal to the party line for the 10th anniversary of Leo Schlageter's death, which included Hanns Johst's play *Schlageter*, a memorial service for the national associations with, among other things, the reading of Schlageter's letters, solemn songs, *Death and Transfiguration* by Richard Strauss, and a special program with a school performance of *Wilhelm Tell*[334] and a lecture by Erwin Guido Kolbenheyer. The latter represented a Darwinian-biological worldview with strong nationalistic tendencies. [335]On the other hand, jazz, which was considered "alien" in the National Socialist sense, was still played uncritically at the Landestheater, and the *Feurombuas*, the jazz singers of the Landestheater, performed as their own ensemble, which the theater also used to promote itself.[336] In addition, Walleck still included works such as *Hoffmann's Tales* by the Jewish composer Jacques Offenbach in the repertoire. This upheaval was also evident in the theater preferences of the Coburg population, which on the one hand longed for modernity and, for example, spoke out in favor of staging The *Threepenny Opera* in Coburg

332 See Frühwald, Wilhelm: Theater und Schule. In: Deutscher Theaterdienst, January 6/7, 1932.

333 See Coburg City Council to the Reich Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, January 7, 1935. StACo Theater 73.

334 Wilhelm Tell was initially a popular play in Nazi circles and was performed on the Führer's birthday in 1933 after Joseph Goebbels had declared it a "Führer drama." However, it lost popularity and was banned in 1941 by "Führer order," in particular because of the tyrannicide it justified.

335 See Intendant Walleck to Franz Dehler, April 3, 1933. StACo Theater 65. On Erwin Guido Kolbenheyer, see Seidler, Herbert: Kolbenheyer, Erwin Guido. In: Neue Deutsche Biographie 12 (1980), pp. 453–455. Ultimately, a modified program was implemented.

336 See Intendanz Walleck to the Stadttheater Nürnberg, April 19, 1933, and Das Coburger Landestheater 1932. StACo Theater 65.

to be performed, and on the other hand repeatedly pushed for a performance of Parsifal with the "good old decorations."[337]

In June 1933, Oskar Walleck was appointed to the Landestheater in Braunschweig, from where he rose to become general director of the Bavarian State Theater, president of the German Stage Association, and member of the administrative advisory board of the Reich Theater Chamber in 1934. From August 1936 to September 1938, he was also head of the Supreme Theater Authority in Bavaria in the State Ministry of the Interior. In 1939, he took over the position of general director of the German Theater in Prague, was responsible for all German theaters in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, and became honorary regional director of the Reich Theater Chamber for the Protectorate.[338] Walleck's successor from August 1933 was Hans Abrell, who had previously been senior director in Augsburg. Abrell was born in Schaffhausen in 1888, attended teacher training college in Marsberg, and worked as an actor from 1907. After serving as a soldier on the front, he worked as the business manager of the Berlin theater group Reibaro, as a director and head of drama in Trier, Saarbrücken, and Bielefeld. After a stint as first director at the Carl Theater in Vienna, he moved to Augsburg and from there to Coburg. His professional career was interrupted by several periods of unemployment. Abrell himself later stated that he was excluded despite his artistic successes because of his membership in the NSDAP. He had joined the party in September 1931 and was able to discuss his exposé *Vom Theater der Gesellschaft zum Theater der Nation* (From the *Theater* of Society to the Theater of the Nation) with Rudolf Hess in the summer of 1931, after which he was introduced to the Führer.
"Führer." Abrell described himself as a fan of Mozart and Strauss and a fanatic classicist in theater.

The struggle over the program after 1933

At the beginning of Abrell's tenure as artistic director, Franz Schwede also announced the role he had envisioned for the theater in National Socialist society:

> "National Socialism is determined to restore theater to its lofty ideal purpose, that is, to make it once again a sanctuary of the German spirit and a powerful herald of our great National Socialist idea. The theater must be placed entirely at the service of the nation in order to free millions of German compatriots from the Jewish-Marxist poison and win them back more and more to German intellectual and spiritual life."[342]

Abrell's concept of a national theater was thus seen as the counterpart to the "alien" theater of the Weimar period, which, according to Abrell, embodied an international worldview, had degenerated into a place of discussion and entertainment, used sensation as a narcotic, and had subversive tendencies. Instead, it should

337 See results of the Landestheater's Christmas survey in 1932 and Wagner-Freunde to artistic director Walleck, April 11, 1933. StACo Theater 65.
338 See personnel file Oskar Walleck. BayHStA MK 45388; Lilla: Walleck and Euler: Theater, p. 106 f. After his internment in 1945, Walleck became a director in Innsbruck and, until 1956, director of the State Theater in Linz. Oskar Walleck moved back to Coburg in 1957 and died there on July 1, 1976.
339 See Director Abrell to Minister President Siebert, November 6, 1933. StACo Theater 72.
340 See letter from director Abrell to Reich Minister Rudolf Hess, November 28, 1934. StACo Theater 73.
341 See Hans Abrell's personnel file. StACo Theater 687.
342 See Franz Schwedes' circular letter dated August 10, 1933. StACo Theater 3512.

the national theater should serve the cultural will of the nation through earth-rooted German poetry and show itself to be the bearer of the cultural national will. [343] Abrell's program for 1933 provided insight into the practical implementation of this plan. In drama, he presented classical works such as Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* or Schiller's *Don Carlos* and *Fiesco* as the foundation of the poetic heritage of the people. Contemporary drama was built on this foundation, which Abrell divided into three concepts that were intended to meet the requirement of being a national "people's theater." The "German idea" included plays such as *Prometheus* by Hermann Burte and *Andreas Hollmann. Tragedy of a People* by Hans Christoph Kaergel. The Führer idea was represented by works such as *100 Days* by Mussolini, *The Battle of the Marne* by Paul Jos Cremers, and *Neidhardt von Gneisenau* by Wolfgang Goetz. General themes and social dramas included Erwin Guido Kolbenheyer's *Heroic Passions* and Romain Rolland's *The Wolves*. In opera, small cycles by German composers such as Richard and Siegfried Wagner, Richard Strauss, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Albert Lortzing, and Carl Maria von Weber formed the core of the work plan. The opera *Der Kreidekreis* by the Jewish composer Alexander von Zemlinsky was particularly out of place here. In addition to light-hearted dramas and classics, 33% of the works performed in the theater could be classified as political dramas centered on völkisch, national conservative, or National Socialist ideas. Naturalistic authors, critical plays, or those that could have been classified as left-wing theater were not performed at all.

Under Abrell's directorship, the National Socialist restructuring of the theater system, which had been conceived in advance by Alfred Rosenberg and the *Kampfbund für die deutsche Kultur (Fighting League for German Culture)*, came into full effect in an organizational sense. In the polycratic power structure, several agencies attempted to exert concrete influence on the programming of plays. The Landestheater was subordinated to the Reich Theater Chamber in terms of its organization. With regard to the plays selected for the repertoire, the stage was subject to the Reich dramaturge Rainer Schlösser in the Propaganda Ministry under the "Theater Act" of May 1934. He issued directives on this matter in confidential circulars. [346] The Coburg theater directors therefore always submitted questionable plays to the Reich dramaturge. However, the instructions from the Propaganda Ministry regarding the constructive design of the programs were ultimately not binding directives and were less in the nature of orders than suggestions. In addition, only the draft programs were usually approved, but as a rule only about half of these were realized, and the other half was supplemented by new acquisitions during the course of the season. Individual approvals were repeatedly obtained for the latter, and

343 See Abrell, Hans: Das nationale Theater. In: Das Coburger Landestheater 1933/34 and Abrell, Hans: Das Theater des dritten Reiches und wir. In: Das Coburger Landestheater 1934/35. StACo Theater 65.

344 See Das Coburger Landestheater 1934/35. StACo Theater 65.

345 Abrell's intention to emphasize the national character of the Coburg State Theater while increasing audience numbers with entertaining plays was in line with the general trend among provincial theaters after 1933. They wanted to combine a new nationalistic and "heroic" theater with elements of popular culture. See Dussel: Theater, pp. 210–212. In his analysis, Dussel compares the Coburg State Theater with theaters in Bielefeld, Dortmund, Ingolstadt, and Karlsruhe. The proportion of plays by the Theater der Rechten ranged from 25 to 43%.

346 See RGBl. I 1934, pp. 411 f.

In 1938, on the instructions of the Reich Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, publishers were simply asked whether Jews or communists were involved in the plays.[347] Works by foreign authors were to be reported to the castles if they were world premieres.[348] With regard to Abrell's first program, Otto Laubinger, Ministerialrat and head of the theater department at the Reich Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, attested to its great success, but suggested replacing the play *Die Wölfe (The Wolves)* by French author Romain Rolland. In the opinion of the Reich Ministry of Propaganda, the play was too much in line with an "international worldview."[349] While the constructive instructions of the Reich dramaturge ultimately had only limited influence on the program design, the instructions on banned composers and musical works, as sent to German theaters in September 1935, were binding. As a result, such pieces were completely avoided. This circumstance was particularly noticeable in the field of operetta, which featured many popular Jewish composers.[350]

At the same time, district cultural officer Schilling, acting on behalf of Gau cultural officer Dr. Moll, took it upon himself to criticize Abrell's programming, despite the clearly defined hierarchical responsibilities and the fact that the theater management was subordinate to the Reich dramaturge, in order to do justice to Coburg's pioneering status as a National Socialist stronghold in the theater as well. For example, he demanded that Theodor Fritsch's *Handbook on the Jewish Question* be used as the basis for selecting plays, which included a list of Jewish playwrights and co-authors to be avoided on German stages, even though the Reich Ministry of Propaganda had to make corrections here time and again.[351] A dispute arose over a play by the author Hans Adler, who also appeared under the pseudonym Paul Vulpius and was suspected of being Jewish. In this context, Schilling argued: "If the Reich Dramaturge has approved the two plays, then he has done the population of Coburg, which has been well educated in National Socialism by our Pg. Schwede, a disservice: they want neither Jewish nor Jewish-influenced plays in their theater and have not the slightest understanding for the cultural attitude of the Reich Dramaturge in this regard. (...) The German city of Coburg was always a step ahead in National Socialism, and it seems to be so in the present case as well."[352] After Schilling and Abrell had clarified the matter in a personal discussion, Abrell was able to prevail, so that, for example, the

347 See memo dated February 3, 1938. StACo Theater 3014.

348 See circulars from the Reich Theater Chamber dated July 12, 1940, and September 19, 1940. StACo Theater 3017.

349 See Otto Leubinger in the Reich Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda to Hans Abrell, September 11, 1933. StACo Theater 65.

350 See circular letter from the Stage Department dated September 1, 1935. StACo Theater 3015. See also Dussel: Theater, pp. 262–266, 272 f. After the war began, the lists were expanded to include individual authors and composers from enemy states.

351 See Fritsch, Theodor: Handbuch der Judenfrage. Die wichtigsten Tatsachen zur Beurteilung des jüdischen Volkes (Handbook on the Jewish Question: The Most Important Facts for Assessing the Jewish People). Leipzig 1944, pp. 201–205. The handbook, which was first published in 1887 as the "Antisemiten-Catechismus" (Anti-Semitic Catechism), was intended to serve as a practical guide for anti-Semites, containing, among other things, information on the history, teachings, and organization of Judaism, court rulings, and numerous lists of names of "Jews in the German cultural community."

352 District cultural officer Schilling to theater director Hans Abrell, November 20, 1934. StACo Theater 65.

The play in question, *Hau-Ruck*, was performed on November 30, 1934. At the same time, Schilling attempted to discipline the theater in other ways in line with National Socialist ideology and reminded the artistic director of his responsibility to ensure that members of the Landestheater no longer shopped at Jewish businesses.[354] On behalf of the administrative committee of the Landestheater, Franz Dehler, as representative of the Bavarian State Ministry of Education and Culture, also emphatically requested that the committee be informed by the theater management before the final program was drawn up.[355] In addition, the Bavarian Ostmark Office of the Propaganda Ministry had secured the right to submit the Landestheater's program on an ongoing basis and to be allocated fixed seats for performances. [356]

In order to subordinate Abrell's work to the will of Mayor Schwede and the city council despite the restructuring of the theater system and to continue to exert concrete influence on it, a clause was to be included in Abrell's contract that tied his actions even more closely to the discretion of the city council. This clause was to read: "Every member is obliged to promote and protect the reputation and dignity of the institute, the prosperity of the art institution, and respect for the artistic profession and individual artists. Observing decency, good manners, and customs is made a strict duty. Behavior that violates these obligations is considered grounds for immediate dismissal if the city council deems such behavior a serious breach of duty."[357]Although the last section had to be deleted at the behest of the State Ministry of Education and Culture due to legal concerns, the influence of the mayor and the city theater representative on the artistic directorship remained evident. The appointment of directors, the compilation and approval of their programs remained a local matter and were often carried out within the local framework and through personal agreements.

At the same time, after 1933, the party increasingly involved the theater in its work. By taking possession of the theater and its social appeal for all high-profile party events, it could serve as a representative stage, allowing Coburg's Nazi officials to seemingly seamlessly place themselves in a ducal tradition. In addition, the work of the artists performing there was incorporated into the liturgy of Nazi events, and the political messages at memorial ceremonies were musically enhanced by the power of a performance by the theater orchestra.[359] The administrative committee of the Landestheater also worked closely with the district administrator of the National Socialist People's Welfare Organization, Puff, and, at the request of the Winter Relief Fund, levied a surcharge of 10 to 60 pfennigs in favor of the WHW. [360] In addition, those artists of the Landestheater who did not

353 See Hans Abrell to District Cultural Officer Schilling, November 16, 1934. StACo Theater 65 and *Bayerische Ostmark* from November 30, 1934.

354 See report on the meeting with the local group leaders of the cultural policy department of the district leadership of the NSDAP on October 31, 1934, November 2, 1934. StACo Theater 65.

355 See Franz Dehler Mayor Dr. Schmidt, October 13, 1935. StACo Theater 3430.

356 See Bavarian Ostmark Regional Office of the Propaganda Ministry to the management of the Coburg State Theater, August 19, 1935. StACo Theater 3015.

357 Meeting of the administrative committee of the Landestheater on June 23, 1933. StACo Theater 687.

358 See also Dussel: Theater, p. 236 f.

359 See memo dated March 12, 1933. StACo Theater 65.

360 See minutes of the Administrative Committee meeting of December 20, 1933. StACo Theater 65.

currently involved in a play were obliged to collect donations from the theater audience during the intermissions of performances, for example on the "Day of National Solidarity," using collection boxes provided by the district leadership of the NSV. [361] As in all German theaters, Hitler's rallies and speeches were broadcast to the auditorium from the stage of the Landestheater. [362]

In August 1935, Hans Abrell was finally elected as a member of the Reich Theater Chamber. Initially, he worked from Dresden as an advisor to all departments of the reorganized chamber and was appointed to the management of the Reich Theater Chamber's higher examination office for personnel and budgetary issues in November 1935. In addition, he headed the examination system for stage certification. [363]

The cultural-political "education of the masses" and the limits of Nazification

His successor, Erwin Dietrich, born in Bad Wimpfen in 1882, had already worked as an actor in Heilbronn, Saarbrücken, Königsberg, Hamburg, Würzburg, Nuremberg, and Stuttgart. Before taking up his post in Coburg, he had been director and senior stage manager and finally artistic director at the municipal theater in Ulm, where he had founded what was supposedly the "first Aryan theater" in 1932 by introducing an "Aryan certificate" for the engagement of actors.[364] Dietrich, who would soon become known in Coburg for his impulsive nature, committed himself to a tougher approach and announced shortly after taking office that he wanted to bring about change at the State Theater and, together with the conductors, consistently assert his artistic will. [365] Carl Eduard was convinced of him from the outset. [366] As his work in Coburg spanned from 1935 to 1943, he was the artistic director who was able to shape the Landestheater most sustainably in line with National Socialist ideology. His appointment also coincided with a new theater policy by the Reich Theater Chamber, which had been conceived in 1935 after the establishment of the Nazi regime. In addition to the theater's task of "educating the masses" in terms of cultural policy, Dietrich also wanted his stage to be a place of relaxation and recreation, and therefore included a number of entertainment pieces in the repertoire.[367] Particularly due to the difficult financial situation of the Landestheater and the urgent need to maintain or increase audience numbers, this project also corresponded to the financial policy requirements of a provincial theater. This also reflected the policy of the Reich Theater Chamber, which, after the 1933/34 season, decided against a radical overhaul of the repertoire in order not to alienate traditional theater audiences. With the simultaneous exclusion of socially critical works and new forms of experimental aesthetics, a semblance of normality was thus maintained for the majority of the population.

Even before Dietrich took office, Mayor Dr. Schmidt and District Cultural Officer Schilling had agreed on various issues concerning the state theater. Schilling,

361 See District Propaganda Director Zeitler to Theater Director Dietrich, December 1, 1936. StACo Theater 67.
362 See notice posted in the Coburg State Theater on November 10, 1933. StACo Theater 65.
363 See *Coburger Tageblatt*, November 11, 1935.
364 See *Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung*, May 27, 1932.
365 See letter from director Dietrich to conductor Siegfried Meik, August 5, 1935. StACo Theater 66.
366 See entry in the pocket calendar dated July 5, 1935. House archive of the Saxe-Coburg and Gotha Foundation.
367 See review of the 1936/37 season. StACo Theater 73.

who had shown himself to be extremely dissatisfied with Abrell's artistic work, presented a cultural policy program that the mayor largely agreed with. With regard to the program, Schilling wanted an even stronger focus on National Socialist principles and demanded the consistent banishment of all Jewish authors and composers from the program with the principle "Jews must not appear in word or sound." He also demanded a consistent rejection of "Jewish modernism."[368]Ultimately, Schilling was relatively satisfied with Dietrich's draft program, but again attempted to align it more strictly with the National Socialist tradition of the city of Coburg than the Propaganda Ministry had stipulated. Strict National Socialist criteria posed particular challenges for the program, especially in the case of operettas. The strict standards that Schilling wanted to apply are evident, for example, in his demand that Eduard Künneke's *Klein Dorrit* not be performed because the author was married to a "non-Aryan" and was therefore considered to have "Jewish connections." However, despite being expelled from the party, Künneke was allowed to continue to be performed with special permission from Goebbels on the part of the Reich Ministry of Propaganda. He even made it onto Goebbels' "Gottbegnadeten-Liste" God-gifted listof artists who were under the special protection of the Nazi regime. Ultimately, however, Schilling was once again unable to assert himself against the creative authority of the artistic director. *Little Dorrit* was performed during the 1936/37 season and was staged three times in Coburg. Dietrich was able to establish close relationships with both Mayor Schmidt and Department Head Heimberger and use these to ward off attempts by the district cultural officer to interfere.[370]

However, thanks to his connections in Coburg, Oskar Walleck, head of the Supreme Theater Authority in Bavaria, established in 1936, insisted on having a say in matters concerning the state theater and championed its interests. Due to the personal ties between Dietrich and Walleck, the Coburg theater director turned to the Bavarian theater authority when he disagreed with the Reich Theater Chamber's decisions on the program. At a meeting between Mayor Schmidt, Franz Dehler, Franz Heimberger, and Walleck in Munich, the participants also drew up a plan for the future structure of the State Theater, bypassing the Reich Theater Chamber. Walleck called on the Coburgers to make pragmatic decisions regarding the financial aspects of transforming the State Theater into a "people's theater," even against the will of the Reich dramaturge. In 1937, Walleck was also authorized to issue instructions to the three state representatives on the Coburg Administrative Committee regarding their voting behavior in urgent cases.[372]

Under Dietrich, the State Theater was extensively incorporated into the National Socialist Coburg cult. The promotional evenings of the 1936/37 season, at which the

368 See District Cultural Officer Schilling to Mayor Dr. Schmidt, August 2, 1935. StACo Theater 3430. Schmidt marked Schilling's letter with exclamation marks and positive comments in several places.

369 See Prieberg: Handbook, p. 4316 f.

370 See Erwin Dietrich to Mayor Greim, March 15, 1939. StACo Theater 3430.

371 See transcript of the meeting with Oskar Walleck in Munich in December 1936. StACo Theater 3430.

372 See State Ministry of the Interior to the Supreme Theater Authority of Bavaria, March 15, 1937. StACo Theater 3430.

newly hired theater members to the audience were organized under the motto "The Train to Coburg." As an innovation, open-air performances were staged in the courtyard of Ehrenburg Castle during Dietrich's tenure in the 1935/36 season. Right at the beginning of his tenure as artistic director, the composer Felix August Bernhard Draeseke, who was born in Coburg in 1835 and died in 1913, also became the center of attention. Rediscovered by the National Socialists, he was celebrated as a grand master of German music. Mayor Dr. Schmidt in particular had made the glorification of the Coburg native part of his agenda. In 1935, on his 100th birthday, Coburg was therefore proud to present him as a son of the city. From May 5 to

On October 7, a working committee chaired by district cultural officer Schilling and honorary chairwoman Frida Draeseke, Draeseke's widow and estate administrator, organized a Draeseke celebration under the patronage of Carl Eduard. In addition to Mayor Dr. Schmidt, the chairman of the Draeseke Society and Draeseke's student Prof. Dr. Hermann Stephani from Marburg also attended. He gave a speech about *Draeseke and his historical mission*. In memory of Draeseke's admiration for Wagner, the State Theater performed Wagner's *Tannhäuser* for the occasion. Professor Stephani also unveiled a commemorative plaque for Felix Draeseke, which had been installed on Coburg's market square, at Draeseke's birthplace, Markt 9. Carl Edu-ard announced in the program of festivities: "It fills me with heartfelt joy that it is part of the great cultural mission of the Third Reich that a true German master of the stature of Felix Draeseke should receive an extraordinary honor in his hometown on his 100th birthday." Mayor Dr. Schmidt described the festivities as "a milestone (...) in the heated struggle for the spiritual and mental renewal of the German people."[374]

As far as the program was concerned, Dietrich continued his predecessor's typical National Socialist line, which included contemporary and modern works alongside classical works and a performance of the Ring cycle.[375]Dietrich also placed an emphasis on bringing German poets to the stage, so that in his first season, for example, of 26 plays by Shakespeare and Ibsen, only two playwrights were not German, and the majority of the German playwrights were living German poets.[376] Dietrich also boasted of staging numerous premieres, including Wagner operas, and of being able to present new productions, with the result that the number of subscribers initially rose again at the beginning of his tenure.

However, Dietrich's course was not destined for lasting success, as traditional theater audiences turned away from the artistic director and the number of subscribers declined steadily from 1927 to 1939. [377]New plays created in line with National Socialist cultural policy did not always appeal to Coburg theater audiences. Walter Erich Schäfer's frequently performed play *Der 18. Oktober* (*October 18*), which dealt with the struggle for freedom against Napoleon, was staged at the Landestheater in 1936 at the conclusion of the Gaukulturwoche (Gau Culture Week). In the theater decorated with swastika flags

373 See District Cultural Officer Schilling to Artistic Director Diertich, September 5, 1938. StACo Landestheater 67.
374 See Festive program for the Felix Draeseke celebration of the city of Coburg. StACo
375 See the Landestheater program for the 1936/37 season. StACo Theater 73.
376 See questionnaire for the 1935/36 season. StACo Theater 3430.
377 See Mayor of the City of Coburg, December 24, 1943. StACo Theater 689.

However, to the great disappointment of the artistic director and district propaganda leader Zeitler, the decorated theater remained empty. Zeitler remarked that it was surprising that Coburg of all places showed so little interest in the play, even though, according to Dietrich, Schäfer was "probably the most contemporary poet with such wonderful German tendencies."[378] The situation was similar with Hanns Johst's play *Thomas Paine*. The play, which artistic director Dietrich described as "the strongest, best, most beautiful, most dramatic, and most combative stage work that Nazi poetry has given us so far" [379], conveyed the message that the fate of the people was above the fate of the individual. Here, empty rows of seats had to be lamented by party representatives, among others, at the ceremony marking the premiere, and the play did not enjoy great popularity with the audience in general.[380] The plays *Gottes Kreaturen unter Tag (God's Creatures Underground)* by Hanns Marschall, which premiered in Coburg, and Hans Rehberg's *Großer Kurfürst* (The Great Elector) joined the ranks of those plays that were treated with contempt by the Coburg audience.[381]

There were clear limits to the penetration of National Socialist ideology into the theater's repertoire, especially since many considered the plays in question to be of poor quality. Although the Coburg State Theater had paved the way for the steady penetration of nationalist and völkisch ideology into the Coburg population and the urban area, there were considerable forces of resistance working against it. The instrumentalization of the Landestheater had been successful overall, but only to the extent that the traditional theater experience was not transformed and the high cultural standards of the stage were not compromised.

1.2.1.3 Exclusion: Personnel policy

However, the Nazification of the theater did not stop at the repertoire, but also affected the question of which artists were allowed to perform on the Coburg stage in line with National Socialist personnel policy. The administrative committee had the right to advise on or object to the reappointment of performing artists, thereby restricting the artistic director's authority in favor of control by the city administration. New hires and the hiring and dismissal of commercial and technical employees, on the other hand were left to the sole discretion of the artistic director.

In September 1923, the *Völkischer Beobachter* had attacked the Coburg State Theater, lamenting the prominent role of the Jewish notary Kuno Hirsch in the theater's administrative committee and accusing the theater of deliberately dismissing German artists and hiring Jewish artists such as Adele Gotthelf and Erich Moral.[383]Mayor Hirschfeld and artistic director Mahling responded by

378 Artistic director Dietrich to district propaganda leader Zeitler, May 23, 1936, and district propaganda leader Zeitler to artistic director Dietrich on May 28, 1936. StACo Theater 66.
379 Memo from artistic director Dietrich, February 17, 1937. StACo Theater 3430.
380 See ibid. and review of the 1936/37 season. StACo Theater 73.
381 See review of the 1936/37 season with Dietrich's handwritten notes. StACo Theater 73.
382 See contract on the continuation of the Coburg State Theater dated May 17, 1924/July 2, 1924, URL: https://www.coburg.de/Portaldata/2/Resources/dokumente/r1-rechtsamt/stadtrecht/A–333-landes theatervertrag.pdf (last accessed September 15, 2021).
383 See *Völkischer Beobachter* dated September 30, 1923.

vehemently and printed a correction in the *Coburger Zeitung*, in which they emphasized artistic principles as the sole basis for personnel decisions.[384] In November 1923, Gotthelf and Moral were informed that their contracts would not be renewed, so that both left the Landestheater in August 1924. Less than two years later, on September 8, 1925, the theater committee under the same artistic director finally decided to issue a directive stating that in future, only German artists and, in emergencies, only foreign artists of German origin would be hired.[385]

However, Mahling's successor, director Schulz-Dornburg, began to engage foreign and Jewish artists despite repeated requests from the administrative committee and the city administration. When the theater committee was reorganized in 1929 and now consisted of two representatives each from the DNVP and NSDAP, as well as one from the SPD, it decided on August 19, 1929, that the "artistic director (...) should be made aware, with unanimous consent, that the hiring of foreigners in the event of a vacancy is highly undesirable" and that in the event of a violation, he would be personally and financially liable for the consequences.[386] Mayor Unverfähr repeatedly stated in the administrative committee and to the directorate that, due to the current majority in the city council and the political attitude of the population, Jews should no longer be employed at the Landestheater.[387] The administrative committee had already rejected the re-employment of a Jewish artist and issued a corresponding instruction to theater agencies that applicants must be of German nationality and Christian denomination. The ensuing criticism from the Bavarian branch of the Central Association of German Citizens of the Jewish Faith, who wanted their fundamental rights to be preserved, and from the Jewish community in Coburg, in particular the preacher and theater critic Hirsch, was ultimately appeased without actually changing anything in practice.[388] The administrative committee justified its actions to the Bavarian State Ministry of Education and Culture by promising to refrain from sending such notifications to theater agencies in the future and to make decisions on engagements within the administrative committee. Hermann Hirsch had explained to District Administrator Fritsch that the primary aim was to exclude "Eastern Jews," on which both reached agreement. This averted the threat of several members of the Coburg Jewish community canceling their theater subscriptions.Even before Walleck's dismissal, the *Coburger Volksblatt newspaper* had criticized the fact that the entire theater staff, artists, and employees were under the "swastika's thumb."

384 See *Coburger Zeitung* newspaper dated October 4, 1923.
385 See minutes of the Administrative Committee meeting of September 8, 1925. StACo Theater 71.
386 Minutes of the Administrative Committee meeting of August 19, 1929. StACo Theater 71.
387 See District Administrator Dr. Fritsch to the State Ministry of Education and Culture, April 5, 1930. BayHStA MK 41067.
388 See Central Association of German Citizens of the Jewish Faith, Bavarian Regional Association, to the Ministry of Education and Culture, Munich, February 27, 1930. BayHStA MK 41067.
389 See District Administrator Dr. Fritsch to the State Ministry of Education and Culture, April 5, 1930, and the management of the Coburg State Theater to the Ministry of Education and Culture in Munich, March 20, 1930. BayHStA MK 41067.
390 See *Coburger Volksblatt*, January 21, 1931.

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environment

Under the artistic direction of Oskar Walleck, this hiring practice became established and immediately provoked resistance from part of the Coburg theater audience. While elsewhere the displacement of Jewish artists took place mostly without protest from the non-Jewish educated middle class,[391] the dismissals, which were unanimously approved by the theater committee, sparked a movement in the city that, although ineffective, once again highlighted the limits to which some theatergoers were willing to tolerate interference with the institution and thus also its quality. On the one hand, the dismissals resulted in a number of sometimes offensive letters to the administrative committee, and on the other hand, calls were made to boycott the theater. A list calling for a boycott was displayed in a Coburg hairdressing salon, and a Coburg resident went from door to door trying to convince people to join the boycott. A list of complaints against the theater's dismissal practices submitted at the end of 1931, bore 280 names.

When the BBG finally came into force in 1933, only one choir singer at the Landestheater was affected. A political purge of theater staff had already taken place by that point and did not need to be repeated in 1933.[393] In the course of the creation of the Reich Chamber of Culture, the first implementing ordinance of the Reich Chamber of Culture Act stipulated that from then on, membership in a sub-chamber of the Reich Chamber of Culture was mandatory for all those who were involved in "the production, reproduction, intellectual or technical processing, distribution, preservation, sale, or brokerage of cultural property."[394] were required to be members of a sub-chamber of the Reich Chamber of Culture. This membership, for which an "Aryan certificate" was necessary, was ultimately a prerequisite for practicing one's profession and thus became the most important instrument of selection for artists. Through the instrument of job placement via the Bühnennachweis stage certificate as an agency for stage contracts of all kinds and the review of applicants' "employability," the Reich Chamber of Theater also secured opportunities to influence casting practices.

Under Walleck, preferential treatment of party members or "old fighters" was primarily evident in the hiring of administrative and technical staff. For example, unemployed SA and SS men were specifically recruited. At the same time, Schwede ensured that "old fighters" among the members of the Landestheater received special recognition. Hildegard Fritz, who had been employed in the theater's administration since 1918, was to be hired as a civil servant and given a higher salary grade. Chamber musician Kubasch was to receive a monthly honorary allowance of 20 RM, and lighting master Kobelt was to receive 10 RM.[397] Among the artistic staff,

391 See Führer, Karl Christian: "Kulturkrise" und Nationalbewusstsein. Der Niedergang des Theaters in der späten Weimarer Republik als bürgerliche Identitätskrise. In: ibid.; Hagemann, Karen; Kundrus, Birthe (eds.): Eliten im Wandel. Gesellschaftliche Führungsschichten im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert. Münster 2004, pp. 155–178 and Führer, Karl Christian: German Cultural Life and the Crisis of National Identity during the Depression, 1929–1932. In German Studies Review 26 (2001) Issue 3, pp. 461–486.

392 See minutes of the extraordinary city council meeting of January 15, 1932. StadtACo A 8074 and various letters to the theater management StACo Theater 65.

393 See Chapter III3.2.1.

394 RGBl. I 1933, pp. 797–800; RGBl I 1933, pp. 969 f.

395 In 1937, independent stage agents were also permitted again. See Dussel: Theater, pp. 75–77.

396 See ibid., pp. 188 f.

397 See minutes of the Administrative Committee meeting of March 8, 1933. StACo Theater 72.

However, in addition to the non-employment of Jewish artists, artistic abilities and budgetary issues continued to be decisive factors. Walleck appointed Siegfried Meik, an old acquaintance from Hagen, as first conductor. Meik helped him to implement his music policy program. In August 1933, a clause was added to the contracts for female staff at the Landestheater stating that the theater management had the right to terminate the contract and release the employee from the day of the wedding if she got married. [398]This clause was removed again at the end of 1936. [399]

Under Abrell's directorship, the political views and background of the staff became more of a focus. In the 1934/35 season, at least 26 of the 150 theater employees, or 17.5%, were themselves party members, which at that time meant a high degree of formal Nazification.[400] At the same time, the

The "racial question" was a constant topic of discussion. Konrad Rehkemper, brother of the prominent opera singer Heinrich Rehkemper, who was employed at the Coburg State Theater, got into a conflict with a Coburg woman because of his sister-in-law's "racial affiliation," which ended in a reconciliation hearing.[401] At the same time, the influence of the Reich Theater Chamber on personnel decisions also became more noticeable. In order to place unemployed party members, the Landestheater was required by decree of the Reich Minister for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda on July 20, 1934, to hire a total of four new stagehands, who were to be placed through the stage registry. However, due to the theater's limited budget, such plans were not always feasible. [402] Nevertheless, Abrell's personnel policy and his National Socialist influence on the staff did not satisfy the district cultural officer Schilling, who was also committed to a more consistent Nazification of the theater in terms of the administrative tasks of the management. Before Dietrich took office, he finally demanded that the staff "as a whole must finally learn to think and act in a National Socialist manner"[403] and wanted to see this achieved by placing greater emphasis on Nazi holidays within the theater or by consistently filling the local branch of the German Stage Association with party members.

After the Coburg State Theater had long been known for paying its artists extremely poorly, causing many artists to leave for other theaters, the significant improvement in working conditions for stage artists thanks to Reich subsidies ultimately led to the expansion of the system of social control among theater staff. In particular, compliant behavior was rewarded with increased prestige and developed into an incentive for the staff of the Landestheater.

398 See minutes of the administrative committee meeting of August 4, 1933. StACo Theater 72.

399 See minutes of the Administrative Committee meeting of November 5, 1936. StACo Theater 3430.

400 According to party statistics from January 1, 1935, 7.5% of all working people and 20% of all civil servants throughout the Reich were party members. See Broszat, Martin: Der Staat Hitlers. Grundlegung und Entwicklung seiner inneren Verfassung (The State of Hitler: Foundations and Development of its Internal Constitution). Munich, 1969, p. 254.

401 See Konrad Rehkemper to the Mayor of Coburg, June 11, 1935. StACo Theater 66.

402 See Dussel: Theater, pp. 190–193.

403 District cultural officer Schilling to Mayor Dr. Schmidt, August 2, 1935. StACo Theater 3430. Emphasis in the original.

1.2.2 Bringing people together: theater as a shared experience

1.2.2.1 A new audience

As early as 1927, actor and director Dr. Ingo Krauß conjured up the idea of a "people's theater," the creation of which the NSDAP had elevated to a cultural policy program: "The 'court theater' had become a 'state theater. But once, hopefully in the not too distant future, it should become a 'people's theater' in the noblest sense of the word,
i.e., a theater that the entire population considers it a matter of honor to make its own through frequent attendance, the possession of which in all its glory is its greatest pride, then, yes, then its 'golden age' will dawn."[404] The idea of this "people's theater" was not a genuinely National Socialist one, but it was to be finally realized within the Nazi state. To this end, the theater audience also had to be reformed.

Opening the theater to the entire "people's community"

Whereas before 1918/19 the Coburg Theater, as a court theater, had been closely linked to the ducal house and had become the center of bourgeois cultural life, the theater was now to be opened up and made accessible to all sections of the population. The theater as an exclusive space for the educated and wealthy classes was to be broken down and transformed into a space for the entire "people's community" to enjoy. From then on, the theater audience would no longer consist solely of aristocrats and the upper middle classes, as well as those who wanted to belong to these circles, but the theater was to become a genuine communal experience. Through artistic experience, the aim was to integrate even the last members of the people into the "people's community." In line with the Rosenberg Circle's thinking, the aim was to merge the audience in the new "people's theater" into an "experience community." By imbuing the plays with true meaning in line with National Socialist thinking, a visit to the theater was intended to provide an emotional experience for all classes and groups of the population and prove to be a great communal experience. [405] The aim was to give those who had previously been socially disadvantaged access to cultural offerings from which they had been excluded. In the spirit of inclusive communitization, the theater space had to be recoded from a status symbol of the upper classes to a place of "people's community." Especially after the Thingstätten movement was ultimately not realized throughout the Reich in the form of a new theater, this task ultimately had to fall to traditional theater. At the beginning of the 1933/34 season, Hans Abrell appealed to the people of Coburg: "Let us also make the theater a great shared experience; let us together recreate the theater of the entire people as the bearer of the artistic and cultural will of our nation."[406] He announced that the redesign of the theater would open up cultural assets to everyone and would no longer be a special domain for the educated. In this way, the theater was to contribute to the development and consolidation of German thought and the unification of the nation, with the people having a duty to create opportunities for the theater to develop through their participation. [407] Not

404 See *Coburger Zeitung*, May 28, 1927.
405 See Guidelines for a vibrant German theater program established by the dramaturgical office of the Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur (Fighting League for German Culture). In: Bausteine zum deutschen Nationaltheater 1 (1933), pp. 17–19.
406 Abrell, Hans: Das nationale Theater. In: Das Coburger Landestheater 1933/34 and Abrell, Hans: Das Theater des dritten Reiches und wir. In Coburger Landestheater 1934/35. StACo Theater 65.
407 Cf. ibid.

Ultimately, this claim necessitated a process of transformation in which the social role of the theater and its inherent space for communication were renegotiated and reappropriated. Here, too, it was necessary to carefully balance the introduction of new forms of cultural life with the preservation of Coburg's traditions and cultural customs.

Even at the centenary celebrations of the State Theater in 1927, an anonymous letter to the editor criticized the fact that the festivities were staged only for the "top 100" and were not organized as a public celebration.[408] In fact, traces of the old ducal theater were still clearly visible even after 1933. Carl Eduard's seat on the administrative committee of the State Theater and the right to participate in its management that this gave him were a clear sign that the city wanted to honor the tradition of the ducal court theater and maintain it to a certain extent, especially since the duke's loyalty to the party line was to be relied upon. The theater lover Ferdinand of Bulgaria was also courted by the theater management. He continued to be granted traditional special privileges, which seemed appropriate, among other things, because of his financial contributions to the Coburg stage. On several occasions, Ferdinand paid 1,000 to 2,000 RM into a foundation fund for the needs of the State Theater or made smaller contributions to special guest performances that were of interest to him or to the purchase of special costumes.[409] In return, special performances were organized for him and fixed schedules were changed when he received guests in Coburg. He always granted the stage personnel involved a special fee. In addition, Ferdinand was repeatedly allowed to attend dress rehearsals at his request and was personally welcomed by the theater management as a guest of honor during the intermissions. [410]

However, the increasingly self-confident KdF also caused tensions in the former tsar's long-standing connection to the theater. In 1938, for example, Ferdinand's requests for special performances or program changes for his guests were no longer granted due to an objection by the KdF, as they were incompatible with its ideas. There also appeared to be tensions between director Dietrich and Ferdinand of Bulgaria, or rather between the theater and the Bulgarian court, which Dietrich had to resolve on behalf of the city administration.[411] At the same time, the city administration also attempted to limit certain privileges of the ducal family in the theater, while preserving the ducal tradition. In 1934, Franz Heimberger was instructed by the administrative committee to speak to Carl Eduard and inform him that the ducal family's box in the theater would no longer be made available to their guests, but would be used exclusively by

408 See *Coburger Zeitung newspaper* dated June 2, 1927.

409 See Director Dietrich to Ferdinand of Bulgaria, October 22, 1936. StACo Theater 66.

410 See memo from Hans Abrell dated January 7, 1935, and letter from Director Dietrich to Ferdinand of Bulgaria, January 13, 1936. StACo Theater 66. At the turn of the year, the director, Ferdinand of Bulgaria, and Carl Eduard always exchanged special wishes, thus maintaining their mutual correspondence. In addition, a cultural circle formed around Ferdinand of Bulgaria and Court Marshal General Gantchev in the tradition of patronage, after Gantchev's invitation led to frequent social gatherings of theater staff and the bonds between the Bulgarian court and the actors of the State Theater remained close. Peter Gantchev, who had come to Coburg with Ferdinand of Bulgaria, had participated in the armistice negotiations in Brest-Litovsk in 1918 as a member of the Bulgarian delegation.

411 See Director Dietrich to General Gentchev, February 14, 1936, and Director Dietrich to Mayor Schmidt, March 28, 1936. StACo Theater 66.

Members of the ducal house were to use it. [412]Ultimately, however, the ducal influence on the Landestheater remained, not least because of the visible presence of the ducal box, like a foreign body within the newly created space of the "people's community."

The exclusion of Jewish theatergoers

Part of the creation of this very space, in addition to the exclusion of "Jewish modernism" and Jewish actors and actresses, was the exclusion of Jewish theatergoers. The Jewish community in Coburg included passionate theatergoers such as Hermann Hirsch, who was a theater critic, and Kuno Hirsch, who was a long-time member of the theater committee. In 1930, 30 of the 1,600 theater subscribers were Jewish, which exceeded their share of the population of Coburg. As early as December 1931, a number of Jewish theatergoers had canceled their subscriptions in protest after Oskar Walleck took office.[413] Although every loss of a loyal visitor was a financial blow to the state theater, the Nazi city administration continued its deliberate efforts to exclude Jews from the communal experience of theater performances.

In 1933, the city administration issued an internal memo stating that Jews were not welcome at the Landestheater. As a result, season ticket holders and businesses were no longer sent programs. Although this instruction was never made official, it seemed to have spread, as the theater box office received repeated inquiries about it. In 1935, when pressure on German Jews had apparently eased somewhat due to foreign policy considerations, retired Jewish choir singer Samuel Löwy inquired with the theater management about the extent to which visits to the theater by "non-Aryans" were still regulated.[415]Theater representative Heimberger then announced that nothing had changed in the 1933 regulation, but director Dietrich now also sought practical implementation that would give the order more weight.[416] However, inquiries to the general management of the Prussian State Theater in Berlin, the Municipal Theater in Nuremberg, the Württemberg State Theater in Stuttgart, and the Bavarian State Theater in Munich revealed that no such regulations had been put in place at these theaters.[417] Ultimately, the administrative committee of the Landestheater decided not to put up public posters, as director Dietrich had suggested, but merely to issue a handwritten note to the office staff at the box office and a verbal instruction to the doormen that known Coburg Jews were no longer to be admitted to performances.[418] This allowed the Coburg city administration to enforce its strict

412 See minutes of the Administrative Committee meeting of September 17, 1934. StACo Theater 72.

413 See: Letter from the management of the Coburg State Theater to the Ministry of Education and Culture, Munich, March 20, 1930. BayHStA MK 41067.

414 See memo dated December 9, 1931. StACo Theater 72.

415 See memo dated October 1, 1935. StACo Theater 66.

416 See Franz Heimberger to Director Dietrich, October 12, 1935. StACo Theater 66.

417 See inquiry to the general directors of the Prussian State Theater Berlin, the Municipal Theater Nuremberg, the Württemberg State Theater Stuttgart, and the Bavarian State Theater Munich, October 23, 1935. StACo Theater 66.

418 See resolution of the administrative committee of the Landestheater dated November 8, 1935. StACo Theater 66.

implemented exclusionary practices, but at the same time officially awaited the immigration regulations announced by Hitler. In May 1938, the matter was reignited when a subscriber complained that the owner of a hosiery and fashion store in Sonneberg had visited the state theater with his family, even though he was Jewish. The person concerned, Karl Gramowski, had been baptized, had explicitly identified his business as a German business, and, after the Reich Office for Genealogical Research had been involved, had been declared half-Jewish by a decision he had sought from the regional court. After he had assured the cashiers at the State Theater that he was not Jewish, they had sold him tickets, but this had now met with criticism from other Sonneberg residents. Dietrich asked the Sonneberg district administration to clarify the background to the matter and forwarded the case to the theater department. On November 18, 1938, the management of the State Theater officially announced that, in accordance with the instructions of Reich Minister Goebbels dated November 12, no more tickets would be issued to Jewish persons and that, in cases of uncertainty about "Aryan" ancestry, it was preferable to proceed restrictively.[419]However, at this point it was still unclear how to deal with
"half-Jews." Here, too, after a meeting with the mayor, it was officially stated that the decision should be postponed until a decree from the Reich Minister had been announced. In practice, however, action was once again taken prematurely. Karl Gramowski, who had been treated as a Jew in Sonneberg and accordingly driven through the streets and arrested during Kristallnacht, had once again used his status as a "half-Jew" to order tickets for his children at the Landestheater. Dietrich refused him, however, on the simple grounds that Jews were no longer allowed to enter theaters as a matter of principle.

Efforts to reach circles outside the theater

In addition to excluding those "outside the community," the creation of the "people's theater" now also aimed to bring circles unfamiliar with theater to the Coburg stage. The public performances introduced by the German Trade Union Federation in 1924 on the initiative of SPD city councilor Bätz were intended to meet this need and, above all, to give workers the opportunity to attend the theater. However, the step of transforming these trade union performances into genuine folk performances was initially met with reluctance, as the latter had been discontinued in the 1923/24 season due to bad experiences under artistic director Mahling. Even then, it had become clear to those responsible how massively such a step would interfere with habitual theater attendance.

After 1929, the NSDAP initially set about implementing its own cultural policy strategy, which at that point was still in its infancy. In September 1930, the administrative committee approved the NSDAP's request to organize special performances for the SA and SS, the Hitler Youth and the League of German Girls, as well as the military, at low prices in exchange for the purchase of around 300 tickets for the NSDAP·Theater attendance was already an established and mandatory part of service in Nazi formations.

419 See Dietrich's order of November 18, 1938. StACo Theater 66.
420 See Director Dietrich to Karl Gramovski, November 25, 1938. StACo Theater 66.
421 See minutes of the administrative committee meeting of October 3, 1927. StACo Theater 71.
422 See minutes of the administrative committee meeting of September 29, 1930. StACo Theater 71.

and, through performances for the SA, the SS, and, from 1932 onwards, also the labor service volunteers of the Coburg labor service camp, introduced groups of people to the theater who had not previously been part of a regular theater audience. From January 1, 1932, director Walleck finally lowered the prices for the Landestheater, thereby anticipating a measure that the NSDAP usually only took after 1933.[423] In doing so, he countered a trend that had seen regular prices rise steadily since 1925 due to increasing operating costs and declining purchasing power. In addition, the NSDAP set about fulfilling its social promises with regard to the theater. On weekdays, the employment office issued tickets for subscribers' performances to unemployed persons for 20 or 30 pfennigs, provided they had an unemployment certificate. Later, the measure was extended to include the wives of the unemployed, and at the instigation of the NSDAP, special closed performances were held for children of needy parents during the 1932/33 season.

After 1933, efforts were made to interest broad sections of the population in the theater and, at the same time, to provide ideological training in the National Socialist spirit. Performances of suitable plays, such as Friedrich Forster's Führerdrama *Alle gegen Einen, Einer für Alle (All Against One, One for All*), at very low prices and Sunday performances at low prices were intended to attract people to the theater and win over the rural population.[425] Furthermore, special conditions with reduced admission prices existed for the Reich School at Hohenfels Castle, the Reich Labor Service, the Reich Women's Labor Service, the Hitler Youth and the League of German Girls, and the Reichswehr. With the KdF taking over events, a decisive change ultimately took place in terms of the composition of theater audiences and the creation of a "people's theater." The KdF in particular had set itself the task of breaking the privilege of the wealthy to enjoy culture, opening the theater to workers and the rural population, and thus raising their social prestige. Therefore, only members of the German Labor Front whose income did not exceed 300 RM per month were eligible to purchase theater tickets through the KdF. [426] In addition, the KdF organized lectures on certain operas or plays in the auditorium of the Oberrealschule or in the "Adolf Hitler House." In addition, it regularly brought theatergoers to Coburg by bus from Neustadt, Lichtenfels, and Kronach. The KdF actually succeeded in introducing theater-shy circles to the Landestheater and, above all, to light entertainment. The local representative of the KdF Neustadt bei Coburg reported in this context, with great propaganda effect, that despite the fact that Neustadt was an area in economic distress with high unemployment, enthusiasm for the theater was growing noticeably there. It was not the great operas, but operettas, plays, and comedies that inspired people and gave them the feeling that they could finally have a say in cultural matters. He also emphasized that the work of the KdF lifted many members of the national community out of their everyday lives and taught them to move freely in a larger community.

423 See Director Walleck to city officials, December 18, 1931. StACo Theater 65.
424 See minutes of the meeting of the administrative committee on February 1, 1932. StACo Theater 71 and minutes of the meeting of the administrative committee on January 3, 1933. StACo Theater 72.
425 See report on the meeting with the local group leaders of the cultural policy department of the district leadership of the NSDAP on October 31, 1934, November 2, 1934. StACo Theater 65.
426 See contract with the KdF dated August 13, 1937. StACo Theater 424.
427 See My experiences at the KdF performances at the Coburg State Theater by local representative Edwin Großmann Neustadt bei Coburg 1936. StACo Theater 419.

As clearly as the report reproduced the idealized notions of KdF work, it nevertheless provided evidence that the KdF was successful. Thanks to the special conditions for Nazi organizations and the introduction of KdF ideas, visitor numbers did indeed rise again briefly from the 1934/35 season onwards. From 1939 onwards, the KdF also took over the organization of special military performances for the Wehrmacht at reduced prices, as well as variety shows in the Coburg military hospitals.[428]At the same time, after the war began, the KdF also took over the Nazi theater community and the established "brown performances" and incorporated them into its program, enabling it to steadily expand its influence. [429]

1.2.2.2 The obligation to experience culture: advertising and cultural tax

In Coburg, advertising for new theatergoers and subscribers always served a dual purpose. In an effort to keep the Landestheater alive, advertising for visitors and subscribers was always one of the prominent organizational tasks of the theater administration after 1919 and exerted particular pressure on the creation of a varied program. The theater's claim to be a "place of celebration for the entire population" coincided with the fiscal effort to keep the theater alive and attract as many subscribers and spectators as possible to the theater. At the same time, theater advertising became part of the effort to educate the audience.

Despite numerous countermeasures, the number of subscribers fell steadily from a temporary peak of 1,888 in November 1926 [430]to 1,159 by June 1928 [431], mainly due to the economic situation and money shortages. The commitment and momentum under Schulz-Dornburg's directorship brought about a significant increase, which was immediately reversed under Kutzschenbach's directorship. Through the expansion of the NSDAP's organizational network, which penetrated various areas of life through youth organizations or the establishment of block and cell leaders, and gained access to all sections of the population

428 See Franz Heimberger to Infantry Regiment 95, January 12, 1939. StACo Theater 425.

429 Minutes of a meeting on the takeover of the NS Theater Community and the planned brown performances by the NSG KdF, November 17, 1939. StACo Theater 425.

430 See minutes of the meeting of the administrative committee on November 8, 1926. StACo Theater 71.

431 The provision of buses for subscribers from the Coburg area, the expansion and extension of guest performances, and the conversion of public performances into union performances were measures taken by director Mahling to combat the decline in audience numbers and subscribers. He also introduced youth and special performances, which generated secure income, and reduced-price Reichsbahn tickets for regular theatergoers. The subscription format was changed and performances were offered at low prices. At the same time, the management attempted to personally contact all subscribers who had canceled their subscriptions in order to win them back. Considerations about closing the opera or shortening the season were repeatedly put on the agenda, but were ultimately dropped due to the risk of a decline in artistic standards as a result of the loss of valuable artistic staff and a decline in theater attendance. Ultimately, however, the salaries of all non-civil servant state theater employees had to be halved for two months of the season in order to maintain year-round operations. The administrative committee also repeatedly appealed to the people of Coburg to contribute to the preservation of the theater by attending performances. See administrative report from 1925 and memo from director Mahling dated March 27, 192; minutes of the administrative committee meetings on August 4 and 25, 1926. StACo Theater 71; Dehler, Franz: On the future of the Coburg State Theater. In: Deutscher Theaterdienst of January 6/7, 1932, and press release from the administrative committee from September 1932. StACo Theater 65.

created, as well as the coercive apparatus that had been gradually established since 1929, there were more effective instruments for increasing attendance under National Socialist rule. The demand under the National Socialist government to save the theater from closure noticeably increased the pressure on the National Socialist city administration, so that the theater's existence became a yardstick for the success of the NSDAP.[432]By ultimately making theater attendance a national duty, the National Socialist city administration succeeded in passing on the pressure to the population of Coburg and increasingly restricting the voluntary nature of theater attendance.

The introduction of the culture tax

In 1931, when the NSDAP had extended its power over the town hall and municipal officials, attending the state theater was declared a national duty. In December 1931, for example, director Walleck addressed all city officials and, as "guardians and promoters of the people's property (...), primarily its culture, which is the highest expression of its inherent powers and assigns it its place in humanity and its history" [433] to rent seats or attend performances, thereby increasing the civil servants' obligation to the State Theater as "Commandment to love one's people" and "a demand for political insight."[434] In August 1933, Mayor Schwede finally called on the city's civil servants, employees, and workers in a circular letter to express their approval of the Nazi state by promoting the Landestheater, announcing that it was "the duty of every German who approves of the government of national uprising to support and promote German theater with all their might."[435] In order to "carry the State Theater through the final difficult stage into a promising, ascendant, better German future" [436], Schwede expressed his expectation that no one receiving a salary or pension from the city of Coburg should be without a season ticket to the State Theater. At the same time, following a decision by the administrative committee of the state theater, Schwede had lists displayed in all departments of the city administration, which, once signed, meant that members of the city administration agreed to have one percent of their net salary withheld each month as a cultural contribution for attending the state theater. In return, the signatories were given a voucher that was accepted as payment when purchasing a season ticket for the Landestheater. [437] Failure to sign the list and, in Schwede's view, the lack of willingness to make sacrifices, was to be met with a corresponding response from the city leadership, which was no longer characterized by consideration or accommodation. In addition, Schwede reserved the right to take further measures, including the dismissal of those who, in his opinion,

432 See minutes of the Administrative Committee meetings of December 15 and 22, 1930. StACo Theater 71.
433 Director Walleck to city officials, December 18, 1931. StACo Theater 65.
434 Ibid. – See Director Walleck to city officials, September 2, 1932. StACo Theater 65.
435 Circular letter from Franz Schwedes dated August 10, 1933. StACo Theater 3512.
436 Ibid.
437 Several families were able to join together to purchase a season ticket, and low-income earners were to receive a further reduction on the cheapest seats. Those whose monthly wage was less than RM 100 or fathers who had more than two children and earned less than RM 130 were to be exempt from the requirement.

Did not comply with the request. [438]Since an official was designated for each department within the administration to organize the season tickets, and the seats were distributed directly within the administration and forwarded to the box office of the state theater, it was possible to control even more directly which officials and employees attended the theater.[439] Those civil servants who did not use the culture tax for a theater subscription were also specifically contacted by the theater management. [440]

The city council subsequently amended the order to stipulate that, as in the private sector, the one percent should be deducted from employees' gross salaries, but exempted pensioners and surviving dependents living outside the city from the regulation, as they would not be able to actually visit the theater for the equivalent value of the voucher.[441]In addition, Schwede's request was soon extended to all civil servants of the Reich and state authorities based in Coburg, and all companies that carried out work for municipal authorities were asked to retain one percent of the invoice amount for the State Theater. According to Abrell's statements, all civil servants, employees, and workers of the city, all suppliers to the city and the state theater, and many employees of state and Reich authorities ultimately paid the cultural tax for the state theater.[442] Those suppliers who had municipal contracts but refused to accept the deductions for the cultural tax were no longer considered for subsequent orders. [443] S. Fischer Verlag Berlin, founded by the German-Jewish Samuel Fischer, also refused to pay the one percent tax.[444] Similarly, the Central Office of Stage Authors and Publishers and the magazine *Der Autor* of the Association of German Stage Writers and Composers called on publishers to reject the Coburg theater director's request for the cultural tax. After the matter was forwarded to the German Stage Association, it also spoke out against paying the cultural levy to the state theater on behalf of its members, out of consideration for the foreign authors and publishers affiliated with them.

After the introduction of the cultural tax, the number of subscriptions had already increased to 2,563 by November 1933, meaning that around ten percent of the population had committed themselves to the theater. As a result, there was hardly any free ticket sales anymore; instead, the majority of tickets were issued through weekly or monthly subscriptions.[446]Ultimately, by the spring of 1934, the culture tax was bringing in an average of about 3,000 RM per month to the Landestheater alone. [447]In 1936, artistic director Dietrich, who was an ardent advocate of the culture tax, summed up that this

438 See ibid.
439 See Birkner to Mayor Schwede, September 14, 1933. StACo Theater 3512.
440 See minutes of the administrative committee meeting of November 12, 1940. StACo Theater 3431.
441 See Mayor Rehlein to the management of the Landestheater, September 25, 1933. StACo Theater 3512.
442 See Director Abrell to the Board of the German Stage Association, October 5, 1933. StACo Theater 3512.
443 See Director Dietrich to the City of Freiburg, October 23, 1936. StACo Theater 3512.
444 See S. Fischer Verlag Berlin to the Coburg theater management, September 28, 1933. StACo Theater 3512.
445 See Otto Leers to Director Abrell, October 19, 1933. StACo Theater 3512.
446 See Director Abrell to Franz Schwede, November 6, 1933. StACo Theater 72 and Director Abrell to Reich Minister Hess, November 28, 1934. StACo Theater 73.
447 See Director Abrell to Amtmann Volk, April 17, 1934. StACo Theater 3512.

Several thousand Reichsmarks in addition came from precisely those people who would otherwise not visit the theater at all or only rarely and were now forced to use up their vouchers.[448] However, the monthly deductions represented a social hardship, especially for low-income earners in municipal services who were unable to escape the obligation to pay the culture tax. This was all the more so because the labor front, the NSV, the Colonial League, the Air Raid Protection League, the WHW, and the party also demanded monthly contributions from their salaries. In particular, the theater vouchers received in return for the culture tax were often sold on by their recipients, which defeated the actual purpose of the tax, which was to attract more visitors to the state theater. [449]In addition, the city administration received numerous letters requesting exemption from the tax or complaining about the coercive measure. However, exemptions were only granted in cases of death, health problems, or the need to care for relatives, which made it impossible to attend the theater.August Gerspacher, the operations manager of the municipal utilities, also submitted a request to the mayor, demanding the same conditions for his low-income employees as those of the state theater. Although he suggested that some employees would be willing to have higher contributions deducted from their cultural tax in order to minimize the loss, the administrative committee rejected the request. [451]There was also considerable discontent on the part of the companies that were required to pay the cultural tax.[452]Since the salaries of the members of the State Theater were already extremely low and were halved during the two summer months, but they themselves were unable to use the theater vouchers, the cultural tax had to be waived for them in November 1934 after repeated requests from the works council of the State Theater.(453) From the summer of 1937 onwards, the city used the culture tax, in addition to Reich subsidies, for social and cultural improvements, in particular to increase the salaries of the members of the Landestheater.

Theater visits as a national duty

In 1934, compulsory theater attendance was significantly increased for the entire population after the number of permanent tenants had declined slightly and Bayreuth had opened its own theater, causing Coburg to fear for its state subsidies. Attending the Landestheater was now elevated to a service to the "people's community" and a commitment to the cultural development of the Nazi state for every Coburg resident. The local group leaders of the cultural policy department of the district leadership now decided to put even more pressure on those who were allegedly still indebted to the general public. To this end, the State Theater handed District Cultural Officer Schilling a compilation of

448 See Director Dietrich to the City of Freiburg, October 23, 1936. StACo Theater 3512.
449 See August Gerspacher to Mayor Rehlein, November 24, 1937. StACo Theater 3512.
450 See, for example, file notes from August 28, 1933, and February 13, 1936. StadtACo A 7904.
451 See minutes of the Administrative Committee meeting of March 22, 1938, and August Gerspacher to Mayor Rehlein, November 24, 1937. StACo Theater 3512.
452 See various letters at StadtACo A 6922.
453 See minutes of the Administrative Committee meeting of November 20, 1934. StACo Theater 3512.
454 See Heimberger's instructions to the city treasury dated August 30, 1937. StACo Theater 3512.
455 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung* of October 10, 1933.

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Season ticket holders were listed by street, so that the relevant block leaders could verbally and in writing urge non-subscribers who were financially able to do so to take out a season ticket. If these measures did not have the desired effect, the names of those concerned were to be published in the daily newspaper, thereby publicly exposing and blaming them. Carl Eduard was also sent a list of people in his circle who did not yet have season tickets and whom he was to influence accordingly. [456]In addition, the standard bearers of the district leadership were to be instructed that the SA service and attendance at the Landestheater had to be better reconciled. With regard to the low-priced performances, for which plays with an impressive ideological message were selected, direct personal pressure and the system of social control could be brought to bear through door-to-door advance ticket sales.

District cultural officer Schilling also proposed distributing the few party members among the solo and choir personnel as cultural officers to the individual local groups so that they could continuously promote the party together with the block wardens at local group meetings. The aim here was to closely monitor the status of permanent rentals, call back those who had been unfaithful, encourage those who were indifferent, and inform those who were uninterested, so that the connection between the theater and the population was maintained through personal contacts and contact persons. In addition, every large company had to appoint a representative for the state theater who reminded the entire workforce of their duty to the theater. In 1937, Schilling wrote a letter to all non-subscribers reminding them of their neglect of the city and the nation.

During his tenure, Director Dietrich showed himself willing to increase pressure on the population and, for example, dictate to party members that they attend the theater.[460] Under his directorship, urban space was used even more for theater advertising, and banners urging people to attend the theater were strung across the streets in various places, so that the constant reminder of each individual's duty to the cultural institution was visualized even more prominently in everyday life. The installations were to be supplemented by advertising vehicles from the Gaurundfunkstelle, which drove through the city playing music and drawing attention to the theater.[461] In addition to their usual promotional evenings, during which the actors introduced themselves to the audience with short scenes or performed Hans Sachs plays on the castle square, the members of the Landestheater themselves also organized promotional parades through the city. In addition to advertising and play wagons, horsemen and a marching band of the Hitler Youth were also used, carrying a banner with the inscription "Youth promotes its theater." The members of the Hitler Youth and SA men who cordoned off the event were rewarded.

456 See Intendanz des Landestheaters an Carl Eduard, March 15, 1934. StadtACo A 6925.
457 Report on the meeting with the local group leaders of the cultural policy department of the district leadership of the NSDAP on October 31, 1934, November 2, 1934. StACo Theater 65.
458 See District Cultural Officer Schilling to Mayor Dr. Schmidt, August 2, 1935. StACo Theater 3430.
459 See circular letter from the district cultural office dated September 1937. StadtACo A 6925.
460 See letter from director Dietrich to Franz Heimberger, September 10, 1937. StACo Theater 3430.
461 See letter from Director Dietrich to the Coburg Police Department, August 16, 1935. StACo Theater 66.

followed by free tickets to the theater. Theater director Heimberger also appealed to the Coburg councilors to increase their personal promotion of the theater so that everyone would fulfill their responsibility to the city within their sphere of influence and circle of acquaintances. The Coburg area was also encouraged to visit the theater through targeted promotional events, with individual members of the theater divided into groups and traveling together to various towns in the surrounding area, accompanied by Schilling and Heimberger. During the Gau Culture Week, when the Reich Music and Theater Chamber met in the "Adolf Hitler House," the theater was always placed at the center of all events on Heimberger's initiative, thereby promoting it nationwide.[463]At the same time, from 1939 onwards, Dietrich began to specifically invite regional party leaders such as Gauleiter Wächtler, his deputy Ruckdeschel, the Gau training director Prof. Dr. Kolb, the Gau propaganda director Kolbe, the director of the Gau school Weismain Stein-bauer, and Gau inspector Dr. Müller to performances at the Landestheater in order to maintain their interest and thus their approval for further financial support for the Coburg stage.

In addition, the party itself generated steady income for the theater through the purchase of season tickets and private events. The National Socialist Theater Association purchased ten or more performances annually starting in the 1930/31 season and later had its own season ticket model, for which a performance was given on Sunday evenings each month. Ultimately, the KdF was the biggest guarantee of a steady flow of audience members and income, purchasing 21 performances in the 1935/36 season, 20 in 1936/37, 45 in 1937/38, and 50 in 1938/39, which took place on Mondays, Saturdays, and Sunday afternoons. The corresponding theater tickets were not sold to the general public; instead, the KdF paid the Landestheater fixed flat rates, which were steadily increased over the course of the collaboration.[464] In particular, contemporary and regionally authentic plays, which were less popular with the general public, were ultimately able to be performed thanks to the KdF. In addition, all towns within a 50-kilometer radius were covered by the KdF and encouraged to visit the Landestheater. [465]

Eliminating competition in the cultural sector

The Landestheater was radically placed at the center of National Socialist cultural policy in Coburg, which meant that any competition in the theater and musical theater sector had to be eliminated. The directors of the Landestheater had always tried to ban competing events or, for example, circus performances in Coburg. In September 1936, under Mayor Rehlein, a decision was finally made to allow only artistic performances such as musical comedies, singing recitals, or theater performances that were not of greater interest to art or science, provided that they did not take place during the Landestheater's season or jeopardize attendance at the Landestheater's performances. Cabaret performances

462 See Director Dietrich to August Gerspacher, September 3, 1935. StACo Theater 66.
463 See Franz Heimberger to the Coburg councilors, May 9, 1936. StACo Theater 3430.
464 See minutes of the Administrative Committee meeting of October 5, 1937. StACo Theater 3430.
465 See financial report from December 1938. StACo Theater 73.

Furthermore, events featuring artists from outside the area were only permitted with the express approval of the district leadership of the NSDAP in the person of the district cultural officer, who wanted to prevent a "cultural flood" in Coburg. [466] He also ruthlessly restricted theater performances by small associations in rural areas.[467] Light entertainment events in particular, such as circus performances that attracted large audiences, ultimately brought the city greater tax advantages. These outweighed the loss for the state theater. In return, the city treasury paid compensation to the state theater for the resulting loss of income. Repeated considerations to eliminate competition from the cinema by having the state theater itself set up a cinema for cultural films were abandoned for structural reasons.

In this context, a particular tension arose with *the* Coburg *Society for Music Lovers*, which was perceived as competition in various ways by the directors of the State Theater. In 1931, its board consisted of the first chairman, Dr. Rudolf Däbritz, the director of the Casimirianum Gymnasium, the second chairman, bank director Eugen Cronemeyer, and the music director, court conductor Fichtner.[469]While the collaboration between the directors Schulz-Dornburg and Kutzschenbach was still relatively harmonious and Kutzschenbach himself was a member of the association's committee, the atmosphere deteriorated noticeably in 1931. Probably as a sign of protest against the deliberate Nazification of culture in Coburg through the appointment of Oskar Walleck and past hostilities towards Rudolf Däbritz on the part of the NSDAP, the music lovers invited the *Comedian Harmonists* to Coburg in October 1931. The Berlin vocal ensemble had already achieved national fame by this time, but had fallen into disrepute in National Socialist circles, among other things because three of its members were Jewish. Especially since the Coburg music lovers were primarily devoted to classical music, the concert was also seen as a political statement. While the audience was completely enthralled by the performance and even the conservative *Coburger Zeitung* wrote: "Rarely has a group of artists exerted such an attraction on the Coburg audience as the cheerful 'Six'," [470] the *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, which had advertised the concert itself, ultimately wanted to interpret the event as a sign of "Jewish cultural subversion."[471] However, the scandal surrounding the Berlin sextet's concert was ultimately only a symptom of the increasingly divergent demands and ideas regarding cultural life in Coburg. In their program announcement for the winter of 1931/32, the *music lovers* had also directly attacked the administrative committee of the Landestheater and complained of unfair treatment.

466 See excerpt from Mayor Rehlein's decision notice, September 22, 1936. StACo Theater 67 and circular letter from the district cultural office, July 20, 1937. StadtACo A 6908.

467 Report on the meeting with the local group leaders of the cultural policy department of the district leadership of the NSDAP on October 31, 1934, November 2, 1934. StACo Theater 65.

468 See minutes of the meeting of the administrative committee on November 12, 1940. StACo Theater 3431.

469 Richard Löwenherz, a liberal Coburg manufacturer and Wagner lover who had renounced his Jewish faith, held the office of first chairman of the Musikfreunde for several years before Däbritz, but was not re-elected in 1931. Court conductor Karl Fichtner had also worked as a choir conductor in the Jewish community of Coburg before 1933.

470 *Coburger Zeitung* newspaper, October 20, 1931.

471 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, October 16 and 21, 1931, and Weiß, Michael: Die Comedian Harmonists singen! In: Jahrbuch der Coburger Landesstiftung 43 (1998), pp. 229–243.

complained. The principal conductor of the Landestheater van Goudoever, who was also a member of the association committee of *the Society for Music Lovers*, was subsequently reprimanded by the administrative committee and ultimately resigned from his position in the association.[472] Despite ongoing cooperation, the NSDAP and the district cultural officer Schilling in particular insisted on taking a hard line against the music lovers, under the guise of eliminating any competition to the Landestheater. In 1935, Schilling wrote to Mayor Dr. Schmidt on this subject:

> "The schedule is based solely on the unyielding will to make the State Theater the focal point of all cultural events, to regard its cultural work as the most urgent, and to convince private associations that they only have a right to exist once their members have completely fulfilled their obligations to the State Theater! The cause of the State Theater must finally become their cause as well. If necessary, harsh measures must not be shied away from. If this means curtailing the old traditions of cultural associations, then this must not be shied away from in the interests of the State Theater."[473]

1.2.2.3 A space for the "people's community" to experience

Although various party initiatives to secure the theater's financial future ensured its survival until it was closed due to the war, they did not succeed in binding the entire population to the Coburg stage to the same extent. A considerable proportion of Coburg's residents initially fulfilled their obligation to support the theater financially, for example through cultural taxes or subscriptions. At the same time, the KdF's work opened up access to the Landestheater to an audience that was not familiar with the theater, thereby significantly expanding their scope for interaction and experience. The plan to break the monopoly of the wealthy and educated on the Landestheater made it possible to give less educated social classes at least the feeling of belonging and having a say. Unlike the KdF trips, however, the mass propaganda effect of the KdF, which was intended to make the promise of a realized "people's community" tangible in everyday life, was less effective in a high-culture institution. In addition, conveying a sense of belonging within a cultural institution that had previously been characterized by its exclusivity was associated with far greater identification problems. Closed events and the increased inclusion of light entertainment in the program were able to somewhat conceal this effect. However, subscriptions and visitor numbers, which initially rose due to corresponding advertising measures and pressure from the party, declined steadily from 1937 until the outbreak of war. Rows often remained empty during performances, and complaints from the classical theater audience in particular increased.

472 See minutes of the meetings of the administrative committee on October 19 and December 9, 1931. StACo Theater 72.

473 District cultural officer Schilling to Mayor Dr. Schmidt, August 2, 1935. StACo Theater 3430. Dr. Schmidt commented on the passage in Schilling's letter with a handwritten "Good!".

474 See, for example, Ferdinand Meyer to Director Dietrich, March 22, 1937. StACo Theater 67 and The Mayor of the City of Coburg, December 24, 1943. StACo Theater 689.

Coburg's State Theater – a "NS People's Theater"?

The Coburg population's attachment to the Landestheater has always been undisputedly special. On the one hand, the city administration boasted that no other city's citizens were as closely connected to their theater and did as much for it as those of Coburg. Coburg was proud to have the most theater-loving audience in the Reich in relation to its size. The fact that Goebbels allegedly admitted this to Franz Heimberger in a telephone conversation in the spring of 1935 was henceforth played out as a political trump card in the annual struggle over subsidy negotiations. On the other hand, Coburg's theater directors in particular complained that the Coburg audience was particularly challenging for their artistic work, as it was more involved in theater operations than elsewhere, was therefore particularly demanding, and insisted on having a say in theater matters.[475] Numerous letters arrived at the theater management's office each season, commenting on theater operations and expressing criticism and specific requests. The population thus actively shaped the space for interaction that the theater embodied within the urban space, and communication between the theater management and the theater audience was an essential part of this. Going to the theater, discussing the plays afterwards, and negotiating the content and quality of the performances together also had an important interactive, structuring, and identity-forming function within the urban bourgeois milieu and formed an essential part of the interaction between the audience and the theater. At the same time, due to its connection to those sections of the population who were educated and wealthy, the space for interaction had always had an exclusive character, which was one of its key distinguishing and defining features. Furthermore, the space for interaction was characterized by a fixed pattern of procedures, rituals, and rules, which its members took great care to observe.

The initiatives to create a "people's theater" were therefore ultimately in direct contradiction to the existing structures and practices that had been established over decades within the state theater. Three areas stood out in which the potential for conflict that emerged was particularly striking.

Firstly, the introduction of a new audience to the theater and the opening up of high culture on stage to all sections of the population changed existing norms and rules of behavior. Ever since the introduction of union and separate school and youth performances, complaints from seasoned theatergoers had been increasing that people in the cheaper standing room lacked a sense of art and disrupted the performance by leaning over the railings of the tiers.[476] When, as a result of initiatives by the National Socialist city administration, further less educated classes and also increasing numbers of Hitler Youth or girls from the BDM attended performances at the Landestheater in closed groups, the situation-specific pressure to follow and adapt to the social practices established within the Landestheater's interaction space decreased at the same time. Complaints about laughter or giggling during performances

475 See Director Dietrich to Oskar Walleck, December 31, 1936, and Oskar Walleck to Director Dietrich, January 8, 1937. StACo Theater 3430.

476 See various letters to artistic director Mahling. StACo Theater 64.

environment
Late arrivals, loud talking or coughing, chair clattering, loud footsteps, crunching, and similar disturbances became more frequent. The presence of audiences who were not normally interested in theater was now the rule rather than the exception. In this context, one theater lover expressed criticism to the theater management regarding the practical implementation of "popular theater": "Certainly, every member of the community should be given access to such a place of art, but if these people do not belong to any educated class and the attentive listener would prefer to leave the theater out of annoyance, then ways and means must be found to educate such backward people or to expel them from the institution without further ado."[478]Although director Dietrich had admitted that, due to the changed composition of the theater audience and his experiences with it, he saw no point in trying to educate the audience, instructions on how to behave appropriately at the Landestheater were repeatedly published in the daily newspaper.[479] This trend intensified again when, with the outbreak of war, more Wehrmacht soldiers came to the performances, further reinforcing the theater's role as an institution of distraction and entertainment. [480]

Ultimately, the break with a social practice that had been established for decades led to a noticeable division among theater audiences, which, in the midst of the outwardly presented "Folk theater" gaped. This was reflected in attendance and the selection of plays, as audiences who had previously been uninterested in theater preferred operettas, dramas, and comedies to operas. Despite the theater staff's various attempts to restore peace within the theater and remind young people of their duties, the long-established theater audience in particular felt neglected. The reservation of Sundays for KdF events or Dietrich's rule, according to which Coburg citizens and families were no longer allowed to pre-order tickets by telephone and thus reserve tickets for the popular Sunday performances, was seen as a decisive encroachment on traditional rights. Criticism grew louder that the educated Coburg audience was being passed over in favor of a less theater-savvy crowd that saw no difference between sitting in the theater or the cinema on Sundays.

Secondly, and closely related to this, the fundamental aim of National Socialist theater policy, which was to dissolve the exclusivity of the "people's community" by making it widely accessible, had noticeable consequences. It was precisely the elitist and exclusive nature of the theater as a space for interaction that had made it so appealing to the urban bourgeoisie. Going to the theater had once served as a distinguishing and identifying feature of the upper middle class, and even in petty bourgeois circles it served to display one's belonging to the bourgeoisie and to distinguish oneself from the working class. Now, theater subscriptions were no longer a prestige object of the upper class, and theater performances were no longer an exclusive place to see and be seen. The

477 See, for example, memo dated October 17, 1936. StACo Theater 67; Dr. Staerker to Director Dietrich, December 13, 1941. StACo Theater 68.
478 Julius Denninger to Director Möller, May 10, 1944. StACo Theater 68.
479 See Director Dietrich to Dr. Staerker, December 20, 1941. StACo Theater 68.
480 See chapter V1.3.2.
481 See Julius Denninger to Director Möller, May 10, 1944. StACo Theater 68.

The theater consequently lost its function as an exclusive forum for self-expression and as a mirror and mouthpiece of bourgeois society. As a result, it was the upper middle classes who stayed away from the theater, which had been transformed by the National Socialists, and were therefore described by district cultural officer Schilling as "saboteurs of the cultural reconstruction efforts of the city and the state theater." Their representatives were only present in the theater for special events; otherwise, an empty center box was a visible sign to all of the hole that had been left in the middle of the actual "Volkstheater" remained open. In order to win back these "better circles" for the theater, their loyalty to the ducal house was exploited and attempts were made to appeal to their sense of exclusivity through exclusive advertising. At a policy meeting between the former Coburg theater director Walleck, as head of the Supreme Theater Authority in Bavaria, Mayor Schmidt, Franz Dehler, and Franz Heimberger in Munich in December 1936, the importance of traditional theatergoers was emphasized, and it was decided to use the social events initiated by Carl Eduard, which were only accessible to a closed circle, for targeted theater advertising with the involvement of Munich artists.

Thirdly, the National Socialist restructuring of the theater severely restricted its function as a public space for interaction. In the field of theater criticism, the traditional social practice of theater, which was geared toward giving the urban bourgeoisie a say, clashed with the institutionalization of the "Führer principle" in the theater sector.

Under Abrell's directorship and during the first season of the Third Reich, attempts were made to address the conflicts that were now inevitably coming to light by organizing public discussions with the directorate after the Reichstag elections in November 1933. While maintaining the director's prominent position, the aim was to alleviate the concerns and thirst for knowledge of the population by publicly answering written questions addressed to Abrell. However, the aim was not to institutionalize the unfiltered acceptance of critical comments, but to create a medium that preempted criticism. Like other innovations and adjustments to social practice, the theater audience was more than cautious, and the chat sessions were soon discontinued due to excessively low participation.[485] Ultimately, however, unanimous and uncritical approval of the plays performed was also decreed with regard to theater criticism, which was intended to reinforce the outward appearance of a successful National Socialist theater policy and the successful establishment of "folk theater." As late as 1927, the city's legal advisor Wagemann stated: "Trained in a century-old tradition of good theater, the people of Coburg are accustomed to and entitled to apply the strictest standards to the performances of their art institute and not to hold back with their criticism."[486] However, public criticism of the theater and its program was already severely restricted before 1933, for example for the Jewish theater critic Hirsch.

482 District cultural officer Schilling to Mayor Dr. Schmidt, August 2, 1935. StACo Theater 3430.
483 See transcript of the meeting with Oskar Walleck in Munich in December 1936. StACo Theater 3430.
484 Schulz-Dornburg had already established consultation hours for theater audiences in 1929. However, his aim was to actively engage with the criticism and wishes of the Coburg public.
485 See press release dated November 3, 1933. StACo Theater 65.
486 *Coburger Zeitung* newspaper dated May 28, 1927.

and was completely suppressed in the course of the creation of a "people's theater." The connection between theater staff and the public, which had always been an important corrective for the artistic work of a cultural institution, enriching the relationship between theatergoers and the institution and thus having an integrative effect, was now severed with the argument that any criticism of the Landestheater would jeopardize its existence. In the spring of 1935, the critic Dr. Gleiß published a negative review in the *Coburger Nationalzeitung*. On behalf of the mayor, the theater director Heimberger summoned Dr. Gleiß and reprimanded him. The admonished critic subsequently declared that he would no longer write any negative reviews of the Landestheater and would give up his work as a critic. The district leadership and the district cultural officer Schilling also clearly formulated the Nazi regime's demands on theater criticism: "Advertising is first and foremost a moral obligation of the Coburg press. In its theater criticism, it must carry out promotional work in every direction! Criticism is the eye and ear of the public and therefore has a duty to act with the utmost sense of responsibility!"

This aspect of theater life ultimately took on particular relevance during Dietrich's tenure as artistic director, after his administrative and artistic work soon gave rise to criticism shortly after he took office. When the *Coburger Tageblatt* published negative reviews of individual plays in 1936, criticizing Dietrich's performance as artistic director, there was once again a prompt reaction from above. Heimberger, the head of the theater department, invited the press to a meeting and, in the presence of the artistic director, reminded them of their role within the Nazi regime. In this context, Dietrich denied that any criticism of his actions was justified and demanded that Mayor Schmidt either dismiss the critics from their posts or he would resign as director of the opera. An anonymous group of subscribers also approached the mayor and complained that the theater would go under under Dietrich's directorship. They described him as a "loudmouth and slave driver," accusing him of having a bad reputation in the theater world and of bringing only bad musicians to Coburg. Heimberger's critics denied his artistic sensibility and demanded that the mayor pay more attention to the theater. In this context, the anonymous writers also lamented the lack of press freedom, which prevented Dietrich from demonstrating his qualities. However, it was not a redesign of the program in line with National Socialist ideology that aroused the subscribers' displeasure, but what they perceived as a decline in artistic standards. Although the anonymous criticism expressed here, which directly attacked two prominent municipal Nazi officials, Mayor Schmidt and Franz Heimberger, was considerable, it should not be interpreted as criticism of the regime per se. Above all, the addition that such conditions would not have been possible under Mayor Schwede rules this out. Ultimately, the practice already in place in Coburg was ordered throughout the Reich by a decree issued by Goebbels in November 1936 restricting traditional theater criticism.

487 See meeting of the administrative committee of the State Theater on April 26, 1935. StACo Theater 3430.
488 District cultural officer Schilling to Mayor Dr. Schmidt, August 2, 1935. StACo Theater 3430.
489 See letter from artistic director Dietrich to Mayor Dr. Schmidt, October 5, 1936. StACo Theater 688.
490 See anonymous letter to Mayor Greim. StACo Theater 688.
491 See Kliesch, Hans Joachim: Film and Theater Criticism in the Nazi State. Berlin 1957, p. 19.

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In December 1941, Dietrich finally went public via the *Coburger Nationalzeitung* newspaper, conceding certain rights to a paying and loyal audience, but complaining at length about what he saw as the presumptuous behavior of theatergoers, who repeatedly complained to the theater management and the city administration about mistakes in the production or criticized the actors for speaking too quietly.[492] At the same time, Schilling refused to allow the Coburg audience and the public, who were often involved, any say in personnel matters. [493] In addition, Dietrich was always able to dismiss criticism of the program selection, for example from the Catholic Church, by referring to the Reich Theater Chamber and its approval authority.[494] Nevertheless, the artistic director also had to deal with a number of frictions and complaints within the Landestheater, which ultimately steadily undermined the "Führer principle" and his internal authority. The theater staff repeatedly leaked internal information to the press, and complaints arose about Dietrich's management style, overly long rehearsal times, and insufficient breaks. However, since Dietrich enjoyed strong support from the city leadership and worked closely with the mayor and Franz Heimberger, the criticism initially came to nothing, without any concrete consequences for his position.

In the field of theater criticism, the paradox ultimately became apparent that, in the course of efforts to fill theaters with an audience that encompassed all groups of the "people's community" and to involve them, the social practices and traditions of bourgeois participation and bourgeois creative will had to be overcome. The breaking points that arose in the attempted substitution of the common bond of bourgeoisie with that of the "people's community" therefore became visible and palpable in the interactive space of the theater. In the field of theater, the Nazi regime did not completely succeed in overwriting the communication space that had grown over decades with its model of a "people's theater." Within the National Socialist communitization process, the state theater was therefore a venue that should not be underestimated, in which the old bourgeois social model competed with the National Socialist "people's community." It became clear that, in comparison to other areas of National Socialist practice, the ideas of the previous pillars of society did not correspond to the offerings and ideas of Nazi theater policy. In the theater's sphere of action, the limits of the regime's appropriation of the upper middle class became apparent in a seemingly apolitical sphere. The theater thus remained an area in which, due to the habitualization already established here, criticism was expressed much more openly than in other areas, even if this usually only happened anonymously. However, due to the stylization of theater attendance as a national duty and task for every Coburg citizen, staying away from performances was also a special statement.

492 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, December 13/14, 1941.
493 See District Cultural Officer Schilling to Mayor Dr. Schmidt, August 2, 1935. StACo Theater 3430. Emphasis in the original.
494 See Director Dietrich to the Catholic parish office of St. Augustin, October 3, 1936. StACo Theater 67.

2 Differentiation

2.1 Welfare system: Formation of a nationalist "performance community"

A constitutive element of Nazi policy was a selective and "racially" differentiated welfare and health policy based on the ideal of the "people's community." Population policy and eugenics were the cornerstones of a Nazified welfare system.[1] The claim of National Socialist policy to put society and urban space in order, to restructure it and to permeate it with an ideologized program, could be implemented above all through social policy. A radical idea of order became the norm in dealing with needy population groups. For the practical implementation of the "people's community" in everyday life, this resulted in a differentiated assessment of the people receiving welfare assistance in the sense of an ideologically defined welfare hierarchy. This was also expressed in a spatial reorganization. The upgrading of preferred groups of people in need according to questions of "Worthiness," the active promotion of "valuable" segments of the population, and an overemphasis on self-help in welfare matters thus found their way into the municipal welfare organization. Groups that received special support included small pensioners, war invalids and war survivors of the First World War, and large families. In their own way, each of these groups had rendered a special service to the "national community" and thus proven their "worthiness." With the help of the labor service as an instrument of socio-political selection and discipline, the Nazi city administration attempted to organize and thereby control the unemployment problem. Franz Schwede's flagship project, which linked the receipt of welfare support to work performance, marked Coburg's transition to a selective social policy in which the categories of work performance and classification within the "people's community" became welfare practice.

If one wants to trace the process of communitization in Nazi society through inclusion and exclusion, the controlled formation of a völkisch "meritocracy" offers a wealth of illustrative material. In the areas of welfare highlighted here, the ambivalences between conformity and deprivation, between assertion and resignation can be demonstrated in detail, and the communication and interaction between the administrative and party offices and those affected can be highlighted.

2.1.1 Upgrading: Hierarchical welfare

2.1.1.1 Organized "socialism in action"

Against the backdrop of the enormous social shifts and challenges within Weimar Republic society triggered by the economic crises, welfare work became one of the most pressing policy areas. After the First World War

1 See Peukert: Volksgenossen, p. 247; Glensk; Rothmaler: Kehrseiten; Paulus: Wohlfahrtspolitik; Fleiter: Stadtverwaltung; Christians: Amtsgewalt and Wimmer: Ordnung.

World War I, welfare tasks, which had previously been the responsibility of private welfare organizations, had to be regulated by the authorities in order to provide for the many people in need and suffering hardship as a result of war, inflation, and unemployment. Welfare expenditures had brought German municipalities to the brink of financial ruin after the global economic crisis and the rising number of welfare recipients. The number of welfare recipients in Coburg had risen from 195 in April 1929 to 510 in April 1931. At that time with around 9,000 people in need of welfare, about one-third of the total population was affected.

It was no coincidence that socio-political issues formed a thematic focus of the NSDAP's city council work before 1929. After welfare in the Duchy of Coburg had been at a remarkably high level until the end of the war and the transition to Bavaria, thanks to the involvement of the ducal house and the generosity of the wealthy population, the population's expectations in this area were particularly high and their disappointment with the economic and social situation in the post-war period was extremely great.[3] Urgent motions to provide the city's needy with additional payments as winter and Christmas assistance or for unemployment welfare therefore formed the core of the publicly staged but ultimately financially unfeasible local politics under Schwede's leadership.[4] A collection launched among the population of Coburg in 1930 at the request of the NSDAP, which was intended to provide Christmas gifts to the needy, already reflected the ideas of the winter relief fund established in the Nazi state.[5]The claim to a pioneering and exemplary National Socialist local policy therefore manifested itself above all in the area of welfare and social policy and ran like a red thread through the work of various institutions in the city tasked with this.

At the heart of National Socialist welfare policy was the cultivation of a "healthy and purified national body," through which the idea of a völkisch-conceived "performance community" based on ethnic principles. [6] The focus on optimizing this "national body" according to the principle of "public benefit before private interest" replaced the assistance for the weak individual that had been at the core of welfare policy in the Weimar Republic. Welfare was thus expanded as "care for the people" based on arguments of racial hygiene and population policy. The actual implementation and organization, as well as the care and support of those in need, ultimately took place at the local government level. In the area of welfare policy in particular, it was up to those responsible to define and categorize different degrees of belonging,

2 See minutes of the city council meeting of March 31, 1931. StadtACo A 8074.

3 See Hönisch, Oskar: Overview of the Coburg welfare system with an outlook on genetics. Lecture given at the opening of Reich Health Week on April 19, 1926. Coburg State Library 61, 1126.

4 These included, for example, motions before 1929 that attempted to establish Nazi principles by demanding that the welfare office only redeem the bread vouchers it issued at bakeries and no longer at the consumer cooperative. See minutes of the city council meeting of September 17, 1929. StadtACo A 8072.

5 See Schwede: Kampf, p. 188; minutes of the city council meetings of December 9 and 22, 1930. StadtACo A 8073. Later, the Coburg NSDAP claimed to be a pioneer of the WHW.

6 See Peukert, Volksgenossen, p. 247.

and boundaries. Because local authorities had to raise the funds for their welfare services themselves, the actions of municipal officials in welfare policy had an enormous impact. In addition to the city administration, the NSV also acted as an agent of inclusion and exclusion. As the National Socialist organization for social welfare, it had supplanted both the banned Workers' Welfare Association and church organizations such as Caritas and Diakonie. It was based in the confiscated building of the Loge zur Fränkischen Krone at Theatergasse 1 and was structured along the lines of the general party structure, with various local NSV groups operating in the Coburg district and trying to outdo each other.

The importance of social welfare was directly recognized in 1933 when the Youth and Welfare Office, previously managed by professional legal advisor Dehler, was established as an independent office. The management was entrusted to Karl Puff, who had previously worked as a clerk in the office. Born in 1890, the civil servant, who was promoted to city inspector in 1923, joined the NSDAP in 1931, was appointed city administrator in 1935, and additionally rose to become district office manager of the Office for Social Welfare. This dual role institutionalized close cooperation and a merging of municipal welfare policy and the NSV program in the person of Karl Puff. Puff was also appointed honorary representative for the WHW.[8] The conflicts of interest associated with such an accumulation of offices, which were discredited elsewhere, had been deliberately promoted in Coburg.[9]Since welfare issues were a priority in the new National Socialist society, the relevant department was placed directly under the mayor and its staff was increased. Initially, the theater and school department was also part of the welfare and youth office, but in 1934 it was transferred to a separate department under Franz Heimberger. After Schwede left the municipal services and the associated restructuring of the city administration, Ernst Bernhard, who had been part of the three-man NSDAP faction in the city council since 1924, was appointed head of the welfare and social services department in July 1934. Mayor Schmidt cited Bernhard's extensive knowledge of personnel and his many years of insight into municipal affairs as the reasons for appointing the master baker to the new office. The provisional appointment ultimately became permanent, even though Bernhard, as a master baker, had no actual qualifications for his honorary position.[10]In his role as head of the Youth and Welfare Department, his responsibilities included holding consultation hours on welfare issues.[11] After the reorganization of the departments following the introduction of the German municipal code, the Welfare and Youth Office, under the leadership of Bernhard and managing director Puff, was expanded into one of the six divisions of the city administration and its staff was increased once again. At the same time, Bernhard served as head of the Heiligenkreuz local group from 1934 onwards and, in this dual role, promoted welfare work.

7 See Mayor Schmidt to the municipal administrations of Kulmbach and Mittweida, December 7, 1933, and February 16, 1934. StadtACo A 6441.
8 See worksheet on the denazification proceedings. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg City P 134.
9 See Gruner: Welfare, p. 33 f.
10 See order by Mayor Dr. Schmidt, July 12, 1934. StadtACo A 6441. For Bernhard, see chapter II2.3.1.
11 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, August 11, 1934.

ran.[12] Bernhard set up an office for the local group on his private property at Steinweg 35 and also provided rooms there free of charge for the NSV and the WHW. In addition, Bernhard did everything in his power to establish his local group as a pioneer in the work of the NSV and the WHW by conducting particularly careful and strict checks on those in need of assistance and achieving remarkably good results in collections and campaigns.[13]

Establishment and organization of welfare services by the Coburg city administration

The welfare services provided by the municipal administration in Coburg were divided into different priority categories. The higher level of welfare was reserved for war invalids, war survivors, social pensioners, small pensioners, and other people in need of assistance, such as women who had recently given birth, who received a higher level of care than the large number of impoverished individuals and families. Corresponding cases and applications were handled directly by the welfare office. Until 1932, there was a joint official welfare office for this purpose, which was subordinate to the district office and responsible for the district of Coburg Land and the towns of Coburg and Rodach. In contrast, there was general welfare, which primarily provided the local poor with the bare necessities to restore the health and working capacity of individuals, and which was linked to the welfare office via welfare workers. This included, for example, the provision of shelter, food, clothing, nursing care, and assistance to women in childbirth. With regard to poor relief, the city was divided into four districts, each of which was further divided into ten circles, which were administered on a voluntary basis by four district managers and ten welfare workers. In the area of employment assistance, welfare recipients who were unable to find work were cared for, meaning those who were able to work but had exhausted their benefits from the employment office and were supported by the municipal WOLU.[15] Based on the calculated local cost of living, it was the responsibility of the welfare offices to determine the necessary needs of those receiving welfare, with officials ultimately having the authority to exceed or fall short of the derived benefit rates. Welfare benefits could take the form of financial allowances, but also material resources such as heating fuel or clothing. In addition, there was also health care. The city of Coburg formed its own district welfare association, which was run by the welfare

12 Bernhard's predecessor as local group leader was the lawyer Dr. Werner Stoll, who was elected second mayor of Bamberg in May 1934. In 1936, Franz Schwede followed him to Pomerania, where he served as mayor of Stralsund. See Hofmann: Oberfranken, p. 215.

13 See *Bayerische Ostmark*, September 27, 1935.

14 At the district office level, an official welfare office had been established in 1919, which was initially located in the Gustav-Dietrich-Haus and then in the Coburger Hof on Viktoriastraße. See StACo LRA 12812.

15 Various support systems established during the Weimar Republic were available to individuals affected by poverty and unemployment. The ALU for the unemployed, established by the Reich Institute for Employment and Unemployment Insurance in 1927, was paid for 20 weeks, provided that employment for at least 26 weeks in the previous year could be proven. Unemployed persons who had exhausted their ALU benefits or did not meet the conditions for receiving them were paid crisis assistance (KRU) for a limited transitional period, which was jointly funded by the Reich and the municipalities. All those who were not entitled to either ALU or KRU were supported by municipal welfare (WOLU), which was organized by the cities and municipalities. See RGBl. 1931 I, p. 765; Gruner: Wohlfahrt, pp. 25–27 and Sachße, Christoph; Tennstedt, Florian: Geschichte der Armenfürsorge in Deutschland. Volume 3 Der Wohlfahrtsstaat im Nationalsozialismus. Stuttgart, Berlin, Cologne 1992, pp. 63–68.

In addition to these forms of open welfare, closed welfare was responsible for those who were housed in homes or institutions.[16] The welfare facilities supervised by the welfare office in the city included the Ernst-Alexandrinen-Volksbad, the Hindenburgbad, the community kitchens and warming rooms in Ehrenburg and Vordere Kreuzgasse, a homeless shelter in the rear building of Markt 2, the St. Georgenhospital, the youth hostel in the Brauhof, the Marienschule as a public kindergarten, and the legal advice center for the poor. Until 1932, the poor in need of care were housed in the municipal nursing home in Wüstenahorn and cared for by the city. There were no workhouses or institutions for "anti-social" and "asocial" people in the Co-burg district.

In particular, the investigation office within the welfare office, initially located at Ketschengasse 56 and from 1939 in the new savings bank building in Rosengasse, was headed by State Secretary Wilhelm Schmitz and tasked with conducting investigations to assess the need for assistance for the employment office, to issue certificates for obtaining poor relief, for applications for cash assistance, or to review marriage loans. He was assisted in this by several investigators who were responsible for different districts of the city and who worked with all departments of the city administration in their daily work. The investigation office proved to be one of the busiest departments of the welfare office, as the overload of municipal welfare work was particularly evident in the investigation of a large number of cases. In 1934, the officials handled 7,267 files and 5,058 unemployment applications alone.[17]In their daily work, the investigators penetrated deep into the private lives of the Coburg population and came closer to them in their everyday lives than most other officials in the city administration. The influence that the office thus had on the distribution of life chances was correspondingly great. According to the mayor's instructions, officials were to treat those in need with kindness, but also with the necessary energy.[18]Compared to his predecessor Faber, Schmitz introduced a much tougher approach to dealing with those in need of assistance from 1931 onwards, which resulted in more rejections. Whereas applicants had previously usually appeared at the office themselves and presented their case to the officials there, the investigation office now worked primarily with summonses.

Responsibilities of the municipal welfare office

A welfare committee was also responsible for handling general tasks.[19] If day-to-day matters were not dealt with by the office, a smaller subcommittee, also known as the adjudication committee, handled them. Due to the high importance of welfare, the seats on the municipal welfare committee carried great political weight.

16 See Dehler, Franz: Das Fürsorgewesen (Welfare). In: Stein, Erwin (ed.): Monographien deutscher Städte (Monographs of German Cities), Volume 30: Coburg. Berlin 1929, pp. 163–170.

17 See Wilhelm Schmitz to the mayor, January 8, 1937. StadtACo A 15252.

18 See Service Instructions for the Municipal Investigation Office dated April 15, 1937. StadtACo A 6276.

19 See Address Book of the City of Coburg from 1937, Part V, p. 24; Gruner, Wolf: Public Welfare and the Persecution of Jews. Interactions between Local and Central Politics in the Nazi State (1933–1942) (=Studies in Contemporary History, Volume 62). Munich 2002, pp. 25–27.

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and were already a controversial issue in local politics before 1933, which the NSDAP wanted to shape according to its own ideas after 1929. Before 1933, its members included selected city councilors, Chief Medical Officer Dr. Hönisch, representatives of the Catholic and Protestant churches and the Jewish community, members of free associations and societies, as well as representatives of the upper welfare groups and welfare districts. Immediately after the NSDAP took power in the city council, however, Franz Schwede questioned whether the Jewish community's legally guaranteed seat on the welfare committee was actually legitimate, as the seat was not proportional to its share of the population. When the welfare committee was re-elected in July 1930, Hermann Hirsch and medical officer Alfred Masur were ultimately not re-elected to the committee by the city council. After the Jewish community lodged a complaint with the government of Upper Franconia, the latter was ultimately forced to declare the city council's decision unlawful and uphold the rights of the representatives of the Jewish community. Despite several votes, the government's decision and thus the appointment of the two Jewish representatives was not approved until City Councilor Faber admitted that the city would ultimately lose a complaint before the administrative court and relented.[20] Even before 1933, Nazi Coburg had already made its intentions and willingness to engage in radical exclusion abundantly clear, but at that point, the official hierarchy was still able to counteract it.

After 1933, as in other cities, the welfare committee was no longer convened. Instead, decisions were made by a smaller subcommittee consisting of the welfare officer, two councilors, representatives of those in need of advanced welfare, and representatives of independent welfare organizations. This successfully reduced the influence of the churches on the welfare system. With the introduction of the DGO, the welfare committee was ultimately abolished and replaced by a welfare advisory board. This consisted of the city councilor Bernhard, two councilors, one representative each of war victims, war survivors, small pensioners, and social pensioners, as well as a representative of the NSV as a member of independent welfare organizations. This institutionalized the involvement of the NSV in administrative practice. The inclusion of the two councilors and the deputy mayor, all of whom were "old fighters," was intended to serve as a guarantee for the preservation of the "Führer principle" and the enforcement of the party's interests in the welfare system.

In October 1934, it became apparent how Jewish citizens of Coburg could be disadvantaged and Jewish businesses specifically discriminated against in the reorganized welfare system by the investigators of the welfare office and the adjudication committee even before official anti-Semitic legislation was enacted. The adjudication committee had to decide on an application from a total of six young people who sought exemption from being called up for the German Labor Service or dismissal in favor of the accommodation of older employees. What all applicants had in common was that they worked for a Jewish employer, the company Conitzer und Söhne, as well as the

20 See minutes of the city council meetings of July 12, 1929, July 11, 1930, August 22, 1930, and October 30, 1930. StadtACo A 8072 and 8073.

21 See City Administrator Puff to the Mayor, November 14, 1935. StadtACo A 6232. See also the example of Augsburg: Gotto: Kommunalpolitik, p. 175 f.

Forchheimer company, which were to be withdrawn from the workers. The investigating officer Schmitz had already contradicted the applicants' argument that without an income they would be endangering their families' livelihoods. The appeals committee also rejected the applications in five cases. Only the daughter of a severely disabled war veteran with many children, who was employed by the Conitzer company, had her request granted.

The integration of the NSV into the administrative practice of the welfare office was primarily achieved through the dual function of municipal officials. In addition to their professional duties, they also held positions in party welfare work or fundraising campaigns. In this regard, the head of the office, Puff, set the standard for his office through his own dual position. As a result, party and official matters were soon no longer separated in the everyday work of administrative officials. This gradually led to the introduction of a new official practice. The investigating officer Wilhelm Schmitz, for example, was supposed to provide information on a restaurant owner's tax file to the tax office, but instead denounced her and advised her to exercise extreme caution, as she had not donated any money to the WHW collections and had only donated a small amount of money to a Red Cross collection after a few days, thanks to his intervention.[23] According to his will, an individual's refusal to submit to the compulsion to charity should have a direct impact on official practice and entail significant disadvantages.

The "Gleichschaltung" of charitable associations

In addition, the NSV and the "Gleichschaltung" of charitable associations reduced the influence of the churches in the field of social welfare. The example of the Alexandrinen Deaconess Association for the Poor and Sick Care exemplifies the vehemence of the city administration and district leadership in the process of subordinating charitable organizations. As early as the 1920s, the city had negotiated with the association for the transfer of the association's property in connection with the expansion of Hindenburgstraße. After the

After the "seizure of power," Mayor Dr. Schmidt resumed talks from a new negotiating position and rejected a draft contract from the association as follows:

> "The content of the contract is clearly based on a misjudgment of the situation. We would like to point out that the NSV, this powerful organization, will absorb all charitable associations and foundations not only in the present but also in the future. This development will result in the NSV, which, incidentally, is under the protectorate of the Reich Chancellor himself, taking on all tasks in the field of social welfare. There is no question of the NSV imposing any regulations or conditions here."[24]

In order to implement an accelerated and simplified "Gleichschaltung" (enforced conformity), which the district leadership of the party was now demanding, it had simultaneously arranged for 15 members of the NS-Frauenschaft (National Socialist Women's League) to join the Alexandrinen-Diakonissenverein (Alexandrine Deaconess Association). The association itself referred to

22 See memo from investigator Schmitz dated October 23, 1934, and excerpt from the meeting of the adjudication committee on October 25, 1934. StadtACo A 15252.

23 See Schmitz's information on the tax file of Eva S., May 7, 1940. StadtACo A 15252.

24 Mayor Dr. Schmidt to Susanne Schraidt, April 25, 1934. StANü Reparations Authority III a 3823.

However, he pointed out its special character and replied that, as it was affiliated with the Landesverein für Innere Mission (State Association for Inner Mission), it did not have to carry out "Gleichschaltung" itself in Bavaria, or rather, as a Protestant church association, it was not subject to it. Mayor Dr. Schmidt replied vehemently once again:

> "We are now giving you a final deadline of two weeks to carry out Gleichschaltung. If this deadline passes without result, we will consider your behavior a public declaration of war against the party and will have to respond accordingly. The general public will be interested to know which individuals make up the current board of your association. It is clear that it will be impossible to avoid the members of the board being thrust into the public spotlight. We expressly draw your attention to the fact that we will treat this matter from a political perspective and draw the necessary conclusions."[25]

Subsequently, in May 1934, in consultation with Mayor Schwede, a meeting took place between Mayor Dr. Schmidt and the director of the State Association for Inner Mission, Pastor Kurt Halbach. Halbach himself, a member of the "German Christians," had sought to place the Bavarian Inner Mission under the authority of the German Christian Reich Church in the course of the *church struggle*. With the consent of the Gauleiter of the NSV in Bayreuth, Pastor Franz Lossin, it was decided that the Alexandrinenverein would make its property available to the city of Coburg free of charge, provided that the Augustenstift or equivalent premises were available for the activities of the deaconesses. In addition, the Alexandrinenverein dissolved and transferred two-thirds of its cash assets to the Inner Mission for the continuation of its previous tasks and one-third to the NSV.[26] Under these conditions, the district leadership considered itself satisfied with the "Gleichschaltung" (enforced conformity) of the association.

Not least, the vehemence displayed in the "Gleichschaltung" of charitable associations, the targeted official restructuring and upgrading of the welfare system, and the simultaneous suppression of all non-National Socialist influences testify to the importance of welfare issues in National Socialist local politics. The welfare system was therefore at the center of National Socialist communitarization and opened up effective spaces for action and communication for both the administration and the party, in which inclusion and exclusion in the interests of the regime could be promoted. In welfare in particular, the party and the administration came into close and personal contact with the population, were able to present themselves as crisis helpers, and in doing so were able to act in a targeted manner to privilege and discriminate.

2.1.1.2 Elevated and spatialized welfare

The preferential treatment of certain groups of people within the public welfare system had already been implemented after the First World War with the introduction of elevated welfare classes and was not a new feature of the Nazi system. This was particularly true of

25 Mayor Dr. Schmidt to Susanne Schraidt, May 15, 1934. StANü Reparations Authority III a 3823.

26 See Mayor Dr. Schmidt to Pastor Halbach, June 6, 1934, and agreement between the Alexandrinenverein für Armen-u. Krankenpflege in Coburg (Alexandrine Association for the Care of the Poor and Sick in Coburg) and the Landesverein für Innere Mission in Bayern (State Association for Inner Mission in Bavaria) dated July 24, 1934. StANü Reparations Authority III a 3823.

war invalids from World War I and their relatives, as well as the families of fallen soldiers. This also included social security and small pensioners who had been severely affected financially by inflation. In Coburg, too, the city council decided before its reorganization in April 1929 to be the first city to introduce a reduction in street cleaning fees and to exempt veterans of 1870/71, invalids, war invalids and survivors, social security and small pensioners, and persons over 70 years of age from the fee.[27]However, since these groups in particular had often turned away from the Weimar Republic in disappointment, it was important to bind them to the Nazi regime, after the NSDAP had already understood how to exploit the experience of social decline for propaganda purposes. The National Socialist welfare hierarchy now focused more strongly on the role and value of the individual for the "people's community" and operated according to the principle of "worthiness," a behavior-dependent standard for categorizing neediness. With the National Socialist takeover, the ideologically defined "worthiness" was used as a selection criterion for receiving welfare benefits, and differentiation and categorization also took place in upper-level welfare. Those in need were given special assistance if they were dependent on public support due to their achievements or service to the people. While receiving welfare benefits was stigmatized, this defined the group of people who, in the regime's view, were entitled to support. While Jewish front-line soldiers Georg and Hans Nomburg, who had fought in the Austrian army on the front lines, had their German citizenship revoked in 1935 because they were classified as "Eastern Jews" despite risking their lives,[28] efforts were made to free "Aryan" front-line soldiers from the stigmatizing effect of welfare as far as possible and to give them preferential treatment. On the one hand, the hierarchization of welfare recipients according to National Socialist evaluation criteria was complemented by the principle of enhanced welfare. On the other hand, by giving preferential treatment to "old fighters," war victims and survivors, and those on social security and small pensions, their sacrifice for the "people's community" as exemplary, thereby prospectively underlining the expectations placed on other members of the community.

War victims' welfare

Particularly since former front-line soldiers had played a decisive role in the development and propaganda of the NSDAP, welfare for war victims in the Nazi state had to be based on a special ideological premise. A considerable part of the population of Coburg was affected by the welfare of this group of people. In 1929, the official welfare office for war invalids and war survivors in the city, established in 1919 by the Coburg State Ministry, cared for 163 severely war-disabled persons, 1,626 severely war-disabled children, 650 slightly war-disabled persons, and 208 war widows.
323 war orphans, 13 full war orphans, and 112 war parents, which amounted to 3,095 people, or over ten percent of the total population.[29] The range of services provided by the Für-

27 See minutes of the city council meeting of April 5, 1929. StadtACo A 8072.
28 See the case of the Nomburg brothers. StadtACo A 16169 and Fromm: Juden, pp. 222–224. The expatriates managed to flee to Chile in 1939.
29 See Dehler: Fürsorgewesen, p. 165. Partially differing figures can be found in: Franz Dehler to the Coburg City Council, January 7, 1930. StadtACo A 15233.

In addition to medical treatment, sickness and housing allowances, and pension benefits, social welfare under the Reich Welfare Act (RVG) of 1920 also included social assistance, for example in the form of educational grants.[30] It was therefore the responsibility of the municipal welfare services to help overcome or mitigate the economic consequences of service-related injuries or the loss of the breadwinner, and to enable war-disabled persons to return to work and reintegrate into economic life. Daily negotiations between severely war-disabled persons and employers were therefore the order of the day. In addition, widows were to be supported in maintaining their households and raising and educating their children, and orphans were to be enabled to obtain a position in life appropriate to their abilities. At the same time, officials provided advice on obtaining statutory pension payments and benefits from Reich funds, as well as on issues relating to family and working life, economic welfare, child-rearing, health care, and legal advice, and facilitated the procurement of clothing and work equipment. Supplementary pensions in particular placed a heavy burden on municipal welfare, as they cost the city around RM 12,000 per month. The implementation of capital settlement provisions, under which war invalids and war survivors could be compensated in part with their pensions for the purchase of real estate or for the economic strengthening of their property, also required time-consuming assessments and negotiations with the parties involved.

The establishment of a separate welfare office ensured that those who had risked their lives for their country and suffered damage in the process did not feel that they were on the same level as other people in need of assistance. The status of enhanced welfare was thus to be expressed in very concrete terms in spatial terms. The war-disabled and war survivors themselves always emphasized their right to preferential welfare. The danger of being reduced to beggars was one of the most pressing concerns of those affected. Accordingly, they emphasized that war victims were not interested in receiving all kinds of support from public funds, but rather in receiving appropriate advice on all matters of life.[33]

Overall, municipal welfare offices had considerable leeway in distributing one-time donations for which they had the right of nomination, while in other administrative practices they primarily responded to supra-local instructions. Particularly strict standards of "worthiness" were to be applied to the distribution of the Hindenburg donation for war victims, which involved a one-off payment of up to RM 100. In principle, the donation was distributed exclusively to front-line soldiers and their relatives. In addition, "worthiness" was measured, among other things, by the fact that the persons nominated had made little use of public welfare services to date. Frugality, modesty, and ambition were therefore values that were included in the assessment process by the welfare office, alongside questions of political reliability. The overemphasis on

30 See RGBl. 1927 I, pp. 515–531.

31 See Franz Dehler to the Coburg City Council, January 7, 1930. StadtACo A 15233.

32 See ibid.

33 See Working Group of War Disabled and War Survivors of the Coburg Military Associations and the Reichsbund Local Group Coburg to the City Council, June 16, 1930. StadtACo A 15233.

applied self-help rewarded them on the one hand and attempted to confirm the apparent effectiveness of National Socialist welfare policy on the other. In addition, donations from the Bavarian War Victims Foundation and annual Christmas donations were distributed in equal measure to particularly "deserving" war victims or survivors, with the aim of singling out individual beneficiaries in addition to regular welfare payments.

Initially, attempts by the National Socialist War Victims' Welfare Organization and thus the party to interfere in the allocation of donations were resisted in order to preserve the authority of the authorities, but the NSKOV was able to steadily expand its influence. Proposals for the granting of Christmas aid were supposed to be agreed upon between the NSKOV and the welfare office, but the practice became established that the welfare office ultimately only forwarded the NSKOV's proposals or, in some cases, was completely bypassed by the NSKOV.

Small and social pension welfare

The privileged position of small pensioners and social pensioners in welfare matters resulted from the destruction of a large part of their capital reserves and the actuarial reserves of pension insurance funds caused by post-war inflation. Those who had been subject to social insurance contributions were classified as social pensioners, while small pensioners were expected to finance their retirement provisions through self-employment or existing assets. The latter were primarily members of the middle class or petty bourgeoisie and, in addition to former self-employed persons, included a high proportion of women who lived off family assets.[35] In Coburg, the economic hardship was even more acute after the city had been considered a wealthy city of pensioners and retirees until inflation, where every household budget could be easily balanced with small surcharges on income and wealth tax.(36) In 1927/28, the welfare office looked after 317 capital pensioners and 437 social pensioners.[37] Inflation not only had an excessive impact on the city's finances, but also led to a massive decline in the standard of living of a broad section of the Coburg population, who were now dependent on welfare and faced a seemingly bleak future due to the loss of their retirement reserves. The overburdened welfare state of the Weimar Republic had provided generous benefits for this section of the population, but ultimately failed to meet their needs, thereby incurring the wrath of the impoverished elderly.[38] In particular, small pensioners, who would not have been dependent on welfare if their assets had not been destroyed by inflation, demanded equal treatment with war invalids and survivors on the basis of their sacrifice for the "people's community," which would have meant entitlement to provision instead of welfare. The issue of small pensioners ultimately also led to a discussion about the continued existence of a middle-class lifestyle and the

34 See various cases involving the allocation of the Hindenburg donation, Christmas donations, and other grants StadtACo A 15237–15241.

35 See Reichel: Retirement, pp. 34–39.

36 See minutes of the city council meeting of September 13, 1929. StadtACo A 8072.

37 See Dehler: Welfare, p. 165. However, it can be assumed that there are unreported cases, as only those who received small pensioner welfare were considered small pensioners, but quite a few may have avoided going to the welfare office.

38 See Reichel: Retirement.

The problem of crisis-induced poverty in old age became more acute, which is why it became the focus of political debate.

Even the National Socialist rulers were only able to meet the wishes of small pensioners to a limited extent after 1933. Aware of the political significance of this section of the population, the Small Pensioners' Assistance Act of 1934, the first legislative measure of the National Socialist state in the field of welfare law, provided for support that was 25% above the general welfare rate. Despite this special status, however, small pensioners remained dependent on welfare and were thus stigmatized as recipients of alms even in the Nazi state.

Since municipal welfare offices had little leeway in providing welfare services to small pensioners and those on social security, the city's initiative mainly focused on providing accommodation for pensioners. In terms of spatial welfare policy in particular, the city focused its attention on small pensioners, which was in line with the typical revaluation and differentiation of inpatient care for the elderly at the time.[40]By October 1934, on the initiative of City Planning Officer Rehlein, Coburg had built a new small pensioners' home on Ernst-Faber-Straße, which comprised eleven large apartments for rent to small pensioners, consisting of a large kitchen-diner with a gas stove, a large room, and a share of the cellar. All rooms in the home were equipped with steam heating, and the home also had bathing facilities and a communal kitchen. Electricity, heating, the bathroom, medical care, and nursing care were provided at no extra charge. In addition, a female assistant was available for cleaning and other household chores. Rents ranged between 25 and 30 RM. If the pensioners still owned property and transferred it to the city, they could be admitted rent-free, in the tradition of the benefactors in church hospitals.[41] The home functioned as a purely municipal institution and expanded the city's inpatient care for the elderly, which until then had consisted solely of St. Georgen Hospital, where since the Middle Ages twelve citizens' daughters and widows had been accommodated as beneficiaries and one maid, and which was also under the jurisdiction of the welfare office, so that the welfare committee or welfare advisory board decided on admission to the institution. The aim of the city administration was to create a separate and privileged space for welfare, the composition of which was within its control, thereby expanding and enhancing the care of the elderly in the upper classes. Externally, too, the small retirement home served as a prestigious symbol of active social policy.

The selection of tenants for the small pensioners' home was the responsibility of the welfare advisory board, chaired by Ernst Bernhard, or a subcommittee set up for this purpose, which acted in consultation with the housing officer, City Councilor Karl Hartung. The target group for admission to the home were people living in Coburg who were receiving ongoing welfare and had previously lived in good circumstances. Initially, the welfare office compiled a list of names of people who would be offered a place.

39 See RGBl. 1934 I, p. 580 f. The Small Pensioners Act was expanded and supplemented by implementing decrees.
40 See Wimmer: Ordnung, pp. 331–341.
41 See letter from the city of Coburg dated October 9, 1934. StadtACo A 15333.
42 See Probst: Coburg, p. 110.

wanted to make available in the home, but only a small number of them showed interest in being admitted to the home. In addition, department head Bernhard himself suggested individual persons whom he wanted to see accommodated in one of the rooms. The remaining places were ultimately allocated to independent applicants whose pension status and personal circumstances had been thoroughly investigated by the welfare office. The applicants themselves cited their status as mothers of soldiers or possible financial contributions to the city, which were indeed taken into account in their favor. Some pensioners also tried to gain an advantage by pointing out that they had previously been employed at the ducal court, but contrary to their demands for preferential admission, they were treated on an equal footing with the other applicants in accordance with National Socialist principles.

Both during admission and while living in the home, strict standards were applied to the residents to ensure compliance with the prescribed house rules. This revealed the ambivalent attitude of the city administration towards the group of small pensioners, who, on the one hand, were to receive a real upgrade in status in accordance with the promises made before the takeover of power, but who, on the other hand, were denied any sense of entitlement due to their need for assistance. Although admission to the home was voluntary and the residents paid rent themselves, they submitted to the prescribed community rules when they moved in. The ability of individual pensioners to comply with the house rules therefore also became a selection criterion for residents. Through them, the privileged space of the small pensioners' home was constructed and the everyday life of the pensioners standardized. With a view to the völkisch-conceived "performance community," the ideal of the "people's community" was to be institutionalized here on a small scale.

The special situation of a retirement home was that the individual residents had already fulfilled their duty to the community through their lifetime of work, and were now no longer able to actively serve the "people's body," but had to be cared for. The language used by the administrative officials therefore documents that the pensioners in their care had to prove themselves, or rather that their value was up for debate. As early as December 1934, the first warnings were issued, and shortly thereafter, the first lease was terminated by the city after the wife of a tenant failed to meet the standards of cleanliness desired by the administration in her cleaning practices.[44] Even after several residents of the home expressed dissatisfaction with the behavior of the nurse in charge and complained about the management of the home, the mayor admonished her, referred to his authority, and emphasized that the nurse was acting on his behalf. After a warning, three residents were again given notice to leave the home in September 1936.

On the one hand, the establishment of the home was part of the National Socialist housing policy and helped to alleviate the prevailing housing shortage in the city. Shortly after its establishment, however, demand for places in the home was still rather low and came mainly from candidates who had originally been considered for a place and

43 See memo from the welfare office dated November 6, 1935. StadtACo A 15333.
44 See memo from the welfare office dated December 27, 1934. StadtACo A 15333.
45 See Youth and Welfare Office to Cronemeyer, Büschelberger, and Friedrich, April 17, 1936. StadtACo A 15333.

Many candidates were reluctant to give up their apartments or did not have sufficient financial resources to do so, but applications rose steadily and peaked after the outbreak of World War II. The fact that the home was a public welfare institution and was run by the welfare office was initially seen as something of a stigma by many small pensioners. On the other hand, however, the NSDAP was able to use the small pensioners' home to develop a high-profile welfare strategy for a politically significant group. The letters from small pensioners to the welfare office showed how much those affected blamed the Weimar system for their predicament. The fact that they had to turn to municipal welfare at all, after their property had "fallen victim to the clutches of the previous November government"[46], was considered an imposition. As

Even before 1933, "victims of the Weimar system" had shown themselves to be receptive to the policies of the NSDAP. Singular initiatives such as the small pensioners' home at least gave the appearance of an exclusive sphere and enhancement for small pensioners in the locality, even if official legislation, apart from the reversal of the 1932 cuts in 1941, was unable to bring about any substantial expansion of pension insurance or combat poverty in old age.

The construction of the small pensioners' home already made housing welfare and thus spatialized welfare visible as a central area in which local authorities were able to successfully act to enhance the status of specific population groups. The redevelopment of urban space in particular had opened up a particularly large scope for social policy action for local government, as the housing shortage was one of the most pressing welfare issues of the time. Since the end of the 19th century, the deterioration of housing conditions in the wake of the impoverishment of the population and the resulting slums and shantytowns had been one of the most urgent tasks of urban construction and welfare policy. In order to prevent political unrest, the origins of which were believed to lie in the slums, among other places, the issue also had to be placed on the National Socialist agenda and combined with welfare measures. At the same time, the increasing economic upturn and the special social measures of the National Socialist marriage promotion policy also increased the demand for housing, so that social and housing policy became closely linked. This circumstance was reflected in the fact that in September 1934, the housing office was removed from the building department and affiliated with the welfare office, and by special decree placed under the authority of City Councilor Karl Hartung.

Housing development

However, the specific urban expansion through small housing estates was not a project of the National Socialist city administration per se. It merely benefited from the housing estate expansions planned or already initiated after 1920, some of which were subsidized by the Reich and later claimed by Mayor Rehlein. The Kriegerdank housing estate, built in Kürengrund in 1920, was also able to be steadily expanded after the Nazis came to power and provided special accommodation.

46 Frieda and Anna Schleiß to the Coburg Welfare Office, October 14, 1934. StadtACo A 15333.
47 See minutes of the city council meeting of September 8, 1934. StadtACo A 8074.

opportunity for war veterans.[48] Single-story houses with larger plots of land for self-sufficiency offered war-disabled persons new and inexpensive living space. [49] Two settlement measures were thus ultimately used by the National Socialist housing welfare policy to differentiate between members of the national community and to establish a "national community" hierarchy within urban areas.

Deserving Coburg residents were to be provided with settlement or living space so that they could build a life for their own families. New settlements were built under the supervision of Wilhelm Rehlein at Spittelleite, in Ketschendorf, on the Hut, and in Tiefenstein. At Spittelleite, those wishing to build had to commit to providing 500 RM in cash and at least 2,000 hours of their own labor in order to cultivate the land leased by the city of Coburg. This personal contribution was intended to reduce the costs of construction on the one hand, but also to connect the builder internally with his land in the spirit of National Socialist settlement ideology on the other. The stone single-family houses with gabled roofs and small vegetable gardens for growing vegetables and keeping small animals were built according to the ideal of National Socialist settlement construction, which was to blend organically into the landscape, avert demographic dangers, and act as a counterpart to large urban barracks buildings. In particular, the houses in the Ketschendorf settlement, which ran along the renamed Von-Batzko-Straße and had been recognized as a model settlement by the Bavarian State Ministry, were given to particularly deserving SA fighters. Although the Ketschendorf settlement was initially conceived as a purely SA settlement, in the end it was primarily built as a home ownership settlement.[51]The settlement houses, which ranged in size from 65 to 97 square meters, were to cost between 8,000 and 11,000 RM, with the settlers receiving support from the municipal savings bank in the form of a first mortgage of at least 3,600 RM and a state loan of 2,000 RM, and having to raise the rest through their own labor, self-help, and cash reserves. [52]

In addition, continuing the building policy of the city administration before 1929, the city devoted itself to the construction of small apartments in multi-family houses in order to reduce rents for those in need. In two family buildings constructed by the city, which could accommodate 12 and 18 families, the rent was RM 12.40 to RM 13.75 for one room and RM 16.05 to RM 20.20 for two rooms. The houses were financed primarily by foundation funds and state loans from a Reich housing construction program, as well as small subsidies from the welfare office.

The settlement was built as a newly created spatial plan, detached from "The narrowness, hustle and bustle of the city center, but settling there as an undemanding community of settlers

48 See Boseckert, Christian: The construction of the Kriegerdanksiedlung in Kürengrund. A work by the German-Jewish architect Wilhelm Haller (1884–1956). In: Coburger Geschichtsblätter 28 (2020), pp. 103–112.

49 See Proceedings of the State Assembly of Saxe-Coburg convened on April 30, 1919, 6th public session. URL: https://zs.thulb.uni-jena.de/receive/jportal_jparticle_00324360 (last accessed on March 8, 2023) and The buildings of the "Coburger Kriegerdank" housing project. StACo LRA 14485.

50 See Walter: Coburg, p. 49; Herold, Eva: Bertelsdorf und seine Höhe. Coburg 1997, p. 239 f. On the ideal of the National Socialist city, see Feder: Stadt.

51 See *Bayerische Ostmark* from May 1, 1937.

52 See ibid.



Fig. 36: Propaganda photograph of workers building housing estates

feel closely connected to the settlement"[53]. As a "people's community" on a small scale, the aim was to create a new sense of belonging in the spirit of a "community rooted in the soil" by bringing together settlers from all walks of life, which was reinforced performatively by working together on the settlement grounds and on the settlement buildings. The *Coburger Nationalzeitung newspaper*, for example, wrote: "This is also the deeper meaning of the settlement, to give people their own land again and show them how beautiful and carefree their existence can be when the law of blood and soil is fully applied and new livelihoods are established according to it."

On the other hand, in return for solving the housing problem, "anti-social" tenants were to be banished from the city limits and forcibly resettled. The construction of emergency housing, consisting of low-rise half-timbered buildings with board cladding and cardboard roofs, without basements or attics, and in which each apartment measured 24 square meters, provided primitive dwellings for those who had proven themselves unworthy of the "people's community."

"worthy" of the "people's community" could be provided with primitive housing. Time and again, individuals were deported to Bertelsdorfer Höhe by the youth welfare office, which they perceived as a punishment. [55] The toilets were not part of the apartments, but were located in a separate building. The rents for the emergency apartments were 6 RM for one person, 8 RM for two, and 9 RM

53 Ibid.
54 Ibid.
55 See, for example, Otto Bölsche to the municipal investigation office. March 23, 1937. StadtACo A 15252.



Fig. 37: Propaganda photograph of housing estates on Bertelsdorfer Höhe

for three rooms, with half of the rent deducted from welfare payments in cases of complete unemployment. The wooden barracks built under Mayor Schwede on Bertelsdorfer Höhe had neither electricity nor running water, and the residents lived in cramped conditions with appalling hygiene. This led to them being mockingly referred to as "Schwedenschanze" (Schwede's trench). In *the Rotes Echo*, the party magazine of the KPD, which was edited by Christian Hagelgans, he described life on Bertelsdorfer Höhe, where unwelcome comrades were resettled under Schwede: "The poorest of the poor, your comrades, were removed from Coburg and put out there in this morass, crammed together in two rooms that are moldy from dampness."[57] Shortly after the publication of the first December issue of *Rot Echo* and the criticism it contained, Hagelgans was evicted from Bertelsdorfer Höhe by means of an eviction suit. Ten police officers were assigned to enforce the eviction, and they encountered about 500 supporters of Hagelgans at the apartment. With the help of the state police and a total force of about 40 men, the smaller demonstrations, which had spread to other neighborhoods and the market square, were broken up with batons, some people were taken into police custody, and criminal charges were filed. [58]Hagelgans and his family were quartered in Wüstenahorn. [59]

56 See Housing Construction in Coburg. StadtACo A 7987 and Faber: Coburg, p. 40.
57 *Das rote Echo*, December 1, 1932 edition. StACo estate 28.
58 See, for example, the ruling of the Coburg District Court of June 30, 1933. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg City R 223. The demonstrators, among whom were also some women, sang the Horst Wessel song with communist lyrics. Those involved were reported by, among others, SA member Hugo Roth.
59 See *Coburger Zeitung* of January 17, 1933.

Even without such vehement forms of protest, the residents of Bertelsdorfer Höhe 1–5 regularly sent inquiries to the city of Coburg asking for electric lighting or water pipes to be installed. Water, for example, had to be carried in buckets about 200 to 300 meters to the houses, which some families rarely did, so that their homes were in poor hygienic condition.[60]After the city administration had rejected "any facility that could serve the convenience of the barracks users" for "educational reasons" [61], Mayor Greim consistently refused to improve the primitive design of the emergency housing until the end of the war. The intertwining of social policy measures with the active shaping of the city's spatial order could therefore hardly be more clearly seen than at Bertelsdorfer Höhe.

The renovation of the Gräfsblock in Coburg's old town, which was inhabited primarily by socially disadvantaged families and was considered by the National Socialist local government to be an architectural and socio-political eyesore in the city center, was a step in the same direction.[62] The prestigious new building erected here in the Heimatschutz style and the accompanying improvement in the quality of living served the propaganda of National Socialist Coburg. While the neighborhood was brought up to the latest standards in terms of hygiene and technology and the new apartments were distributed to deserving members of the national community, the former residents were relocated, such as the aforementioned KPD leader Hagelgans to Bertelsdorfer Höhe.

The spatial welfare policy of the National Socialist local government served, on the one hand, to make the feeling of change and progress visible in terms of construction. On the other hand, the claim to reorganize urban space in the sense of a National Socialist welfare hierarchy could be fulfilled by providing new and cheaper housing for the upper welfare classes on the one hand, and by removing "anti-social elements" from view on the other. The social problems of the time were addressed with a spatial reorganization and an ideologically motivated social restructuring. Wilhelm Rehlein summed up that, thanks to the efforts of the city administration, "districts have sprung up on the heights around the old town, where happy and cheerful people live."[64] In reality, however, the measures did not always prove to be advantageous for the beneficiaries of housing welfare and often presented the purchasers of the settlement houses with major financial challenges. In addition, the houses were not connected to the sewer system for years, meaning that they did not meet the promised high hygiene standards.[65] The continuation of the housing policy, for which Rehlein drew up numerous development plans, was accompanied by the abolition of absolute freedom of construction.

60 See, for example, the city treasurer's memo dated February 27, 1940, and several letters from residents of Bertelsdorfer Höhe to Mayor Greim. StadtACo A 11960.

61 Mayor Greim to Mayor Rehlein, April 2, 1943, and Mayor Greim to the city planning office, April 9, 1944. StadtACo A 11960.

62 See *Bayerische Ostmark*, July 31, 1937.

63 See *Coburger Zeitung*, January 17, 1933, and Boseckert: NS-Baupolitik, pp. 53–70.

64 Rehlein: Coburg baut, p. 723.

65 The purchase of a house in a housing estate had ruined Ferdinand B., a war invalid. In 1933, he approached the welfare office after being pressured by creditors to pay the construction costs for his house and feeling compelled to seek financial assistance from the office. See the Youth and Welfare Office to Ferdinand B., February 27, 1933. StadtACo A 15237.

and was supposed to create 1,500 new apartments remained a pipe dream of the city planning council, not least because of the outbreak of World War II.

2.1.2.3 Honorary sponsorships

While official support for war survivors and small or social pensioners in the Nazi state was merely expanded and adapted to National Socialist principles, the revaluation of large families in line with the ideas of "hereditary and racial care" represented a new National Socialist control element. With the goal of creating a "genetically optimized national community," the Reich government, in addition to cultivating an extensive cult of motherhood, enacted a number of measures designed to promote the fertility of selected families and thus orderly population growth. In addition to granting interest-free marriage loans, the repayment of which was reduced depending on the number of children born, and the introduction of monthly child allowances from the fifth and later from the third child, this also included tax concessions.

Although local authorities had little leeway for their own population policy measures beyond the implementation of the above provisions, in 1934 Mayor Dr. Otto Schmidt initiated the introduction of honorary sponsorships by the city of Coburg, a local political instrument for the selective promotion of "Aryan" and
"hereditarily healthy" families. The aim of the measure was to encourage childbirth in the city and once again highlight Coburg's pioneering status. Initiated shortly after Dr. Schmidt took office, the measure represented an attempt by the mayor to live up to the legacy of his predecessor Schwede and to sharpen his own profile as head of the city in line with the ideology of the "people's community." The honorary sponsorships are to be understood as a clear commitment to National Socialist "hereditary and racial preservation" and illustrate the political will to work against the "Führer" through proactive and preemptive action, as well as the close municipal cooperation between the various authorities responsible for social welfare.

On the initiative of the mayor, the city council decided to have the city take on honorary sponsorships with effect from August 1, 1934. With a maximum of 30 sponsorships per year, the city or the mayor wanted to act as sponsor for every fourth and fifth child and every further legitimate child from "hereditarily valuable" families. In addition to the associated prestige and public recognition as a family that contributed to the "viability of the German race," the sponsorship was linked to concrete material gains. Upon taking on the sponsorship, the families in question received a one-time honorary sponsorship gift of 30 RM in the form of vouchers that entitled them to purchase goods exclusively in "Aryan" stores in Coburg. In addition, as godchildren of the city of Coburg, the children received a letter of honorary godparenthood, which entitled them to preferential consideration for work assignments, employment, and hiring in municipal administration positions. The mothers of the godchildren received a four-week vacation at the expense of the NSV district office in Bayreuth.

66 See Chapter V1.2.

67 See Voegeli, Wolfgang; Willenbacher, Barbara. The realized system of family policy benefits under National Socialism. In: ibid. (ed.): National Socialist family policy between ideology and implementation. Hamburg 2001, pp. 17–47.

a NSV mothers' home, and the godchildren or siblings themselves, if they were in need of recuperation, were considered for the Kinderlandverschickung children's evacuation program from school age onwards. The necessary financial resources were taken from the budget of the Coburg-Stadt district welfare association.

The administrative processing of honorary sponsorships was therefore also the responsibility of the welfare and youth office, with its director Karl Puff initially taking charge and Karl Schunck's remit being expanded to include sponsorships. In addition to their
"hereditary biological value," the parents' neediness, which was defined as an income limit of up to 150 RM per month for four children and 175 RM per month for five children, as well as their politically impeccable attitudes. In designing the selection process for honorary sponsorships, the city administration took advantage of the existing legal situation regarding the selection of families for a marriage loan or the obtaining of proof of descent as part of the BBG. The strictest standards were applied when reviewing the categories.

Review of "worthiness" and "biological value"

The legal assessment of the child's "biological value" was the responsibility of the full-time physician at the lung care center, senior physician Dr. Erich Kaebsch, who was required to make a judgment at least after the submission of the legally prescribed examinations for the granting of marriage loans. This stipulated that a medical examination was required to ensure "that neither of the spouses suffers from hereditary mental or physical defects that would make their marriage appear not to be in the interests of the national community."[69] To this end, he was instructed to consult material from the lung and venereal disease care services, obtain further information from doctors or institutions such as the school authorities, and examine documents relating to the examination of existing children in order to assess the hereditary value of the parents. This first stage of the review by the city's "hereditary doctor" alone required an enormous amount of administrative work and extensive correspondence.[70]Based on the medical report, the adjudication committee of the city's district welfare committee ultimately decided whether all the requirements for an honorary godparent certificate had been met. The reassessment of the child's "hereditary biological value" included, for example, inspecting the criminal record of the godparent family to check for previous convictions. Such convictions were only considered acceptable if they had not been "incurred exclusively in the struggle to establish the Third Reich, or if they were minor police penalties, or if they were considered atoned for and compensated for by subsequent behavior, particularly in the struggle for the NSDAP." In addition, the same evidence was required for the "Aryan" ancestry of the child as was stipulated in the legal guidelines for the recruitment of civil servants under the BBG. The political reliability of the parents was also based on the legal situation regarding the granting of marital status.

68 See draft city council resolution of July 19, 1934; minutes of the city council meeting of July 20, 1934, and Mayor Dr. Schmidt to NSV Gauleiter Pastor Lossin, July 4, 1934. StadtACo A 15327.
69 RGBl. 1933 I, p. 540.
70 See Dr. Kaebsch to Karl Puff, February 23, 1935. StadtACo A 15327.
71 Implementing provisions of Mayor Schmidt dated August 2, 1934. StadtACo A 15327.

This included, for example, the possession of civil rights and ruthless commitment to the National Socialist state. The criminal investigation department of the municipal police was primarily responsible for assessing these factors, judging previous political activity, current political views, and ultimately also "hereditary biological suitability." The criminal police themselves obtained political reports from various local groups and gave their own assessment. The criminal police officers assessed the applicants in the first round of honorary sponsorships as
"lazy," "morally inferior," "hereditarily unhealthy," and "politically unreliable," thus specifically applying a "national community" categorization that went beyond their actual area of competence.

Ultimately, in the first year of the honorary sponsorships, six of the 22 applications were approved, and on December 14, 1935, honorary sponsorship letters were ceremoniously presented to the parents in the presence of Councilman Ernst Bernhard, pulmonologist Dr. Erich Kaebsch, the district leader of the National Socialist Women's League Marie Riechers, and the head of the municipal press office Dr. Probst. In his speech, the mayor referred to Judaism and Marxism as being responsible for the spread of selfishness, which had led to a decline in the birth rate, and said that during the Nazi era, only "anti-social elements" had received support. The Coburg honorary sponsorship was intended to show the people of Coburg and all of Germany "how a forward-looking population policy was pursued in the National Socialist state." The text of the sponsorship certificate, which was designed by Franz Höch, among others, read as follows: "In the difficult but great time of Adolf Hitler's second year in office, the first National Socialist city of Coburg decided on July 20, 1934, to solemnly protest against the decline in births among the German people and to express our will to provide godparent positions in large, capable families in the future."[75] The nevertheless modest setting of the ceremony clearly reflected the position of honorary sponsorships between celebrated fertility and the stigma of receiving welfare benefits.

The concept of honorary sponsorships was developed in close consultation and personal cooperation with the Berlin Public Health Department, which had drafted its own concept for repopulating the city and had awarded sponsorships to the city in this context. However, the Berlin model was aimed at parents who met the "hereditary-biological requirements" for participating in the repopulation and growth of the population, but who were reluctant to do so, particularly for economic reasons. Families who were eligible for the Berlin sponsorships and whose procreation was of public interest according to the National Socialist city administration were subjected to hereditary biological and political screening before conception and could then receive the city's honorary sponsorship for their third or fourth child, which, in addition to preferential treatment in job placement, employment, and promotions, entailed a monthly payment of 30 RM during the first year of life and up to age of 14. [76]

72 See RGBl. 1933 I, p. 377.

73 See the implementing provisions of Mayor Schmidt of August 2, 1934, and statements by the criminal investigation department of December 7, 1934. StadtACo A 15327.

74 *Bayerische Ostmark* of December 16, 1935.

75 Ibid.

76 See brochure on the repopulation of Berlin dated March 16, 1934; Fritz Beck to Karl Puff, June 27, 1934, and principles for the awarding of honorary sponsorships by the city of Berlin dated April 20, 1934. StadtACo A 15327.

The subsidies provided by the city of Berlin were thus much more extensive than those in Coburg, but due to the tense financial situation in the Vestestadt, the latter could only reserve the right to increase its financial subsidies in the coming years in line with the positive development of the city's finances.[77] In addition, Mayor Dr. Schmidt had spoken out against the idea that, as in Berlin, parents should notify the city authorities of their intention to have a child before conceiving, as he was convinced that "high-quality" people in particular would regard this as a violation of their sense of modesty.[78] Dr. Schmidt wanted to use the introduction of sponsorships in particular to raise his own profile, and he promoted Coburg's approach both through the German Association of Municipalities and through the Gau Office for Local Politics, which in turn repeatedly sought information about the Coburg regulations. Ultimately, the concept of honorary sponsorships was also introduced in other cities. In 1939, the NSV and the German Municipal Council issued guidelines and directives for uniform organization. However, the city of Coburg continued to adhere to its original concept.

Mayor Greim also made it his personal mission to promote "genetically healthy" families with many children. However, after a number of measures for large families had already come into force as part of National Socialist population policy, he wanted to create incentives for couples to have as many children as possible. For this reason, in May 1939, the city decided to sell building land to large families at lower prices than to others and, above all, to defer the purchase price at 3% interest for young married couples from the second child onwards, with the interest rate being reduced by 1% for each additional child. From the fifth child onwards, the purchase price could ultimately be granted without interest payments. [80]Special population policy measures thus formed a continuum within Coburg's social policy.

2.1.2 Discipline: Labor welfare

2.1.2.1 The Coburg Labor Service

2.1.2.1.1 Unemployment as a core social policy problem

The orientation of municipal social policy toward nationalist patterns of thought and action took place in Coburg soon after the local takeover, as the social policy agenda had been one of the NSDAP's most important campaign arguments. The transition from individual provision in the Weimar Republic system to repressive social welfare based on the ideal of the "people's community" was therefore already underway in Coburg in the area of labor welfare before 1933.

Unemployment had become the municipal political problem par excellence in Coburg, especially after the global economic crisis of 1929, and affected male youth in particular. On the one hand, the welfare-dependent unemployed placed an extreme strain on the already tight municipal budget. On the other hand, the large number of

77 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, July 21, 1934.

78 See Mayor Schmidt to the German Municipal Council, for the attention of Mayor Knorr, December 16, 1935. StadtACo A 15327.

79 See NSV Bayerische Ostmark to the Mayor of Coburg, July 6, 1939, and news service of the German Municipal Council dated April 21, 1939. StadtACo A 15327.

80 See minutes of the meeting with the deputy mayors on May 26, 1939. StadtACo A 8074a.

unemployed also posed a security problem. Riots in January 1930 clearly illustrate the seriousness of the situation. According to police reports, around 800 people had gathered in Uferstraße, and 250 of them attempted to force their way into the local employment office to obtain unemployment benefits after the caretaker had locked the doors due to the large crowd. The police intervened when they feared further rioting in the office. As a result, payments to the unemployed had to be supervised by the police.[81] In addition, the KPD had also founded an unemployment commission at the end of the 1920s and attempted to win over the unemployed. It organized several unemployment rallies, at which the Nazi city councilors Schwede and Linke also appeared and spoke, as well as demonstration marches through the city. [82]

In March 1930, Coburg had the highest unemployment rate in Bavaria on the right bank of the Rhine at 5.9%, ahead of Nuremberg, Munich, Aschaffenburg, Hof, and Schweinfurt. The cities in Coburg's vicinity also had significantly lower rates, such as Hof with 4.4%, Bayreuth with 3.8%, and Bamberg with 3.2%. The economic report of the Coburg Chamber of Industry and Commerce summed it up as follows: "Looking back on the year 1930, we have to say that the economy in our region has also gone through a deep, dark valley, deeper and darker than any valley in the changing economic cycle, and that we have had to endure unprecedented upheavals in the economy, this is a statement that the Chamber, in its full awareness of its responsibility, must unfortunately make."[83] In this context, the Coburg Chamber of Industry and Commerce sent a call for help to the Bavarian State Ministry of Agriculture and Labor, asking the authority to find ways and means to counteract excessive unemployment in the Coburg employment office district and to initiate measures for value-creating unemployment assistance. One of the measures proposed was to press ahead with the Rodach-Königshofen railway expansion, which had already been promised in the state treaty, as the poor transport links, which excluded the district office from the central flow of goods, significantly exacerbated the situation in Coburg. However, the hoped-for railway expansion initially fell by the wayside due to delays in the preliminary work.

Since the unemployment rate in the rural areas of the Coburg employment office district was relatively low, the crisis was concentrated in the cities and their commercial sectors. This was mainly due to the slump in exports following the almost complete loss of foreign markets on which the basketware, wicker furniture, and toy industries in the Coburg area depended, as well as the particular impact of the economic downturn on the production of manufactured goods. In the basketware and wicker furniture production sector in particular, more and more workers had been gathering in the industry since the mid-1920s, working for the lowest wages and at the same time causing the quality of Coburg basketware to decline. The collapse of the entire foreign market by around 80% was therefore accompanied by a decline in domestic demand. Even in the toy industry, which had produced 80% of its output for export, mainly to America, before the introduction of protective tariffs, the domestic market was unable to compensate for the loss, as before

81 See report by the Coburg Police Department dated January 10, 1930. StadtACo A 8376.
82 See report by the Coburg Police Department dated March 6, 1929. StadtACo A 8376.
83 Coburg Chamber of Industry and Commerce: The 1930 financial year. BWA K6/846.
84 See *Coburger Zeitung newspaper* dated March 21, 1930.

Against the backdrop of widespread economic hardship, toys had become luxury goods. Sales in toy production and wages had fallen by around 60% after 1929. In the Coburg labor market district, between 1929 and 1934, around 50 to 55% of home workers in these two key industries were permanently unemployed. This development ultimately dragged the skilled trades into the crisis as well. The exceptionally high density of businesses in the city and countryside of Coburg, with a large number of small and micro-enterprises, had led to local skilled trades producing far more than local demand, which had a particularly negative impact after the global economic crisis.[86] In addition to the decline in demand for local craftsmen, the supra-regional sales markets also disappeared, which ultimately led to a significant drop in prices. In February 1931, Coburg once again took the top spot in Bavaria on the right bank of the Rhine with an unemployment rate of 6.2%, ahead of Nuremberg with 5.5% and Munich with 5.3%.[86] The effects of the economic crisis thus had particularly negative consequences in the Coburg employment office district. [87]

The problem of unemployment and Nazi social policy

Dealing with unemployment in the Vestestadt therefore had to be at the top of the NSDAP's political agenda, especially after the loud Nazi propaganda on social issues, once it had seized decision-making power in the city council. The NSDAP's social policy strategy could no longer consist solely of exploiting unemployment; its promises had to be translated into successful measures. Initially, the NSDAP committed itself to strict and restrictive welfare provision. During Carnival in 1932, the city council instructed all welfare workers, welfare office officials, and police officers to monitor Carnival events to check whether people living on public welfare were spending their money elsewhere. In such cases, the individuals in question were to be removed from public welfare and no longer supported by the welfare office.

As a further measure to deal with unemployment, Paragraph 19 of the Reich Welfare Ordinance gave local authorities the option of assigning unemployed persons receiving welfare office support to community service, which could take the form of welfare work paid at the standard rate or unpaid compulsory work. If the persons concerned refused, the local authorities had the right to suspend or withdraw their support.[89] As early as 1925, the city council had resorted to emergency work as a measure of productive unemployment welfare in order to employ unemployed people who had exhausted their benefits, deploying them at the Schindberg quarry or for the expansion of Route 84, and setting up a workshop for this purpose in the Haus-

85 In fact, the city and district of Coburg had the highest density of craft businesses in Bavaria, with an average of almost five self-employed craftsmen per 100 inhabitants. There were around 4,000 craft businesses with 5,000 employees in the Coburg district.

86 See *Coburger Zeitung newspaper* dated February 9, 1931.

87 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung* newspaper dated May 17, 1932; brief report on the economic conditions in the city and district of Coburg and proposals for improvement. Undated. StACo Sauerteig 16 estate and Albrecht: Avantgarde, p. 155 f.

88 See minutes of the city council meeting of January 22, 1932. StadtACo A 8074.

89 See RGBl. 1924 I, p. 104 and Gruner: Welfare, p. 42.

occupied a prominent position in the city. [90]Nevertheless, the NSDAP repeatedly requested the city council to assign unemployed persons who had exhausted their benefits from the employment office to the welfare office for employment, if possible, so that they could later receive unemployment benefits again.[91]After 1929, Schwede took the lead in combating unemployment with a concept that had been championed and developed by *the Stahlhelm*, and in particular by Wilhelm Rehlein, and made it his own.

2.1.2.1.2 Establishment of the Wüstenahorn labor camp

After 1918, ideas about compulsory labor service were particularly popular in reactionary and nationalist circles. Arthur Mahraun, on behalf of the *Young German Order*, presented plans for two years of compulsory service in order to keep young workers out of the free economy and make room for older unemployed people. The *Stahlhelm* had also called for the introduction of compulsory labor service as a substitute for military service in the early 1920s. Labor service was also intended to have a disciplining effect, so that young men could be taught a "sense of subordination, work, orderly living, and personal hygiene."[92] The primary model for this was Bulgaria, where a national labor service for men and women had been decreed in December 1920. [93] When, in July 1931, the Reich government responded to rising unemployment figures by enacting the "Law on Employment Services and Unemployment Insurance" , the Coburg NSDAP and the *Stahlhelm* decided to create their own labor service model based on the *Stahlhelm's* preliminary considerations and to abolish unproductive welfare services. Contrary to the proclaimed concept of voluntariness, as had already been the practice since 1929, every able-bodied person whose need for assistance had been proven was obliged to work if they wanted to continue receiving welfare support. This applied to about 80% of the 600–700 welfare recipients who were consequently assigned to labor service. However the city deliberately did not want to establish the labor service in the spirit of the FAD as a special enterprise of a religious, military, or sports organization, but rather as a municipal undertaking.

In January 1932, the city council also announced the introduction of a youth division of the labor service, which was to integrate unmarried young welfare workers aged 18 to 25, who made up about 20% of those who had exhausted their unemployment benefits. The Wüstenahorn forest recreation center near Coburg was converted into a closed camp for which young welfare recipients could apply.[96]Contrary to the regulations envisaged by the Reich government, however, the Coburg labor service did not target ALU and KRU recipients or young people who had not yet reached the prescribed age for receiving crisis support, but rather welfare recipients.

90 See Schwede, Franz: Der freiwillige Arbeitsdienst beim Stadtrat Coburg (The voluntary labor service at Coburg City Council). StadtACo A 7992.

91 See minutes of the city council meetings of June 28, 1928, February 1, August 23, and December 27, 1929. December 1929. StadtACo A 8071 and 8072.

92 *Coburger Zeitung* newspaper dated January 9, 1932; cf. Benz, Wolfgang: Vom Freiwilligen Arbeitsdienst zur Arbeitsdienstpflicht (From Voluntary Labor Service to Compulsory Labor Service). In: VfZ 16/4 (1968), pp. 517–546, here pp. 519 f.

93 See Benz: Labor Service, p. 518.

94 See 9 Monate Arbeitsdienst (Nine Months of Labor Service). StadtACo A 7992.

95 See minutes of the city council meeting of January 8, 1932. StadtACo A 8074.

unemployed persons. The Coburg NSDAP argued on social grounds that the recipients of WOLU were most in need of work and eager to work, and also had financial considerations, as the aim was not only to relieve the burden on the employment office, but also on municipal finances, since the unemployed in Coburg were able to earn the right to unemployment benefits and thus leave the WOLU.[96]

The young people were accommodated and fed at the camp in Wüstenahorn, which had previously served as a forest recreation center for tuberculosis patients and as a country home for the Boy Scouts. Initially, the camp was transferred to the *Stahlhelm* as a public institution in accordance with the provisions of the emergency decree on the FAD until April 1932.[97]Ultimately, however, the NSDAP wanted the Coburg labor service camp to be designed as a municipal institution, terminated the contract, and took over as the sponsor of the service and the work itself, so that the NSDAP, *the Stahlhelm,* and the local government worked hand in hand and the Coburg model could be promoted as a National Socialist institution. While the *Stahlhelm* was still given full credit for the establishment of the camp after it was set up, the NSDAP increasingly claimed the praise for itself. The department responsible for the youth labor camp was in the hands of Wilhelm Rehlein, who coordinated the joint project as a member of *the Stahlhelm* and then the NSDAP. Through him and the institution, a political bridge could be built between the nationalist forces in *the Stahlhelm* and the NSDAP.

After initial supplies from the *Stahlhelm*, the city administration ultimately took over the entire catering for the camp inmates and had all the preparatory work in the camp carried out by the municipal civil engineering office. Without the responsibilities being clearly defined, the building authority initially covered most of the expenses for the camp, especially its structural maintenance. An item was created in the budget of the Youth and Welfare Office for the structural expansion of the camp and the purchase of inventory. Finally, however, the camp was incorporated into the budget of the welfare association and was thus partially outside the municipal budget. These administrative ambiguities and overlaps in responsibilities initially hampered the efficiency of camp administration enormously.

The camp organization

The camp organization was affiliated with the municipal youth and welfare office and was under the authority of department head Rehlein. He visited the camp several times a week to carry out inspections, represented the camp to the outside world, and was responsible for inquiries about the camp. On site, supervision was the responsibility of the camp commander, Franz Hammer, a graduate engineer, *member of the Stahlhelm (Steel Helmet) organization*, and later party member, who took over command of the camp as a municipal employee and was supported by the Coburg *Stahlhelm.*

96 See Schwede: Kampf, p. 214 and Hammer, Franz: Der Coburger Arbeitsdienst. Ein Vorläufer der allgemeinen Arbeitsdienstpflicht (= Kampfschrift Nr. 20, brochure of the Reich Propaganda Department of the NSDAP) Munich 1932. StadtACo Coburgica I/430.

97 See agreement between the Coburg Welfare and Youth Office and the Stahlhelm, January 19, 1932. StadtACo A 154245.

98 See the Audit Office to the Coburg City Council, May 31, 1932, and the camp management to the Coburg City Council, June 6, 1932. StadtACo A 7987.

was explicitly seconded from the Munich Stahlhelm group for his work at the Coburg camp. He was responsible for setting up and organizing the labor service, had signing authority, and conducted negotiations with the business community as well as official correspondence with municipal authorities and the employment office. In addition, the camp construction site and the quarry operation were directly subordinate to him. Workers were also employed as camp supervisors and administrators, who also left after 27 weeks to make room for others. The first camp supervisor was Heinrich Faber, a young Stahlhelm leader who, along with Hammer, was commissioned by *the Stahlhelm* to set up the camp. He was trained as a foreman on the construction site and subsequently supervised the youth department there. As a sergeant, he was also responsible for the military leadership of the camp and was replaced in April 1932 by Sergeant Paul Panzer.

The coexistence of the labor service personnel was determined by a strict hierarchy analogous to military formations, with column and group leaders for the teams and additional guard and supervisory duties. These also presided over the work force assigned to them on the construction site, to which a foreman from the responsible construction company was also assigned. Thanks to additional technical training, the column leaders could also be employed as construction supervisors for the camp team. Young men who were able to subordinate themselves well to the ideological and military premises of the labor service and knew how to assert themselves well towards their comrades were thus able to take advantage of opportunities for advancement within the camp. Individuals with special skills were also employed as clerks for office work beyond the actual duration of their stay and were taken on by Rehlein as permanent staff for the camp.

Admission to the camp was decided by the municipal youth and welfare office, to which an application had to be submitted with appropriate justification of need, which was then presented to the selection committee. Before the barracks were occupied, clothing and laundry were disinfected and an examination was carried out by the camp doctor, Dr. Fried, at the Marienhaus. After the camp was occupied on January 12 by ten men recruited by the *Stahlhelm* from circles of the NSDAP, the *Stahlhelm*, and sports associations, the camp population grew steadily and by June 1932 already numbered 90 young men. At that time, 35% of the inmates belonged to right-wing political associations, while the rest felt they belonged to workers' organizations or were politically indifferent. Their average age was 22.5 years, with 55 men still underage and not eligible to vote. A considerable proportion of the men, 40 in total, were from the locksmith or metalworking trades, 17 from the construction industry, and 10 from the basket-making trade. On average, they had been unemployed for 1.5 years before being admitted to the labor service camp.

As early as September 1932, the labor service camp was reorganized after a FAD team was integrated or merged with it, despite all opposition to the Reich model. In contrast to the previous

99 See Wüstenahorn Youth Labor Camp to the Municipal Welfare Office, February 5, 1932, and notes on camp inspections by Wilhelm Rehlein, April 28, 1932. StadtACo A 15245.

100 See Journal of the Wüstenahorn Labor Service Camp from September 1932. StadtACo A 7987.

101 See the Wüstenahorn labor service camp to the city building authority, August 20, 1932. StadtACo A 7987.

102 See Hammer: Labor Service.

The municipal labor service received a state subsidy of 90% of the costs incurred. [103]As envisaged by the Reich, the FAD department included ALU and KRU beneficiaries, who were also treated in accordance with the existing rules of the youth camp.[104] After their planned period of stay had expired, inmates of the municipal labor service could be transferred to the FAD team if they had demonstrated good behavior. The same procedure was followed for those who, due to a particular emergency, were to benefit from the better pay within the FAD.[105]The Coburg SPD had expressed concerns about the organization of the Coburg labor service from the outset, as it quickly became apparent that the voluntary nature of the young people's admission to the camp was a mere sham. City councilor Otto Voye therefore raised objections to the barracks and the coercion of young people to go to Wüstenahorn. The *Coburger Volksblatt* therefore denounced the "violation that makes a mockery of all human laws" [106]in the camp. However, the principle of the Coburg Labor Service, "no welfare support without work," was openly propagated by the NSDAP, the *Stahlhelm,* and the *Schwarz-Weiß-Rot citizens' bloc*.In September 1932, camp leader Hammer took stock and announced "that the introduction of the labor service on the basis of compulsory service had not been carried out with excessive difficulty and had proven itself in every respect."

The young people received wages equivalent to those of a married welfare recipient. In May 1932, this amounted to about 61 pfennigs per hour, meaning that the work camp inmates earned RM 21.35 for a 35-hour working week. However, they were ultimately paid only RM 3.50 in cash against a receipt as pocket money. RM 2 was retained for sick pay, unemployment, disability, and employee insurance, RM 7.70 for meals, and RM 1.40 for accommodation, lighting, and heating. The remaining RM 6.75 had to be assigned to the welfare office for possible repayments or advances, could be paid out in installments for the purchase of appropriate clothing and shoes, which the inmates initially had to provide themselves, or was deposited in an untouchable savings account, and the balance could be paid out upon leaving the camp with the countersignature of the department head.[109]However, the compulsory savings amount provided for in this case had to be reduced from RM 180 to RM 80 in August due to the city's increased welfare costs. In addition, a decree issued in January 1933 allowed the camp management to determine the amount, type, and timing of the payment of the individual savings amount in cases of punishment or premature departure from service, and to cover the repair costs of the camp equipment and furnishings from the retained savings amounts.[110] Overall, the regulation was intended to

103 The emergency decrees on the FAD in July and August 1932 had significantly relaxed the conditions for funding. See Benz: Arbeitsdienst, p. 525.
104 See Journal of the Wüstenahorn Labor Camp, September 1932. StadtACo A 7987.
105 See Journal of the Wüstenahorn Labor Camp, January 1933. StadtACo A 7987.
106 *Coburger Volksblatt newspaper* dated March 11, 1932.
107 See minutes of the city council meeting of January 8, 1932. StadtACo A 8074.
108 Franz Hammer to Jakob Müller, September 28, 1932. StadtACo A 7988.
109 Appropriate clothing could be purchased in Coburg stores and paid for by the camp administration through wage deductions. Shopping in Jewish stores was expressly prohibited. See Faber: Coburg, p. 37.
110 See decree of January 15, 1933. StadtACo A 15245.

ensure that a large part of the wages paid out flowed directly back into Coburg's business community and contributed to the economic viability of the project. [If]the city council determined that there was a need, the sum could also be transferred to needy relatives. On the one hand, the wage system guaranteed continued or renewed insurance with the health and disability insurance fund. On the other hand, the employment period of 27 weeks was chosen so that the young people subsequently acquired the right to reapply for unemployment benefits as a result of their stay in the labor camp. Soon after the camp opened, however, wages had to be cut, so that in August 1932, an unmarried work camp inmate under the age of 25 earned only about 45 pfennigs per hour.

2.1.2.1.3 Education through work

The aim of the camp was not only to combat unemployment, but also, and more importantly, to educate and indoctrinate young people. As a result, the camp developed into a central place of "national community" discipline. The barracks-style layout of the camp made it possible to supervise the inmates beyond their work assignments, regulate their daily lives, and undermine their individual rights. The educational concept, as it had always been demanded by nationalist circles in relation to compulsory labor service, was at the forefront of all aspects of everyday life. Ultimately, a form of social welfare militarism was introduced, which the *Coburger Volksblatt* described as "the worst and most brutal mental enslavement of unemployed young people." By signing the contract, the young men committed themselves to unconditional submission to the prescribed camp rules. Under the supreme principles of unconditional obedience and camaraderie, excessive shouting, indecent singing or slamming doors, as well as derogatory political ranting, were prohibited, and an obligation to maintain the highest possible standards of cleanliness was imposed. In addition, it prescribed camp duty, which included, among other things, staff duty responsible for the cleanliness of the camp rooms, guard duty, and a delegation to do laundry in the municipal baths and maintain camaraderie. Violations could result in the withdrawal of leave, a withdrawal of leave and privileges, which meant that prisoners were not allowed to leave the camp in the evening, a stricter form of camp arrest, which prohibited prisoners from leaving the camp altogether and required them to report every hour, a withdrawal of wages, and ultimately a hearing before the labor camp supervisor and subsequent exclusion from the camp for a period of one month. Complete exclusion from labor service was also possible as a last resort.

Discipline in the camp

Although a promotional brochure on labor service from June 1932 still reported that only two people had been dismissed for disregarding camp rules to date

111 After nine months of labor service, it was estimated that 99% of the net wages earned had been returned to the Coburg business community. See Nine Months of Labor Service. StadtACo A 7992.

112 See Journal of the Wüstenahorn labor service camp from August 1932. StadtACo A 7987.

113 *Coburger Volksblatt newspaper* dated March 11, 1932.

114 See Implementing provisions for the camp regulations of the municipal youth and welfare office of December 23, 1931. StadtACo A 7987 and Hammer: Labor Service.

had to, such things were part of everyday life. Exceeding leave, refusal to serve, or indiscipline, as well as "communist agitation," were often punished with dismissal, especially in the establishment phase of the labor service. Despite the political neutrality that was propagated to the outside world and the intention to integrate members of workers' organizations into a National Socialist "people's community" through the instrument of the labor service, a much tougher line was taken toward young workers from the left wing. In October 1932, for example, eight SS men had to be dismissed for violating camp regulations, but four of them were soon readmitted to the camp after offering extensive apologies. No comparable consideration was shown to non-party members. [115]In the first year of the labor service, more men were dismissed or forced to resign than could be reintegrated into the labor process, which ultimately called into question the success of the institution. About 41 people had to be dismissed from the municipal youth department, 14 resigned, while only 13 found jobs. Twenty-three men were forcibly dismissed from the FAD department, 17 submitted their resignations, and 29 were transferred to employment.

Since disruptive incidents had become rampant in the first few months of the camp's existence, SS leader Emil Mazuw was appointed deputy camp commander in August 1932, thereby institutionalizing the connection to local Nazi leaders. The strict implementation of camp duties and the practice of militarized procedures, such as drill exercises and marching in formation, were henceforth under his control. In June 1933, following Hammer's departure, Mazuw was given full responsibility for the camp. The militarization of camp service and stricter discipline among inmates promoted by Mazuw ultimately also led to a decline in discharges. A uniform for labor service personnel, introduced in June 1932 at the suggestion of the camp commander and adopted from the Straubing penitentiary, reinforced the military drill and paramilitary character of the institution.

In addition, a daily routine regulated down to the last detail and minute was prescribed in the camp, with regular roll calls, communal meals, meticulously clean bedding, and joint marches to the workplace. The actual working hours were four hours in the morning and three hours in the afternoon, except on Fridays. Only the evenings from 7 to 10 p.m. were off duty, so that the crew could go out.[119] After that, bedtime prevailed, which could only be extended until 11 p.m. or midnight by applying for additional leave if the crew behaved well. On Saturdays, the work camp crew was required to work an additional three hours of unpaid labor to compensate for the unproductive hours caused by camp assignments. In addition, two hours of marching, physical exercises, and singing practice were on the program.

115 See Journal of the Wüstenahorn Labor Service Camp from August 1932. StadtACo A 7987.
116 See lists of participants in the labor camp of 1932. StadtACo A 7469.
117 See Journal of the Wüstenahorn Labor Camp, August 1932. StadtACo A 7987.
118 See Journal of the Wüstenahorn Labor Camp, June 1932. StadtACo A 7987.
119 The exact times varied depending on the season. See Schwede, Franz: Der freiwillige Arbeitsdienst beim Stadtrat Coburg (Voluntary Labor Service at Coburg City Council). In: Faber, Werner: Coburg unterm Hakenkreuz (Coburg under the Swastika). Munich 1932, pp. 45–48, here pp. 46 f.

Karl - Coburg ahead #8.indd 467 Nov. 4, 2024, 6:13 p.m.



Fig. 38: Coburg RAD Group 3-280 Sandwirt von Tirol at the Coburg market, postcard

During the week, several hours of instruction were also held in the afternoons on topics such as accident prevention, first aid and rescue services, personal hygiene, civics, natural history, and history, often in conjunction with visits to historical monuments in the surrounding area. Franz Schwede had appointed, among others, the Nazi city councilor and school superintendent Frühwald, who was responsible for the intellectual training of those willing to perform labor service and indoctrinated them in the Nazi ideology. Other Nazi officials such as Franz Heimberger, also gave lectures in the labor camp.

Regular visits to theaters and museums, a monthly celebratory hike in the Coburg region, to which the comrades' relatives were also invited, were intended to serve as a means of forging "the bonds of a genuine community of the people." To fulfill religious obligations, church attendance was scheduled at least once a month. Repeated performances and receptions at the ducal court with hospitality were also part of the leisure program, through which Carl Eduard and the institution expressed their mutual solidarity. Once a week, the men were given free admission to the state theater and the swimming pool, and they had their own sports field at their disposal for a sports program. Physical training in conjunction with the militarization of camp service was therefore fully in line with the defense policy objectives, which had always included the nationalist idea of compulsory labor service. The strengthening of the "national body" was thus successfully integrated into the camp structure as a permanent objective.

120 See journals of the Wüstenahorn labor service camp from October and November 1932. StadtACo A 7987.
121 Hammer: Labor Service.

The actual work was initially carried out together with other compulsory labor service workers for the Coburg civil engineering contractor Paul Wischniowsky and, from June 1932, for Bernhard Erkenbrecher's civil engineering company. The city administration provided the company with the necessary shovels, pickaxes, wheelbarrows, tools, and lorries and rails. The work areas were primarily selected where only minimal materials and thus minimal financial investment were required, such as road construction, road repair, and earthworks. In addition to the camp expansion, the team was deployed for construction on Gustav-Hirschfeld-Ring, a bypass road on Bertelsdorfer Höhe, and in the Schindberg quarry. Some of the volunteers were also assigned to piecework or employed in the camp's own workshops. The tasks assigned to the youth department and the FAD were ultimately limited to those areas that were within the sphere of influence and thus under the control of the city itself and not, as proposed by the government, to the preparation of winter relief, for example, as this would have required cooperation with independent welfare organizations.

For criticism from the camp inmates themselves, there was a complaints procedure that prohibited the crew from joining together to lodge complaints and made it a punishable offense. Personal complaints could only be lodged with the highest authority, the department head Rehlein himself, who was required to deal with them within 24 hours. In addition, during Rehlein's weekly visits to the camp, a consultation hour was set up for inmates' concerns. [123]In particular the food in the camp, which was often spoiled, was a frequent cause for complaint. For example, the crew was upset that their food was cooked in the same pot as the pig feed and, in their opinion, tasted sour as a result. Meat samples from the camp also had to be handed over to the chemical laboratory at the slaughterhouse because of the foul smell, which confirmed its inferior quality.[124] In practice, however, these instruments of co-determination were soon no longer used after complaints about food rations and clothing sometimes even resulted in punishments and expulsion. Ultimately, this completely undermined the right of the labor service volunteers to have a say and revealed its sham nature. Only the complete subordination of the young men was approved. [125]

Work was used as a means of educating people to fit into the "people's community." When ten men interrupted their work on Hirschfeldring in January 1933 due to the extreme cold and returned to the camp of their own accord, they were temporarily locked up for not submitting to authority.[126] The panel doctors who looked after those willing to work were also instructed to only grant exemption from barracks duty in exceptional cases when issuing sick notes in order to maintain discipline and order in the camp. [127] Outsiders and visitors reported to the Coburg

122 See Journal of the Wüstenahorn Labor Service Camp from December 1932. StadtACo A 7987.
123 See Hammer: Labor Service.
124 See Journals of the Wüstenahorn Labor Service Camp from July and November 1932. StadtACo A 7987.
125 See ibid. and journals of the Wüstenahorn labor service camp from October, November 1932, and February 1933. StadtACo A 7987.
126 See journal of the Wüstenahorn labor service camp from January 1933. StadtACo A 7987.
127 See: The Coburg Labor Camp, Circular Letter to Panel Physicians dated December 13, 1932. StadtACo A 7987.

The Labor Service therefore repeatedly emphasized the special discipline and training, especially in comparison to other FAD camps. The camp, as an isolated space, offered the ideal conditions for oppressing those willing to perform labor service, depriving them of their civil liberties, and thus implementing the self-imposed educational mandate as a measure against the
"degeneration" of youth. The tightly scheduled daily routine, militarization, and the compulsion to complete subordination prevented any possibility of developing a private sphere or individuality. The daily marches to and from work, singing marching and military songs in closed formation, served to accustom them to discipline and order. Unconditional submission to the camp rules and the leaders on the construction site was intended to test the character of the young men. The *Volksblatt newspaper* described service in the camp accordingly as "modern slavery on construction sites, where only the will of the supervisor counts!"[128]However, the fact that individual inmates regularly left the camp due to dissatisfaction with their pay or food, as well as differences with the camp leader, was kept completely secret from the public, as were the numerous dismissals.

At the same time, in December 1932, at the request of the NSDAP, a bonus of 2 RM per week was introduced, which was paid to the FAD team at the expense of the city if they behaved well, and was intended to provide a positive incentive for obedience.[129]The NSDAP explicitly requested that the payment of the weekly allowance to those willing to perform labor service be linked to an assessment of their "worthiness," for which the camp administration was to evaluate their behavior both inside and outside the camp. From January 1933 onwards, young people had to sign a declaration upon entering the camp agreeing that they would only receive the 2 RM after their "worthiness" had been assessed, thereby contractually stipulating the requirement for behavior conforming to the ideology of the "people's community."[130]

B y gathering them in a camp outside the city, unemployment was also visibly removed from the urban space. Previously, young men in particular, who were publicly visible in various parts of the city during the day, had kept the issue in the spotlight and had thus become a disruptive factor. This image was replaced by that of orderly and uniformed teams of labor service men marching together to work or working on a construction site. At the same time, the city administration promoted a close connection between the city population and the labor camp and presented the labor camp project as a city-wide initiative. At the topping-out ceremony for the extension in June 1932, various restaurants, butchers, and breweries donated food to the camp. The Coburg Savings Bank subsidized the celebration with a donation of 100 RM.[131] In addition, despite its remote location, the labor camp was integrated into city society, which in turn contributed significantly to the self-efficacy of the inmates. For example, those willing to perform labor service always participated en masse in major city events. For Princess Sybilla's engagement party, the camp crew formed

128 *Coburger Volksblatt*, March 11, 1932.
129 See Journal of the Wüstenahorn Labor Service Camp, December 1932. StadtACo A 7987.
130 See memo by Dehler, January 4, 1933. StadtACo A 15245.
131 See journal of the Wüstenahorn labor camp from June 1932. StadtACo A 7987.

in loyalty to the ducal house as a lantern procession, for which each participant was rewarded with beer and cigarettes. A little later, Wilhelm Rehlein presented the bride and groom with a photo album with impressions from the camp as a wedding gift.

For the inmates of the camp themselves, the labor service also offered opportunities. Against the backdrop of National Socialist indoctrination, the structure of the camp service enabled the young men to rebel against the "republic of the old," which had promoted their unemployment and thus limited their opportunities for development. The nationalist militarism conveyed in everyday life, as already practiced and exploited by the military associations, offered the opportunity to channel the frustrations of those who felt cheated by the Weimar system in terms of their future prospects. By being admitted to the camp, the young men on their way to adulthood were influenced by völkisch and nationalist ideas during the decisive years of socialization and political decision-making. In this sense, the Coburg labor service camp created a space in which individuals could become radicalized, especially in the phase before the "seizure of power." The fact that inmates of the Coburg camp were directly recruited into the auxiliary police force formed in 1933 and used it to promote the spread of violence in Coburg in 1933 testifies to the depth of the ideological and habitual indoctrination of the labor service men.[133] On the tenth anniversary of "German Day" in Coburg, the labor service men were assigned to sell postcards of the camp and were thus directly involved in advertising for the NSDAP.

2.1.2.1.4 The labor service as a propaganda tool

However, the significance of the labor camp for the NSDAP itself lay precisely in its function as a propaganda tool. On the one hand, it allowed the party to emphasize its constantly questioned ability to govern, convey a sense of energetic change, and publicly demonstrate the apparent effectiveness of its political premises through propaganda. In contrast to other municipalities, where Nazi local politics usually had no concrete objectives other than the negation of existing conditions, Schwede wanted to prove that he could also implement policies. Schwede thus proclaimed that the city of Coburg was "the first in the entire German Reich to establish the labor service in the only form that was initially possible and expedient."[134]By constantly emphasizing the political neutrality of the camp and the associated open acceptance of young men from across the political spectrum, the NSDAP wanted to demonstrate to the people of Coburg what the realization of the idea of a "people's community" could look like in reality.[135] The public success that the labor service brought to the city and also to the entire German Reich, which once again made Coburg appear in the newspapers as a pioneering city, not only addressed many of the fears and concerns of the people of Coburg with regard to social development, but also specifically addressed their particular sense of mission.

132 See journals of the Wüstenahorn labor camp from June and October 1932. StadtACo A 7987.
133 See journals of the Wüstenahorn labor camp from March and April 1933. StadtACo A 7987.
134 See Schwede: Arbeitsdienst, p. 48.
135 See, for example, Mayor Schwede to the Reich Youth Leader, Press Department of the Reich Leadership of the NSDAP, July 20, 1932. StadtACo A 7988.

Through its cooperation with the *Stahlhelm*, the NSDAP was also able to sell the labor service camp as a bourgeois project, which ultimately seemed to solve the problem of left-wing radicalization among the unemployed that had been conjured up for decades and supposedly made the intensifying conflict between the bourgeoisie and the working class manageable. In this sense, the labor service camp became a powerful argument within Coburg society and also in bourgeois circles for supporting the NSDAP, which had succeeded in making the prospect of a "Third Reich" appear worthwhile and thus generating a convincing means of securing power. The Coburg labor service experiment thus developed into a valuable instrument of inclusion and made an important contribution to National Socialist socialization. It served to shape the National Socialist movement in Coburg in the phase before the Reich-wide "seizure of power," to strengthen its self-confidence, and to educate obedient followers.

On the other hand, the staged success of the Coburg labor camp could be used throughout the Reich as a powerful argument in the 1932 election campaign, when, even before the "seizure of power," the aim was to prove the NSDAP's ability to govern. Shortly after the camp was set up and promoted by the NSDAP, the Coburg city administration received a series of inquiries asking for information about the exact circumstances and details of the camp's installation, highlighting how pressing the problem of unemployment was for municipalities and how promising the Coburg model appeared to be. Teachers also approached the city administration with requests to admit young people who, in their opinion, were at risk of finding a home in Marxist circles to the camp. By the summer of 1932, the city administration had received over a hundred inquiries from city administrations, private individuals, and local Nazi groups in other cities, which it ultimately answered with a standard letter and a short essay on the practical implementation of the Coburg labor service. Gauleiter Schemm also referred other city council factions to Coburg for information, since "much of what we National Socialists envision as ideal has been implemented in the stronghold of Coburg."[137]

After the Coburg and local political departments of the NSDAP became aware of the value of the Wüstenahorn camp as a propaganda tool and counterpart to the FAD institutionalized by the Reich government, the Coburg labor service increasingly developed into a means of National Socialist self-promotion. A system of advertising barracks was established, whereby communities and organizations from all over the Reich, but especially from Saxony, Thuringia, and Franconia, sent delegations to Coburg to visit the camp or move in on a trial basis. The impetus for this was the visit of a three-member delegation from the NSBO (National Socialist Factory Cell Organization) in Gotha, which had accommodated a National Socialist, a Communist, and an independent for three days in the Coburg camp. On the one hand, the left-wing youth joined the NSBO immediately after his stay in the camp and held out the prospect of joining the NSDAP, whereupon several Gotha workers and some independents

136 See *Bayerische Ostmark*, June 8, 1937.
137 NSDAP local group Varel to Franz Schwede, May 31, 1932. StadtACo A 7988.

also registered with the NSBO. On the other hand, the Gotha worker and his companions were allegedly persuaded to write a report about their impressions of the camp, which was exploited for propaganda purposes.[138] Both the *Coburger Nationalzeitung* and Werner Faber published the report, which was written purely as propaganda for the NSDAP and also praised its housing policy. Doubts about the authenticity of the report quickly arose, and the claim spread that its authors had merely had to sign a pre-written text. In fact, Schwede's secretariat had sent the last page of the report to Gotha to have it signed in ink. The original text was first kept in the town hall and then in the labor camp, where all interested parties could verify its authenticity.

In July 1932 alone, a commission from the Nuremberg City Council, the mayor and city councilors from Plauen visited the camp, and a total of 29 men from Ingolstadt, Halle, Meerane, Kätschenbroda near Dresden, Waldenburg, Zwickau, Zwönitz, Elsterberg, and Bad Berneck were interned. In August 1932, 60 men from Erfurt, a police commission from Zittau, city councilors from Reichenbach, Plauen, and Elsterberg, and a Nazi delegation from Bautzen visited the facility, and delegations from Ingolstadt, Reichenbach, Mittweida, Schutterwald, Altenburg, Rochlitz, Berlin, Bad Berneck, and Neustadt an der Aisch were briefly admitted to the camp. While the first admissions of interested parties from outside the city for promotional purposes were still financed by the city itself, from June 1932 onwards, due to high demand, delegations had to pay a daily rate of 1.25 RM for accommodation and meals. [140] Before the visit, the Coburg city administration issued a set of guidelines designed to ensure that the visit would be successful in terms of propaganda. The delegations were advised to ensure that, if Marxists were traveling with them, reliable National Socialists checked the statements made by them. However, particular importance was attached to statements made by the political left, as they could be used in the election campaign. Trial internments in Wüsthorn were therefore also planned before the respective elections as part of the local propaganda strategy. The delegations sent to Coburg therefore often consisted of one or more National Socialists and one Communist or independent. In many cities, detailed newspaper reports about the Coburg camp and the experiences made there subsequently appeared in order to demonstrate the practicality of the National Socialist model. At the same time, letters to the editor were repeatedly published calling for the introduction of the Coburg model. After the election campaign ended in November 1932, the promotional activities in Coburg declined sharply and were subsequently limited primarily to those interested parties who themselves had the intention of setting up a camp, as well as to Nazi formations.

At the same time, Franz Schwede traveled around the Reich in 1932 as a propaganda speaker for the NSDAP, promoting the Coburg model as a flagship for the NSDAP. In addition

138 See NSBO Gotha to Mayor Schwede, May 8, 1932; Mayor Schwede to the NSDAP Gotha, May 12, 1932, and NSBO Gotha to Mayor Schwede, June 17, 1932. StadtACo A 7988.

139 See Secretariat of the First Mayor to the NSDAP local group Gotha, June 24, 1932, and July 8, 1932; NSDAP local group Gotha, July 5, 1932. StadtACo A 7988.

140 See Mayor Schwede to the Ingolstadt local group, June 25, 1932. StadtACo A 7988.

141 See, for example, *Aller-Zeitung*, April 14, 1932.

Advertising brochures presented the Coburg Labor Service in practice. Franz Hammer wrote about his experiences in Coburg in a brochure published by the Reich Propaganda Office of the NSDAP, Louis Walter praised the labor service in the promotional booklet *Coburg im ersten Jahr des Dritten Reiches* (Coburg in the First Year of the Third Reich), and Werner Faber included a separate chapter on voluntary labor service in his practical guide to National Socialist reconstruction work in Coburg.[142] Above all, Faber's *Coburg unter dem Hakenkreuz (Coburg under the Swastika)* was published specifically as a counterstatement to publications by left-wing circles, which denounced the policies of the NSDAP in Coburg and, in particular, the portrayals of the Coburg Labor Service with their contradictions. In September 1932, the *Völkischer Beobachter* also took pictures of the camp and reported extensively from Coburg. In addition a propaganda documentary film about the camp was made Ultimately, those responsible in Coburg extensively praised the Coburg Labor Service as the precursor to general compulsory labor service, regardless of the fact that the economic crisis in Coburg persisted and the city continued to lead in unemployment figures. Shortly after the
the "seizure of power," the Coburg tax office again reported that the economic outlook for the Coburg tax district was extremely worrying and that the situation remained dire.[144]

2.1.2.1.5 Labor service after 1933

After the "seizure of power" in April 1933, work students and thus the student voluntary labor service were initially admitted to the camp. This was intended to complete the idea of the "people's community" in the labor service in the composition of the camp inmates. In May 1933, the camp was finally incorporated into the NSDAP labor service of the Gau Oberfranken, and the employed welfare recipients were also taken over by the FAD. Absorbed into the "Third Reich," Coburg now styled itself as the champion and pioneer of the labor service concept and the founder of the first National Socialist-run youth labor service camp in Germany, even though a training and experimental camp of the NSDAP had already been established in Hammerstein in Hinterpommern on
January 2, 1932. [145] In addition, the credit for establishing the camp, which was primarily based on ideas from *the Stahlhelm*, was now attributed entirely to the NSDAP. The city of Coburg now insisted on compensation. Contrary to the standard transfers of other camps, Mayor Rehlein demanded a special agreement for Coburg from the Gau leadership as a moral right.

After negotiations between the Coburg City Council and the NSDAP's main department for the FAD at the end of April 1933, it was finally decided that the city of Coburg would transfer the Wüstenahorn camp to the NSDAP, relinquishing its status as the operator of the service.

142 See Hammer: Arbeitsdienst, Walter: Coburg, Faber: Coburg.
143 See: The Labor Service in Coburg. BA Film Archive K–23864.
144 See Coburg Tax Office to the Reich Statistical Office, Department VI Tax Statistics, Wealth Statistics Group, March 25, 1933. StACo Coburg Tax Office, Tax 2017 2648.
145 See Benz: Labor Service, p. 532. In comparison to Konstantin Hierl, who later became head of the Reich Labor Service, Gregor Strasser advocated within the NSDAP for the party's participation in the FAD and the establishment of camps.
146 See Mayor Rehlein to Engineer Ganninger, April 22, 1933. StadtACo A 7992.

Transferred to the Gauabteilung für den FAD (Gau Department for the FAD) on May 1, 1933. In fact, the Hauptabteilung für den FAD (Main Department for the FAD) was prepared to emphasize the special significance that Coburg had assumed with its establishment, in line with Rehlein's views, and to grant the camp a special status. The management of the camp therefore remained entirely in the hands of Mayor Rehlein, who received instructions solely from the Gau leadership. In addition, Rehlein was appointed district advisor for the FAD in the Coburg district, taking over the management of the Wüstenahorn camp and supervising its transfer to the Gau department of the NSDAP. In return, the city declared its continued willingness to support all matters relating to the camp, thus showing the FAD extraordinary goodwill. While the buildings in Wüstenahorn remained the property of the city, the inventory value of municipal property was converted into camp property at replacement cost. The resulting sum of RM 7,677.52 was amortized under Rehlein's responsibility by withholding one Reichsmark from the weekly subsidy per labor service man in the respective camp occupation, primarily in order to be able to pay off the camp's debt of RM 4,036.42 to creditors. The NSDAP main department had to pay the city 50 RM per month in rent for the FAD, which served as amortization of the construction costs for the camp expansion in 1932. The labor service department of the NSDAP in the Gau Oberfranken also acted as the legal successor to the city in all existing loan agreements for the items provided. [147]In return for its cooperation in the transfer of the camp, the city council expected to be given special consideration in the selection of locations for the labor service army formations and to have a larger department with a staff stationed on site.

Rehlein demanded a similar special status for camp commander Hammer from the district leader of the Bavarian FAD, Major Fritz Schinnerer, thus demonstrating a confident attitude in personnel policy as well. Hammer had already been repeatedly called to Bayreuth in April and May 1933 on behalf of the district representative for the FAD of the NSDAP Bavarian Ostmark and tasked with organizing and supervising the NSDAP labor camps in Upper Franconia.[148] Rehlein pointed out to the Gau leadership that Hammer should be transferred to the Upper Franconian Gau labor staff for his services in setting up the Coburg camp, thereby qualifying him for promotion within the labor service. [149] However, as in the case of Hammer, many of the unctuous promises made to Coburg proved to be empty words. At the end of June 1936, camp leader Hammer resigned from the camp service altogether and took over as senior construction manager for the Mönchröden water pipeline construction project. Mazuw took over the camp management and was represented by Paul Panzer.

In fact, immediately after the takeover, the Gau leadership of the FAD ordered a number of changes to adapt the camp to the Gau system. While the compulsory savings amount remained in place, the weekly wage was now reduced to

147 See Wilhelm Rehlein's treatise on the transfer of the city's youth labor camp to the labor service department of the NSDAP Gau Oberfranken, May 22, 1933; Gau worker for the FAD of the NSDAP Gauleitung Bayrische Ostmark to Mayor Rehlein, April 27, 1933. StadtACo A 7990.

148 See journals of the Wüstenahorn labor service camp from April and May 1933. StadtACo A 7987.

149 See Mayor Rehlein to the district leader for the FAD of the NSDAP, Major Schinnerer, May 18, 1933. StadtACo A 7992.

other NSDAP camps and reduced from RM 2.10 to RM 1.80. In June 1933, after visiting the camp, Ganninger ordered that the existing youth camp be temporarily converted into a troop camp with a workforce of 120 men from
July 5, 1933, with a workforce of 120 men, and that the existing labor camp should be relocated to Mönchröden and housed in the Alexandrinental porcelain factory.[150] The camp in Wüstenhorn was accordingly dissolved as a troop camp, but the unexpected change of use put it in a predicament that had to be resolved by the district leader Schinnerer on behalf of the city.[151] In July 1933, a Stahlhelm camp in Meeder was also taken over in the former community center in the FAD and staffed as an external department with state leaders, and in mid-August the Mönchröden camp was handed over to a new service provider.

In the camp, the outward appearance of political neutrality was now abandoned, and Nazi indoctrination was displayed much more openly through the holding of Schlageter celebrations and the participation of the camp staff in the NSDAP's solstice celebrations. From then on, the entire workforces of the Wüstenahorn, Meeder, and Mönchröden camps were also sent to party marches and celebrations. However, the city administration's scope for decision-making declined noticeably. When a 28-year-old man from Coburg who was not eligible for KRU payments applied to the welfare office in July 1933 to be admitted to the camp, the office approved his application, but the Coburg employment office immediately pointed out that anyone over the age of 25 could only be admitted at the city's expense. In addition, the Reich authority informed the city that any new admission of persons willing to perform labor service first required the approval of the district leadership of the FAD and that no exceptions would be made for the city. Despite all requests for special treatment, a consultation between Mayor Rehlein and District Leader Schinnerer in August 1933 confirmed the result that although those over 25 who were already employed could be recognized, further assignments would require the approval of the district leadership, as men over 25 were only to make up 10% of the individual FAD teams.[153] The city of Coburg's participation in the FAD in the form of the original model dwindled, but attempts were made to compensate for this with a public tribute to the city as a pioneer of compulsory labor service and the further concession of special status to the city.

Together with the additional camps in Meeder, Rodach, and Mönchröden, which had been established on October 10, 1932, April 15, 1933, and June 26, 1933, the Wüstenahorn camp was taken over by the district administration of Bavaria-West on August 10, 1933.[154] After the handover, the camps were administered by the respective camp leaders themselves, while control remained with the district. The city of Coburg now acted only as the sponsor of the work to implement the ongoing measures for Wüstenahorn and

150 See journals of the Wüstenahorn labor camp from May and June 1933. StadtACo A 7987.

151 See letter from the district director of the labor service for the district of Bavaria-West, Schinnerer, to field master Gustav Eichleiter, commander of the Coburg Wüstenahorn camp, July 15, 1933. StadtACo A 7991.

152 See journals of the Wüstenahorn labor service camp from May and July 1933. StadtACo A 7987.

153 See Otto Mesch to Welfare Office, July 29, 1933. Welfare and Youth Office to Coburg Employment Office, July 31, 1933. Coburg Employment Office to Coburg City Council, August 8, 1933; Coburg Employment Office to Coburg City Council, August 23, 1933. StadtACo A 15245.

154 See *Bayerische Ostmark*, February 26, 1937.

Mönchröden. [155]In recognition of its achievements in the field of labor service, the Reich Labor Service Authority in Coburg ultimately assigned it its own labor service department, initially with 160 and later 216 men. This was assigned to Labor District 28 in France.[156] FAD Group 280/3 was set up in the former Dusko Works, a basketware, unfinished furniture, and raffia carpet factory at Uferstraße 7, now owned by the city. At the request of Labor District 28, the camp had been expanded with the support of the Labor Service itself in accordance with the district leadership's guidelines at the expense of the city of Coburg. After the transit camp in Wüstenahorn was dissolved and transferred to the main camp in Coburg, its inauguration and transfer to the German Labor Service took place on December 16, 1933, in the presence of district advisor Rehlein, labor district leader Schinnerer, and department leader Filler. At the ceremony, Labor District Leader Schinnerer awarded Franz Schwede and Wilhelm Rehlein the golden badge of the Förderverband (Promotion Association) as the first in the Reich for their services to the Labor Service, and showcased Coburg's status as a supposed pioneer and forerunner of the Labor Service idea through a personalized tribute. The city was also assured of a special position with regard to concerns about impending budget cuts in the FAD.

The Coburg base camp covered a total area of approximately 8,000 $m^2$and consisted of a main site, a training hall, a 1·200 m^2 -wide parade ground, and a 3·000 m^2 vegetable garden. A two-family house was intended to accommodate married leaders. Initially supervised by Oberfeldmeister Wilhelm Filler, the camp was under the direction of Oberfeldmeister Hans Hildner from the end of 1934. Named after Andreas Hofer's *Sandwirt von Passeyer*, the Coburg main camp wanted to "Image of a strong German of peasant origin whose fighting spirit was rooted in his love for his homeland" at the center of his work. [158]The transit camps in Mönchröden, Meeder, and Rodach remained under the authority of the Coburg main camp. The labor service was now primarily used to beautify Coburg and to implement the Reich's settlement concept and job creation program. By June 1935, it had been used to expand the main camp on Uferstraße, in the urban settlement area on Bertelsdorfer Höhe, to complete 40 settler sites and decide on further settlements, to construct drainage ditches, to drain the Hohenfels property, and to regulate the drainage area near Coburg and the moat at Waldsachsen and Neuhof.[159]The military tradition of the camp was now also underlined by the fact that the Coburg Labor Service maintained close contacts with the Wehrmacht and, for example, the 8th Company of Infantry Regiment No. 95 under Company Commander Max Freiherr von Tautphoeus regularly spent time with the men of the RAD. Until the camp was dissolved, around 1,300 labor service men passed through it. After the introduction of compulsory labor service on June 26, 1935, the camp became part of the Reich Labor Service. At the same time, the

155 See Journal of the Wüstenahorn Labor Service Camp from August 1933. StadtACo A 7987.

156 The Reich territory was divided into 30 labor districts, three of which were located in Bavaria: labor districts 28 Franconia, 29 Bavaria East Mark, and 30 Bavaria Highlands.

157 See German Labor Service Arbeitsgau 28 Franken, Sinnerer to the group leadership 280 German Labor Service Kulmbach, May 18, 1934. StadtACo A 7992.

158 *Bayerische Ostmark*, February 26, 1937. However, the glorification of Andreas Hofer was revised in the so-called " Third Reich." Hofer's fight against Bavaria ultimately contradicted Greater German ideas, so that the NSDAP completely suppressed the commemoration of him in 1938.

159 See ibid.

In September 1933, the city council approved the establishment of a labor camp for women in the farm buildings of Hohenfels Castle, which had been owned by the city since November 1932. However, the further development of the labor service in Coburg, which the city was only able to resist to a limited extent, was also a clear symptom of Coburg's decline in political importance after 1933. As early as 1935, the city's main camp was to be closed and relocated to Emsland. However, Mayor Dr. Schmidt, Mayor Rehlein, and City Treasurer Vollmuth, who were aware of the symbolic and political significance of this decision, managed to delay it for another two years by designating appropriate work projects and providing financial support.[160] However, an economic policy geared entirely toward war preparations, and in particular the Four-Year Plan, ultimately left little room for the special privileges of the self-proclaimed pioneer Coburg and forced the relocation of the labor service camp to Ettleben near Schweinfurt at the beginning of June 1937, where it continued as Department 1/284.[161] As special compensation for Coburg, Group Staff 286 subsequently moved into the camp. It was assigned the five labor service camps in Steinheid, Blechhammer, Neustadt, Ebelsbach, and Eltmann to administer. To this end, the labor service camp was converted into an administrative building under the direction of the city building authority and with the help of 14 labor service men.[162] However, as early as August 1938, the Reich Labor Leader ordered, as part of the Four-Year Plan, that the RAD be deployed as a matter of urgency for worthwhile work projects and that Reich Labor Service Group 286 Coburg and the transportable barracks camp be transferred to the labor district.

XXXII Saar to be relocated. [163]

2.1.2.2 Job creation measures

However, as unemployment in the Coburg employment office district remained well above the Reich average and still ranked highest in the Bavarian Ostmark district in 1935, it was up to the city administration to initiate further measures to combat unemployment and build up the city's economic strength.[164] In August 1933, a contract and procurement office was initially set up within the municipal works department under the direction of Arno Fischer to coordinate all municipal purchases and the awarding of contracts. The individual municipal departments had to submit all supplier and requirements lists and relinquish their authority to award contracts themselves.[165]

In addition, in January 1934, Mayor Schwede ordered the establishment of a labor propaganda office with the task of preserving jobs in the city by supporting local businesses, identifying every available job opportunity in local commercial enterprises, and providing the private sector with suggestions and

160 See memo from Feldmeister Hildner, January 24, 1935. StadtACo A 7992.
161 See *Bayerische Ostmark*, February 26, 1937.
162 See *Bayerische Ostmark*, December 9, 1937.
163 See Reich Labor Service Group 286 to the Mayor of Coburg, August 1, 1938. Stadt-ACo A 6298 and *Bayerische Ostmark*, August 2, 1938.
164 See Coburg City Council to the Reich Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, January 7, 1935. StACo Theater 73 and Coburg City Council to the State Ministry of Education and Culture, January 14, 1935. StACo Theater 3430.
165 See circular letter from Arno Fischer to municipal departments, August 26, 1933. StACo Theater 3512.

To submit proposals for combating unemployment and to take up the fight against illegal employment. The office also played a special role in enforcing National Socialist ideas regarding female workers. The value of women in the desired "people's community" was measured primarily by their role as mothers and their service in the domestic and private sphere, which is why their access to public spaces and the world of work was to be significantly restricted. It was therefore the responsibility of director Ernst Kuhn to push women out of working life as far as possible so that jobs could be made available for men. The labor propaganda office was tasked with tracking down dual-income households and, as far as possible and appropriate, promoting the replacement of female workers with male ones. Above all, the elimination of dual-income households to combat unemployment had been one of the NSDAP's campaign slogans. The extent to which this had been successful in stirring up social envy is shown, for example, by a letter written by several unemployed people to Mayor Schwede in December 1931, in which they reminded the Nazi mayor of his promises made at a meeting in the Hofbräusaal regarding action against dishonest dual earners and accused a number of people of of being registered with the employment office despite having an income.

The Labor Propaganda Office under Ernst Kuhn

The newly created office was established within the city planning department, assigned to the city planning commissioner, and entrusted to City Councilor Ernst Kuhn on an honorary basis. [167]On August 26, 1934, the two offices were finally merged when the contract and procurement office was separated from the operations office and subordinated to the labor propaganda office under Kuhn.[168] This ultimately concentrated decision-making power over all municipal contracts in the hands of businessman Ernst Kuhn, thereby directly subordinating it to National Socialist goals and punishing companies and job seekers who did not act in accordance with the regime's wishes. Ernst Kuhn thus acted as an advisory and mediating body between the municipality, the free economy, and the skilled trades, which also gave him the opportunity to act as the administrator of Nazi economic policy vis-à-vis Coburg companies. Thanks to his personal connections, he worked closely with the Nazi HAGO and the Rabatt- und Handelsschutzverein (Discount and Trade Protection Association) under Karl Hartung, as well as the Coburg Chamber of Industry and Commerce, and involved the city administration, economic organizations, and the party in job creation under his direction.[169] As an "old fighter" and confidant of Schwede, Kuhn, who had always distinguished himself through his strict and loyal party political behavior, was predestined to take the initiative in promoting appropriate measures.

With the establishment of the employment propaganda office, the city administration responded to an initiative by Karl Fiehler, who, in the fight against unemployment, had called on local authorities to create an office from which all issues relating to job creation and the accommodation of the unemployed could be dealt with. In doing so, Fiehler emphasized the duty of every individual to follow the appeal of the "Führer."

166 See "Einige Arbeitslose" (Some Unemployed Persons) to Mayor Schwede, December 14, 1931. StadtACo A 15252.
167 See decree by Mayor Schwede, January 24, 1934. StadtACo A 6332.
168 See decree by Mayor Schmidt, September 4, 1934. StadtACo A 6332.
169 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, April 5, 1934. For more on the NS-HAGO and Karl Hartung, see Chapter IV3.2.1.3.

not to wait for instructions, but to take action and initiate "forward-looking initiatives," which met with open ears in Coburg.[170] His instructions and implementation proposals, published in the magazine *Die nationalsozialistische Gemeinde (The National Socialist Community)*, served as guidelines for the Coburg city administration in terms of administrative organization and administrative action. In his first year on the job, Kuhn organized temporary help for Coburg's tailors to produce a batch of uniform blue suits for the DAF and 500 drill uniforms for the labor service, securing several weeks of work. At the same time, he was able to encourage city employees to consider the local emergency situation in their consumption habits. The municipal savings bank also supported him in his plans, as it, together with the other Coburg banks, influenced the economic development of the Coburg region with a generous credit policy. By 1939 the United Coburg Savings Banks, which had merged in 1938, had contributed almost 24 million Reichsmarks to the local economy in the form of loans. Ultimately, he was able to claim credit for having helped many unemployed people, for example at the Reichsbahn and the Reichspost, back into gainful employment. According to Fiehler's statements, party members and "old fighters" were given priority in job placement. Ernst Kuhn himself was able to benefit from these privileges when he was hired by the city in February 1935 as head of the labor propaganda office. Due to his training and experience as an independent manufacturer, but above all due to his commitment to the national uprising, Kuhn was credited with eight years of service when he was transferred to civil service. [173] In addition to municipal contracting and procurement, he was also assigned the task of collecting cultural taxes for the state theater.

Kuhn ultimately saw himself in his position as a middleman between the various ministries, the Wehrmacht, industry, trade, and commerce, and relied primarily on personal agreements and contacts in his work. If entrepreneurs and craftsmen encountered problems with price differences when awarding contracts, for example, the agency mediated.[174] From this position, Kuhn conducted negotiations with the basket industry and the tailoring trade on the allocation of army contracts, with the carpentry trade, where he organized contracts worth RM 72,000 in consultation with the Greater German Cremation Association, and with the woodworking industry on the manufacture of transport crates.[175] He thus complemented the municipal job creation measures already underway, in which, according to Mayor Rehlein in 1933, the city council awarded contracts worth RM 1,335,000 for housing construction, the Hausen power plant, and the construction of labor service camps. This sum increased to RM 8,200,000 by 1938.

170 Fiehler, Karl: The struggle of municipalities against unemployment. In: Journal for the National Socialist Community, September 15, 1933. StadtACo A 6332. The passages in Fiehler's essay marked in red by the city administration make it clear that the Munich native's remarks provided the direct impetus and implementation instructions for the establishment of the labor propaganda office.

171 See *Bayerische Ostmark*, June 23, 1939.

172 See *Bayerische Ostmark*, January 30, 1935.

173 See resolution of the Administrative and Police Senate of February 11, 1935. StadtACo A 6332.

174 See Fritz Kuhn to the intelligence service of the Bavarian Municipal Council, June 13, 1935. StadtACo A 6332.

175 See minutes of the consultation with the councilors dated July 7, 1938. StadtACo A 6332.

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RM through further infrastructure measures, such as the construction of the trade and commercial school, the new Gräfsblock, the small pensioners' home, and road construction, for which Rehlein had received numerous state subsidies for the city.

After unemployment steadily declined and full employment was ultimately achieved thanks to the arms industry boom, the labor propaganda office was dissolved in November 1938 and transformed into a municipal economic office under the direction of Ernst Kuhn.[177] The rest of its staff was also directly subordinate to the mayor in the new office. At the same time, its range of tasks was expanded to include recording the demand for essential goods and procuring temporary employees and workers for municipal needs. To this end, the Economic Office was responsible for official communications with professional organizations such as the district farmers' association, the Chamber of Industry and Commerce, the Chamber of Crafts, and the guilds.

The labor service and job creation measures fulfilled two objectives of National Socialist local politics. On the one hand, the measures against unemployment allowed for action-oriented and dynamic politics. This met the need for order within the population and demonstrated the efficiency of the regime to the outside world. Although the implementation of the labor service, such as its insistence on manual labor, was not very efficient or progressive from an economic point of view, it did fulfill these objectives. Solving the unemployment problem and reviving the economy, which was in fact also due to unprecedented rearmament, boosted the popularity of the regime. The fact that many workers now had the opportunity to find long-term, stable employment, that working conditions had improved, for example through a minimum annual vacation, and that the working class was being promoted through propaganda, was convincing, even if social hierarchies remained in place. A rigid price freeze and the freezing of wages and salaries guaranteed superficial stability. [179]Through repressive inclusion, job creation also promoted the forced integration of all those capable of working into the "völkische Leistungsgemeinschaft" (ethnic community of achievement) and served as a means of discipline. On the other hand, job creation measures contributed to the expansion of municipal infrastructure. By building bypass roads and expanding residential areas and housing developments, job creation measures shaped and enhanced urban space. They were thus a vehicle for inclusion that should not be underestimated. Despite all the problems in and around the housing developments, they were a tangible and presentable element with which the pressing problems of the time could be countered in a planned and seemingly efficient manner and the crisis-ridden nature of modernity made manageable. Their contribution to the redesign and organization of urban space, as well as to socio-political and symbolic profiling, made them an important instrument of power. The standard of living seemed particularly high in the

176 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, April 5, 1934, and Rehlein: Coburg baut, pp. 722–723.

177 By December 1, 1935, they had fallen from 8,364 to 6,009 in the Coburg employment office district. See the 1937 Coburg City Directory, Part V, p. 15, and had fallen to 3,787 by November 30, 1936. See 1937 Coburg City Address Book, Part V, p. 16.

178 See Order on the Establishment of the Economic Office of the City of Coburg, Mayor Rehlein November 21, 1938. StadtACo A 6332.

179 See Tooze, Adam: The Economics of Destruction. The History of the Economy under National Socialism. Munich 2007.

Compared to the precarious economic situation before 1933, it rose steadily, aided by increased consumer opportunities and the leisure policies of the KdF.

2.2 Hereditary and racial care: "Keeping the national body pure"

In National Socialist health policy, the "preservation of the purity of the national body" by municipal and state authorities and the medical profession was a top priority. This severely restricted the freedom of those affected to live their lives as they wished. Regardless of behavior, the value of the individual to the "national community" was determined by "racial" affiliation or hereditary biological characteristics, which could not be influenced by personal actions. The "Nuremberg Laws" ended the civic equality of Jewish Germans and created a legal framework for "keeping German blood pure," which had to be implemented in concrete measures by the municipal registry office and the local youth and welfare office. In addition to institutionalized discrimination, bureaucratic harassment also became an administrative practice of degrading applicants. In particular, the implementation of the "Marriage and Blood Protection Act" exemplifies the bureaucratized disenfranchisement and the corresponding reaction of those affected. State health authorities and hereditary health courts were to create areas of selection and persecution within the health care system and also carry out selection within the actual "people's community." With the aim of
The "improvement" of the German people was ultimately intended to lead to the "eradication" of unwelcome offspring. The multifaceted powers of intervention available to the state health authorities as the enforcement body for "hereditary and racial hygiene" thus demonstrate the extent of the stigmatization of people with "hereditary diseases." On the other hand, the implementation of the "Law for the Prevention of Hereditary Diseases in Offspring" through the cooperation of the health authorities, the hereditary health court, and the doctors and lawyers working in both authorities provides insight into the "extermination." The procedure for sterilization, the mechanisms underlying administrative action, and the options available to the families concerned must therefore be the focus of any examination of administrative practice. Individual cases illustrate the depth of penetration of the measures implemented.

2.2.1 Denigration: The "Marriage and Blood Protection Act"

While marriages between "racially and genetically valuable members of the national community" were encouraged through marriage loans, and the procreation of "Aryan" and "genetically healthy" children was particularly encouraged through the cult of the German mother and the Coburg honorary sponsorships, union and procreation were to be prohibited and punished for others. Regardless of behavior and based solely on a person's "racial" affiliation, life chances and personal freedoms were to be restricted or completely denied. In the wake of the Nuremberg Laws, measures were introduced in 1935 that prohibited marriages in the interests of racial hygiene. The Nazi state intervened massively in the private lives of German Jews by law. The "Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor" of September 15, 1935, prohibited "marriages between

Jews and citizens of German or related blood" as well as extramarital relations. In addition, Jews were prohibited from employing women "of German or related blood under the age of 45" [180]in their households, thereby legalizing the assumption that Jewish employers would inevitably abuse their employees. The concrete implementation of the law was in the hands of the municipal welfare and registry offices, which subsequently also had power over the private and thus personal protective space of the Jewish citizens of Coburg.

2.2.1.1 Employment of "Aryan" domestic workers

Following the provisions of the "Blood Protection Law," the Bavarian Political Police ordered the police department to compile a list of all Jewish families, institutions, associations, and businesses that employed "Aryan" female domestic workers under the age of 45 in November 1935. A total of 38 Jewish households and institutions were identified in which 44 "Aryan" women were employed as maids, domestic workers, or employees in a clinic. After the "Blood Protection Law" was enacted, 25 of these women were dismissed as of January 1, 1936. Two of the "Aryan" employees worked in a house where there were no male members of the household, so their employment did not have to be terminated. The others were over 35 years of age and therefore exempt from the law on the basis of their age, since Section 12 of the "First Ordinance for the Implementation of the Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor" stipulated that domestic servants could remain in their employment if they had reached the age of 35 by December 31, 1935.[181]

An exemption request by Jewish cattle dealer Siegfried Sterns was rejected. Hermann Hirsch, the preacher and head of the Jewish boarding school, on the other hand, was able to secure continued employment for the "Aryan" housekeepers at the Hirsch boarding school after he too had been urged to dismiss the two women concerned. Hirsch had studied the existing legal situation in detail, attaching excerpts from legal commentaries on the "Blood Protection Law" to his application and thus making the best use of the drastically reduced legal framework for Jews in 1936. Referring to the legal commentary on the law, he confronted the Coburg police department with the fact that a boarding house like his was excluded from the existing regulation, as it primarily applied to private households. Inspector Wilhelm Scheel of the municipal police then had the official Rudolf Kessel investigate the matter. Although Kessel could find no concrete evidence that the two "Aryan" employees were also employed in Hermann Hirsch's private household outside of their school cleaning work, he wanted the provisions of the "Blood Protection Law" to be applied to the boarding school as well.[182]Scheel then deemed the application ready for rejection and left further action to the Special Office for Exemption from § 3 of the "Blood Protection Law" in the Reich Ministry of the Interior. [183]However, the latter ultimately agreed with the legal situation outlined by Hirsch and merely pointed out that the applicant should be made aware of the penal provisions.

180 RGBl. 1935 I, p. 1146 f.
181 See RGBl. 1935 I, p. 1334–1336.
182 See memo by Rudolf Kessel, January 3, 1936. StadtACo A 8440.
183 See memo from Wilhelm Scheel, January 4, 1936. StadtACo A 8440.

in the event that he circumvented the regulation. [184]However, the Coburg employment office also insisted that the boarding house be denied permission to employ the three "Aryan" domestic helpers who were now working there. Scheel had Kessel investigate again, but ultimately had to refer the employment office to the instructions of the Reich Ministry of the Interior, which no one dared to directly oppose. As a result, Kessel monitored the boarding house every three months with regard to the employment of female employees.

On January 18, 1936, the police reported that all of the "Aryan" domestic workers concerned had either resigned or been dismissed. For the families themselves, the loss of loyal employees often came as a heavy blow, as these workers had played an important role in the daily lives of the children and in relieving the burden on the wives. Until November 1944, police officers carried out regular checks at the employment office, the local health insurance fund, the residents' registration office, and through physical inspections to determine the extent to which anyone had violated the regulations. A file kept at the police station on exemptions for the employment of "Aryan" domestic workers was closed by Kessel in January 1941 with the note that the financial circumstances of the Jews that had since arisen and the current shortage of labor would have automatically ruled out the employment of "Aryans" by Jews.

2.2.1.2 Marriages of "Mischlinge"

Within the legal framework designed to guarantee the "improvement" and "preservation of the purity of the German people," a gradation and differentiation was made with regard to "Jewish half-breeds." The first implementing regulation of the "Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor" of November 14, 1935, thus allowed "Jewish nationalswith two fully Jewish grandparents" to marry "citizens of German or related blood or Jewish half-breeds who have only one fully Jewish grandparent," provided they could obtain permission from the Reich Minister of the Interior and the Deputy Führer or an agency designated by them. Here, too, questions of "worthiness" came into play, with "the physical, mental, and character traits of the applicant, the length of his family's residence in Germany, his or his father's participation in the World War, and his other family history" [187]being the decisive factors in the decision. A corresponding application had to be submitted to the competent higher administrative authority, in Coburg's case the government of Upper Franconia. However, the latter forwarded the applications directly to the mayor of Coburg, who, in consultation with the health department and with the cooperation of the registry office, was to make a preliminary decision and thus take concrete action locally in the

184 See Reich Ministry of the Interior to the Coburg city administration, January 13, 1936. StadtACo A 8440.

185 See Coburg Employment Office to Coburg Police Department, March 28, 1936, and Wilhelm Scheel to Coburg Employment Office, April 4, 1936. StadtACo A 8440. By April 1938, all of the women in question had either resigned from their jobs at the boarding school or been dismissed. See memo by Rudolf Kessel, April 24, 1938. StadtACo A 8440.

186 See memo by Rudolf Kessel dated January 8, 1941. StadtACo A 8440.

187 See RGBl. 1935 I, p. 1146.

invade the private sphere of Jewish men and women in Coburg, judge them, and ultimately shape their lives.

Although the chances of approval were very slim from the outset, four applications for the approval of "mixed marriages" were received from Coburg citizens, who subsequently found themselves at the mercy of the Coburg authorities and had to complete a bureaucratic obstacle course in which they, their past, and their families were recorded and evaluated down to the last detail. Two cases illustrate the procedure and the associated disruptions to people's lives.

The Schmidt brothers case

The Protestant-baptized brothers Dr. Hans Egon and Robert Eduard Schmidt were both considered "first-degree Mischlinge" under Nazi legislation because their mother had Jewish parents. Their father, Gustav Schmidt, had turned the corset factory founded in 1862 into a successful business together with his wife Erna [188]as the Eduard Schmidt corset and doll factory, and had registered several patents under the brand name ESCORA in the field of corsetry manufacturing. The family's imposing villa at Obere Klinge 9 bore witness to the Schmidt family's success. In the 1930s, both brothers sought to marry an "Aryan" woman. Dr. Hans Egon Schmidt, born in Coburg in 1905 and a graduate in business administration, therefore submitted a corresponding application to the government of Upper Franconia in December 1936 after becoming engaged to a woman named Margarete Olschenka. Along with the application, the couple had to submit a series of documents to the registry office, which reveal the bureaucratic harassment associated with what was essentially a hopeless endeavor. These included ten documents proving the bride's "Aryan" ancestry, 15 civil and parish records proving Schmidt's ancestry, confirmation from the parish office of his membership in the Protestant Church, citizenship certificates and residence permits, marital status certificates, photographs, a certificate of eligibility for active military service from both the government and the military registration office, a letter from the Beuthen police administration, a confirmation from the Langemarck student association, a booklet of duties from the Teutonia Corps, and a letter from the Academic Scientific Employment Office in Berlin. In addition, both had to provide detailed written information about themselves and their family history, proving how long the family had been living in Germany, what professions the family members had pursued, to what extent family members had served in the Wehrmacht, to what extent the families were of "German blood" and had participated in German intellectual life.[189] In addition to the evidence regarding the "worthiness" of the potential spouses, a number of expert opinions had to be submitted and persons named who could provide information about the applicants.

Schmidt traced his family history back to his great-great-great-great-great-grandfather and, through his written accounts, attempted to convey the value and economic significance of his father's company, which employed around 200 people and 33 home-based workers, was soon to be expanded, and was to establish a social institution.

188 Erna Schmidt was one of four women who survived because she lived in a "privileged mixed marriage."

189 See the documents submitted by Schmidt to the registry office and the mayor's instructions on the approval procedure Schmidt dated January 23, 1937. StadtACo A 5893.

He wanted to prove to Coburg that he intended to grant benefits to the workforce. He wanted to demonstrate that he had inherited his commercial skills and enthusiasm for the subject from his father, who came from a long line of Protestant manufacturers and could thus prove, in the logic of the regime, that the "Jewish element" had not had such a strong influence on him. He also praised a new corset he had designed and patented, which he hoped to sell successfully abroad, thereby bringing foreign currency earnings to the German Reich. At the same time, Schmidt sought to prove the categories of special "worthiness" specified in the law. His mother's conversion to the Protestant faith, her study of the German language, her work in a military hospital during the First World War and the associated award of a medal of merit, his voluntary enlistment for active military service in July 1935, and his efforts as a scout and in military sports were all factors in his favor.[190] Expert opinions from the Scout leadership and former teachers also spoke in favor of Schmidt's character. Schmidt's fiancée was also able to prove that she had been active as a block warden in the National Socialist Women's League and that her father had been awarded the Iron Cross.

The registry office obtained expert opinions on behalf of the mayor himself. The Coburg district administration wrote a political assessment confirming Schmidt's passive attitude toward the NSDAP and characterizing him as a sincere, quiet, and apolitical man who did not even participate in collections.[191] The district leadership also consulted an expert opinion by Professor Wilhelm Möser, a former high school teacher of Hans Egon Schmidt, which was intended to determine "whether the racial characteristics of his Aryan father or his Jewish mother were apparent."[192] The teacher boasted that, as a member of *the Anti-Semitic Association of German Students*, he had taken an early interest in how the "mixed marriage" affected the Schmidt brothers and that he had closely observed the physical and mental appearance of both of them. He was convinced that the racial elements were much more apparent in the older brother, but that Egon Schmidt did not display any "Jewish assertiveness or other typical Jewish characteristics" [193]in class. On the contrary, he was well-liked by his classmates and participated in all games and sports activities. Whereas in his youth he would not have made a Jewish impression outwardly, Möser now wanted to recognize this more clearly. The "Advisory Center for Hereditary and Racial Care" of the Coburg State Health Office opposed the Bonn Health Office, which had issued a certificate of fitness for marriage, and thus pushed for a more restrictive course.[194] The Coburg District Office's Office for Public Health also agreed with the Coburg Health Office and wanted to

190 See family history written by Egon Schmidt, undated, and Egon Schmidt to District Leader Dr. Schmidt, May 28, 1937. StadtACo A 5893.

191 See Coburg district leadership to the mayor, March 31, 1937. StadtACo A 5893.

192 Study professor Dr. Wilhelm Möser to Coburg NSDAP district leadership, May 15, 1937. StadtACo A 5893.

193 Ibid.

194 See Erb und Rassenpflege Beratungsstelle (Heritage and Racial Care Counseling Center) of the Coburg State Health Office to the mayor, May 14, 1937. StadtACo A 5893. For more on the Coburg Health Office, see Chapter IV2.2.2.

find no valid reason in any of the documents submitted to approve the marriage.

After both the mayor of Coburg, based on an expert opinion from the registry office, and the government of Upper Franconia had expressed their opposition to the application, the Reich Ministry of the Interior, in agreement with the Deputy Führer, also rejected Egon Schmidt's application for marriage on November 16, 1937. The Coburg registry office conveyed the message to the applicant, noting that the decision was final. Nevertheless, Schmidt submitted another application in February 1939, which was rejected without further review.

Ultimately, however, the Schmidt brothers did not allow Nazi legislation to prevent them from marrying. Egon Schmidt married in London-Kensington in June 1940, and his brother Eduard had already married in Amsterdam in February 1939. An examination by the municipal legal office finally revealed that Eduard Schmidt did not need permission to marry because his bride was Dutch. Later, City Treasurer Vollmuth suspected that Eduard Schmidt had initially wanted to wait for his brother's approval process because he looked and behaved more "Jewish" than his brother. In addition, legal advisor Schulze-Döbold determined that although the relevant registry officials had committed a criminal offense, the two marriages were valid according to Stuckart-Globke's commentary on the "Blood Protection Law" and that § 5 (1), which provided for a prison sentence for violations, did not apply to "half-breeds." The legal office did not see any stricter legal action against the Schmidt brothers until after the end of the war.

In addition to the administrative implementation of anti-Semitic stereotypes of the "greedy Jew," administrative actions were also permeated by the Nazi categories of "worthiness" and the evaluation of individuals based on their service to the "people's community." In the case of the Schmidt brothers, it was particularly the fact that they had not fulfilled their civic duties with regard to military service and were now able to obtain a marriage license thanks to their existing capital that caused a stir.[197]Instead of accepting this situation, Mayor Greim, after consulting with the administrative advisors and at the suggestion of Schulze-Döbold, decided to use the SS security service in Bayreuth to lobby the legislature for a change in the existing legal situation.[198] Bypassing the regular channels, the city attempted to take the lead and initiate a tightening of the current rules of exclusion. City treasurer Hermann Vollmuth therefore asked the SD to work toward a change in the law with regard to "Mischlinge" (people of mixed race) so that "marriages concluded abroad without permission would be just as void as marriages between Jews and citizens of German descent." [199]

195 See Office for Public Health, Administrative Director Kaebsch to the Gau Office Director of the Office for Public Health in Bayreuth, Dr. med. Heßler, September 28, 1937. StadtACo 5893.

196 See statement by the legal department dated July 6, 1940.

197 According to the decree of July 25, 1935, "Jewish half-breeds" were initially allowed to perform military service, even though special restrictions were imposed. See RGBl. 1935 I, p. 1047 f.

198 See minutes of the consultation with the administrative advisory boards of July 8, 1940. StadtACo A 5893.

199 See City Treasurer Vollmuth to the SS, SD Coburg Branch Office, July 12, 1940. StadtACo A 5893.

Just how hopeless the applications for permission to marry actually were is illustrated by the cases of Lisa Gagel and Marie Luise Inderwies, two women from Coburg who were declared to be "Jewish Mischlinge" (half-breeds) and who had also applied for permission to marry. Lisa Gagel, who, with only one Jewish grandparent, had a better chance of obtaining permission to marry as a "second-degree Mischling," had her application for legal equality with
"German blood" persons. However, she was able to obtain the approval of the Reich Ministry of the Interior for her marriage, provided that the authority responsible for her also submitted a corresponding application to the Deputy Führer. It was also helpful that her fiancé, Dr. Paul Sauerteig, was a party member and managing director of the Sonneberg district welfare office. However, since the government of Upper and Middle Franconia had placed this task in the hands of the mayor of Coburg, he did not consider himself responsible and forwarded the matter to the superior office of Lisa Gagel's fiancé, the district administrator of Sonneberg.[200] After Gagel had overcome numerous official obstacles and the Sonneberg district administrator had actually submitted a request to the Deputy Führer, they were ultimately still denied the right to marry. [201]

The Inderwies case

The Inderwies family, who lived at Glockenberg 4, saw themselves as typical representatives of a middle-class Coburg family, who were equally imbued with national pathos and boasted of their love for their fatherland. The mother, Hedwig Inderwies, née Lion, had Jewish parents, which is why her children Kurt and Marie Luise were also considered "first-degree Jewish Mischlinge." After the Nuremberg Laws were enacted, the family, who felt they were unquestionably part of the German "people's community," was confronted with legal discrimination and disadvantage due to Hedwig Inderwies' Jewish ancestry. However, the family was keen to maintain their status within Coburg and German society and attempted to challenge the status imposed on them by law. The father, Ludwig Inderwies, a retired lieutenant colonel who had participated in the Boxer Rebellion and World War I and was a retired government councilor, had unsuccessfully applied to the Reich Chancellery [for] his two children to be granted equal status with "second-degree Jewish half-breeds."

In addition, Hedwig Inderwies, who had converted to Catholicism before her marriage, as had her parents, and who had been expelled from Alsace-Lorraine in 1919, wrote to the Reich Chancellery herself after Kristallnacht to be freed from being treated as a Jew. After her experiences on the night of
November 10, it had become clear to her that she would henceforth belong to the pariahs. She wrote:

> "After the cowardly murder in Paris, which few people condemned as deeply as I did, I was arrested, taken to the police station, and forced to march through the city with the Jews, with whom I no longer have any connection. I understand that this is how it is

200 See Government of Upper and Middle Franconia to the Mayor, June 27, 1938, and Treasurer Vollmuth to the Government of Upper and Middle Franconia, Aug. 16, 1938. StadtACo A 5893.
201 See Deputy Führer via the Reich Governor in Thuringia, June 27, 1939. StadtACo A 5893.
202 See State Ministry of the Interior to the government of Upper Franconia, November 30, 1936. StadtACo A 5893.

> had to come, but now I know what 'Golgotha' means. I have suffered as only a human 'being' can suffer; the despair, the horror, never leaves me. There are days when I am no longer in control of my senses. After all that has been said, must I repeat that I was one of the Führer's most loyal followers from the very beginning, that my children walked through the streets wearing the party badge 16 years ago and were bitterly harassed!" [203]

Hedwig Inderwies specifically requested to be exempted from carrying a "Jewish identification card," the "Jew ban," which, among other things, denied her access to the state theater, the obligation to change her name, and the "mark of the outlawed" [204]in order to be able to belong to the "people's community" as a German. In an attempt to prove that she was as nationalistic as anyone else, she also assured them that Kreisleiter Schmidt and Standartenführer Gerspacher had always treated her decently. In order to preserve her own bourgeois self-image, she downplayed the persecution of Jews that was currently taking place.[205] At the same time, her letter illustrates how openly and readily National Socialist ideas were accepted in bourgeois circles, given that Inderwies was able to identify fully with the ideals of the movement even though her own rights were severely restricted as a result. [206] This attempt at equality also failed.

In March 1939, Erich Sünderwald, Marie Luise Inderwies' fiancé, finally submitted an application for permission to marry. The investigations subsequently initiated by the municipal authorities revealed that the applicants fully met the National Socialist criteria of "worthiness." In addition to Ludwig Inderwies' military service and numerous war decorations, the couple attempted to prove their loyalty and interest in German culture by submitting a list of literature available in their home, which included works such as *Mein Kampf*, *Hitler und die Jugend*, *Neuer Geist, neue Zeit*, as well as works about Wagner, Hindenburg, Bismarck, and Frederick the Great. They also assured that they only read the *Bayerische Ostmark*, the *Völkischer Beobachter*, and the *Coburger Tageblatt*. Both applicants were also members of the NSV, because, according to Sünderwald's statements, he was denied party membership because of his fiancée. At the time of the application, the local group had not yet responded to an application for membership in the Reichskolonialbund (Reich Colonial League).[207] In a corresponding political report, the district leadership noted that although nothing negative was known about Marie Luise Inderwies, her ancestry meant that she could not be politically reliable. Sünderwald characterized the report as apathetic toward politics. After the outbreak of war and Sünderwald's deployment to the front, another element was added with which the applicant could prove his "worthiness" as defined by the "people's community."

203 Hedwig Inderwies to the Reich Chancellery of the Führer, December 27, 1938. StadtACo A 5893. Emphasis in the original.
204 Ibid.
205 See ibid. See also Roseman, Mark: Jews on the Defensive. In: Frei, Norbert (ed.): Wie bürgerlich war der Nationalsozialismus? Göttingen 2018, pp. 53–62.
206 As one of four women, Hedwig Inderwies survived in a "privileged mixed marriage."
207 See Erich Sünderwald to the Central Administration of the City of Coburg, June 26, 1939. StadtACo A 5893.
208 See Political testimony of District Leader Schmitz, July 19, 1939. StadtACo A 5893.

The city administration therefore drew particular attention to the discrepancy in the perception of civic duties between the Schmidt and Sünderwald brothers. At the same time, this reflected the gender-based differentiation in which cases in which women or men were categorized as Jewish were treated differently.

On the orders of the city administration, Sünderwald and Inderwies also underwent an examination at the state health office, where their physical and mental condition was assessed. Despite unremarkable findings, the office advised against approving the marriage in its final ruling, as the bride was a "half-breed."[209] In April 1940, the application was finally officially rejected. Along with the negative decision, Sünderwald and Inderwies were sent a fee notice for the bureaucratic procedure.[210]However, since the applications not only took up the applicants' time and resources, but also had a negative impact on the administrative apparatus in the course of a war-related process of labor pooling, the Ministry of the Interior ordered in February 1940 that the health department should refrain from investigating spouses because applications involving "first- or second-degree Mischlinge" had no chance of success.In addition, the fiancés were to be informed that they could not expect to receive a permit even if they performed military or frontline service. In addition, the fiancés were to be informed that they could not expect to receive approval even if they performed military or frontline service.[211] As a result, a war-related moratorium on the processing of such cases soon prevailed, which could only be lifted by citing reasons of war importance.[212]

In addition to the major encroachment on the personal freedom and opportunities for individual development of those affected, the restrictions on marriage also entailed considerable legal and financial disadvantages. For women in particular, the ban on marriage meant the loss of an essential safety net. Against the backdrop of the continuing stigmatization of illegitimate children, social discrimination also extended to any offspring.

2.2.1.3 Persecution for "racial defilement"

In December 1936, Dr. Rudolf Kaufmann was found guilty by the Grand Criminal Chamber of the Coburg Regional Court of violating the so-called "Blood Protection Law" and was sentenced to three years in prison in Amberg and deprivation of his civil rights for five years.[213]Born in Königsberg in 1909, the geologist with a doctorate had been employed as a teacher at Hermann Hirsch's boarding school since October 1935 and had therefore moved to Coburg. Although he and his parents had been baptized as Protestants, he was denied a university career because of his grandparents' Jewish ancestry, so that after spending time abroad he had accepted the position in Coburg. Here Kaufmann contracted syphilis during a relationship with a woman

209 See investigation form from the health department dated August 12, 1939. StadtACo A 5893.
210 See Mayor Rehlein to Marie Luise Inderwies, June 10, 1940. StadtACo A 5893.
211 See State Ministry of the Interior to the district presidents, February 29, 1940. StadtACo A 5893.
212 See the case of Hans Töpfer. StadtACo A 5893.
213 On the subject of "racial defilement," see Przyrembel, Alexandra: "Rassenschande" Sexualität, "Rasse" und das "Jüdische" vor NS-Gerichten in den Jahren 1935 bis 1945. In: Historische Anthropologie 12.3 (2004), pp. 338–354.

a sexually transmitted disease and was denounced by the attending physician. The *Coburger Nationalzeitung* reported: "This incident proves once again the audacity with which Jews still seek their victims today, even after the National Socialist state has protected the Aryan race with strict laws and the German people have been sufficiently enlightened."[214]His lawyer, Thomas Dehler from Bamberg,[215]who himself came under the spotlight of *Der Stürmer* for defending Kaufmann, was unable to secure any mitigating circumstances for him despite Kaufmann's remorse expressed in court. The Coburg Regional Court even went so far as to have Kaufmann's doctorate revoked by the University of Greifswald in order to emphasize the loss of honor associated with the punishment. After serving his sentence and several years of forced labor, Kaufmann emigrated to Lithuania in 1939, where he worked and married. In 1941, a German soldier shot him in the street.[216]

On November 20, 1937, the police in Coburg also arrested haberdasher Max Kohn on suspicion of "racial defilement" and accused him of having illicit relations with a German woman. The *Bayerische Ostmark* newspaper wrote: "We know the Jew Kohn as a small figure in dirty clothes with a brutal expression on his face. But with the same brutality with which he sought victims for his dark urges among German women, he will be met with the full force of the law."[217] Wilhelm Schmitz, an investigator with the municipal youth and welfare office, was also asked to provide information for the investigation. The investigative office had placed the woman in question under observation after she had lived with the Jewish merchant Wolf Baumwollspinner at Judengasse 8 and was also in contact with Max Kohn, who, according to her statements, had asked her to do housework for him that his wife was physically unable to do. Schmitz therefore regularly visited Rosa O. and tried to educate and influence her, among other things by giving her copies of Der *Stürmer* in line with Nazi ideology. Schmitz was ultimately unable to provide any actual evidence of an affair between Kohn and the domestic helper, but his wording left plenty of room for speculation. He attested to Rosa O.'s immoral lifestyle based purely on hearsay, thereby deliberately discrediting her. Without any actual evidence, the investigative office thus made itself an accomplice in the racial defilement proceedings against Kohn.

Meanwhile, the *Bayerische Ostmark* had published a private photo of Kohn, presenting, among other things, the shape of the corner of his mouth as supposedly race- and hereditary-based compelling evidence of his guilt. It stated:

"The above private photograph convincingly shows the audacity with which this Eastern Jew committed racial defilement and now believes she can deny it. Here you can see

214 *Bayerische Ostmark* from August 1/2, 1936.

215 Thomas Dehler was born on December 14, 1897, in Lichtenfels. As a member of the German Democratic Party (DDP), he co-founded the Reichsbanner Schwarz-Rot-Gold (Black-Red-Gold Reich Banner) in 1924. He himself lived in a "privileged mixed marriage" according to the Nuremberg Laws. After 1945, he was one of the founding members of the FDP Bavaria and served as Federal Minister of Justice from 1949 to 1953 and as Federal Chairman of the FDP from 1954 to 1957.

216 Reinhard Kaiser reconstructed the fate of Rudolf Kaufmann on the basis of a collection of letters between Kaufmann and his Swedish girlfriend and turned it into a novel. See Kaiser, Reinhard: Königskinder – Eine wahre Liebe (Royal Children – A True Love). Frankfurt 1996.

217 *Bayerische Ostmark*, November 23, 1937.

218 See Wilhelm Schmitz's report on the Kohn case, January 18, 1938. StadtACo A 15252.

we devilish facial features, in which the vile disposition is sharply enough pronounced, and which cannot give us the impression that we are still dealing with a 'decent' Jews. Max Kohn still wants to play this role, which we find difficult to understand when we take a closer look at the corners of his mouth, whose shape reveals the true racial defiler."[219] In the end, Max Kohn was convicted and initially sentenced to three and a half years in prison in Amberg. In May 1941, he was taken into "protective custody" and transferred to the Dachau concentration camp. After his transfer to the Buchenwald concentration camp in July 1941, he was declared dead on October 21, 1941.[220]

The administrative enforcement of the "Marriage and Blood Protection Act" in all the cases presented here impressively underscores the authority and administrative power of the municipal administration. Individual officials not only had the power to restrict life chances and reinforce financial disadvantages, but by participating in the presentation of evidence and prosecution of racial defilement offenses, they ultimately also played a part in the complete destruction of human existence. It is clear that the Coburg officials did not use the scope for action available to them to protect those affected, even in cases where the evidence was clearly dubious. In contrast, the powerlessness of the victims of National Socialist eugenics and racial policy became increasingly apparent, but they continued to try to take advantage of the massively restricted legal framework to which they were still entitled. In everyday life in Coburg, the enforcement of the law promoted the progressive separation and concentration of Jewish Coburgers in segregated areas and led to the separation of the spheres of life and contact of the "fellow citizens" and those "alien to the c o m m u n i t y ."

2.2.2 Excerpt: Hereditary and Racial Care by the Health Department

For decades, the district medical officer Dr. Oskar Hönisch was at the helm of the health service in Coburg, working closely with the city administration and the rest of the medical profession.[221] Oskar Hönisch was born on January 19, 1872, in Pretzsch in the district of Wittenberg. He completed his medical training in Freiburg, Munich, and Berlin and, after a period as an assistant physician, director of the Nowawes home for cripples, and substitute general practitioner in all German districts, he settled in Coburg in August 1901. Here he soon became involved in public health issues and held a number of honorary medical positions. [222]After his military service, Oskar Hönisch was appointed medical officer in July 1917 and entrusted with the provisional management of the Coburg district court. Promoted to government and medical councilor in July 1918 and then to senior medical councilor, he worked after the end of the war as district physician in Coburg, responsible for the district of Coburg and the towns of Coburg, Neustadt, and Rodach. In this capacity, he was appointed a member of the

219 *Bayerische Ostmark* on December 1, 1937.

220 See change notification from Buchenwald concentration camp dated October 21, 1941. Arolsen Archives 8012500225 and Fromm: Jews, p. 94.

221 In addition to Dr. Hönisch, Dr. Erich Kaebsch, the senior physician and full-time doctor at the lung care center, also served as district office manager of the NSDAP's Office for Public Health.

222 See Oskar Hönisch's curriculum vitae dated November 3, 1936, and Oskar Hönisch's personnel file. StABa Government of Upper Franconia K3 2012, 95.

of the Upper Franconia District Medical Committee. [223]Upon his retirement in 1937, he was awarded the German Red Cross Medal of Honor, Second Class, by Carl Eduard. [224] Politically, Hönisch, a member of the lodge, had been involved in the German People's Party (DVP) and, after 1933, had joined the National Socialist People's League (NSV), but not the NSDAP.[226] His involvement in "hereditary and racial care" in Coburg did not stem from a decisive National Socialist worldview, but from his enthusiasm for eugenics.

The district physician Dr. Oskar Hönisch

Among other things, Hönisch was a supporter of Gobineau's theory of heredity, which, alongside the theories of Houston Stewart Chamberlain, paved the way for Nazi racial doctrine. Joseph Arthur de Gobineau's *essay on the inequality of human races* laid the theoretical foundation for proving the existence of a superior "Aryan race" and identifying "racial mixing" as a cause of the "decline of civilized peoples."[226]Gobineau's ideas spread in Germany, particularly through translations of his works by the racial theorist Karl Ludwig Schemann. Born in Cologne in 1852, Schemann spent his youth in Coburg after his father co-founded the Ernsthütte and later Langestein & Schemann AG in Coburg-Cortendorf. Schemann himself had attended the Casimirianum Coburg and later became a member of the Bayreuth circle around Richard and Cosima Wagner, where he came into contact with Houston Stewart Chamberlain, among others. Richard Wagner himself had encouraged him to translate Gobineau's works.[227] Through his enthusiasm for the work of Schemann and Gobineau, Dr. Hönisch ultimately joined a discussion on eugenics and racial hygiene that was already being conducted internationally in all political camps during the German Empire and was part of a comprehensive rationalization process in response to the challenges of modernity. Within the debate on eugenic measures, which was driven in particular by the decline in birth rates at the beginning of the 20th century and the demographic and socio-political challenges of the World War, there was a consensus on the categorization of people into superior and inferior individuals. Only in terms of the practical political and medical consequences derived from this did different approaches differ in the degree of radicalism applied. [228]Through the influence of Dr. Hönisch, Gobineau's theories, among others, were put into practice in Coburg as early as the 1920s in the form of positive eugenics and voluntary eugenic control. At the same time, as a public health officer, Hönisch established an understanding within the health care system that also included ideas of negative eugenics and was compatible with the National Socialists' ideas of "keeping the body of the people pure."

223 See Government Gazette for the Duchy of Coburg dated July 19, 1917, and July 20, 1918; *Coburger Zeitung* dated July 20, 1917, December 29, 1920, August 1, 1924, and September 22, 1928.
224 See transcript of the award certificate dated April 1, 1937. StABa Government of Upper Franconia K3 2012, 95.
225 See personnel file Oskar Hönisch. StABa Government of Upper Franconia K3 2012, 95.
226 See Weingart, Peter; Kroll, Jürgen; Bayertz, Kurt: Race, Blood, and Genes. History of Eugenics and Racial Hygiene in Germany. Göttingen 1992, p. 94.
227 See *Bayerische Ostmark*, July 3, 1937.
228 For the development of the discussion on racial hygiene in Germany, see Weingart; Kroll; Bayertz: Race.

Hönisch propagated solving the hardships of the time solely through self-help, which was to be "the only way worthy of the new German."[229] In a lecture given during Reich Health Week in April 1926, he proclaimed: "The new tasks that are gradually emerging must, however, be directed toward preventing too many inferior people from being born, preventing marriages between inferior parents who are physically, mentally, and morally far below average." Referring to Gobineau, he went on to say: "The heritability of various mental illnesses, such as juvenile insanity, epilepsy, and mental deficiency, is a serious problem. (...) Mental deficiency gives rise to the mentally and morally inferior, vagrants, drunkards, criminals, prostitutes, and women who give birth to illegitimate children every year. They are a plague on humanity."[230] Due to the large number of epileptics, mentally ill, drunkards, blind, deaf-mutes, cripples, and consumptives, Hönisch presented personal health and healthy offspring as one of the most important struggles of the present and future generations, with the clearly formulated goal of "improving the species" and "breeding." Contrary to the slackening and disintegration of the present, he wanted service to the people and the fatherland to be the actual content of every individual's life. [231]With regard to the welfare policy of the Weimar Republic, he judged that "with our welfare, we have raised too many inferior people in the moral and intellectual spheres, thereby placing a heavy economic burden on the next generation." He therefore called for the sterilization of "subhumans."[232]

Against the backdrop of "degeneration," Hönisch was also convinced that the fountain of youth for promoting good hereditary traits could be found among the up-and-coming section of the working class, the middle class, and the peasantry. He was particularly critical of urban women, who lagged behind rural women in the Coburg region in terms of fertility due to a "cultural softening" in "birth performance." Against this backdrop, he called for child allowances and tax breaks for those who were particularly fertile and, in return, penalties for the unmarried.[233] His convictions were implemented in the 1920s primarily through educational work aimed at preventing "inferior" marriages. As part of his educational welfare work, Dr. Hönisch organized exhibitions and lectures on heredity.[234] At the same time, corresponding leaflets were distributed at the registry office in Coburg for marriage counseling in order to prevent engagements and warn against marriage in cases of "impaired heredity." The health certificates that had to be issued before marriage were also intended to inform and educate those affected. [235]

In the Nazi state, many of Hönisch's ideas and wishes for a health policy aimed at "improving the species" became reality. The "preservation of the purity of the people" and the "improvement of the German race" were declared and institutionalized as premises of the health care system in the Nazi state. In its various forms

229 Annual report of the district medical officer from 1924. StadtACo A 5946.
230 See Hönisch: Overview.
231 See ibid.
232 *Coburger Zeitung* newspaper, August 27, 1931.
233 See ibid. and *Coburger Zeitung* newspaper dated May 16, 1925.
234 See Hönisch, Oskar: Gesundheitswesen (Health Care). In: Stein, Erwin (ed.): Monographien deutscher Städte (Monographs of German Cities), Volume 30: Coburg. Berlin, 1929, pp. 171–173.
235 See Hönisch: Overview.

In National Socialist racial hygiene, social Darwinism, eugenics, and racism now merged into a radical approach that sought to enforce population policy goals by force. The individual had to subordinate his or her desires and interests to the ideology of the "people's community" with its "hereditary and racial care." District Administrator Dehler therefore emphasized the valuable groundwork laid early on by Hönisch with regard to racial and health care, which had become common knowledge after 1933.[236]After Hönisch had contributed to the expansion of the health department, he retired as district physician on June 1, 1937, but continued to be involved in the implementation of eugenic and racial hygiene measures in Coburg. His successor was Dr. Anton Fuchs, the former district physician of Burglengenfeld.

In order to enforce and uniformly implement National Socialist policy in the sense of positive and negative eugenics and to achieve the most complete possible registration of those affected, the Nazi regime sought to standardize the health care system. Hereditary health courts, 24 of which were established in Bavaria in 1933 at the respective seats of local courts, were to oversee National Socialist sterilization practices. A corresponding law of July 3, 1934, also established health offices as state institutions, of which a total of 138 operated within Bavaria in the territory of the respective district offices.

The establishment of the health office

On January 6, 1936, a corresponding office began operating in Coburg in the Gustav-Dietrich-Haus at Alle 12 under the direction of Dr. Hönisch as the state medical officer. It was responsible for both the city area and the entire district of Coburg. On February 21, 1936, a branch office was also established for Neustadt bei Coburg. The office was to take over the previous district and court medical duties and apply the Nazi hereditary biology race legislation of 1935 in the health care system. According to the law, this included the health police, "hereditary and racial care" including marriage counseling, public health education, school health care, maternal and child counseling, care for tuberculosis patients, sexually transmitted disease patients, physically disabled persons, the infirm and addicts, measures to promote personal hygiene and physical exercise, and certain official, judicial, and medical activities.[239] The Coburg Health Office was therefore assigned a full-time tuberculosis care center at Löwenstraße 22 and, since March 10, 1936, a "counseling center for hereditary and racial care" under the direction of the district court physician Dr. Rolf Niedenthal.

Rolf Josef August Niedenthal was born in Steinbach in Baden in 1904 as the son of a physician and also pursued a career in medicine himself, studying in Würzburg and Heidelberg. After a year of practical training in the medical clinic and in the

236 See *Bayerische Ostmark*, June 3, 1937. When Oskar Hönisch died at the end of May 1949, the city published an obituary in *the Coburg official gazette* on the advice of Alfred Sauerteig. His widow was also thanked for the pioneering healthcare facilities that the deceased had initiated for the city. See Coburg City Council, June 1, 1949. StadtACo A 5944.

237 See RGBl. 1934 I, p. 531 f.

238 At this point, the working methods of the health court will only be presented in an overview and schematic form, as a detailed description of individual case decisions, in which the health department was also involved, is provided in section 2.2.3.

239 See ibid.

After working at the Clinic for Psychiatry in Heidelberg, Niedenthal was employed as a physician at the Frankenthal mental hospital in the Palatinate and, after passing his medical exam in 1933, as a court physician at the Munich I Regional Court. Niedenthal joined the NSDAP in 1933 and the Nazi Medical Association in 1934. At the beginning of 1936, he moved to Coburg as a district court physician and, alongside Dr. Hönisch, became a key figure in the implementation of racial and population policy measures.

The establishment of the health department not only restricted the municipal administration's access to the healthcare system, but also created a persecutory body within the urban area. In particular, the "Counseling Center for Hereditary and Racial Care" under Dr. Niedenthal was at the center of hereditary biological registration and control of the population.[241]With the help of registers in which health and personal data were collected, it was possible to institutionalize and systematize the recording of suspected hereditary diseases. The specific daily work of the health office therefore consisted primarily of collecting health information about individuals. The hereditary file created by the health office subsequently served as the basis for the distribution of special welfare benefits in the case of "hereditarily valuable members of the national community." It also formed the basis for "negative selection" and thus served as a coordination tool for Nazi sterilization practices.

Hereditary files and family trees

In addition to the personal data of the individuals concerned, the standardized forms in the hereditary file asked about medical history and institutional stays, receipt of public welfare, type of school attended and school performance, physical and character development, any special talents, and the diagnosis of hereditary diseases. Detailed information also had to be provided according to the categorization "Aryan" versus "non-Aryan," whereby the body type was determined according to Kretschmer[242]and a predominant "racial component with possible influence" was to be determined with a specification of hair color, eye color, and skull shape. Previous convictions and any criminal biological investigations were also included in the compilation of the hereditary file. At the same time, it had to be stated to what extent the persons concerned were legitimate or illegitimate children and to what extent their parents were blood relatives. A large part of the hereditary file was also taken up by the clan findings, as both high-quality characteristics and all hereditary diseases[243]defined as such at the time had to be entered in the clan. Ultimately, the health department was able to

240 In June 1939, Dr. Niedenthal took up a position as a forensic doctor at the Berlin Health Authority and was subsequently deployed as a military doctor in Poland, France, and Russia until the summer of 1943. Until the end of the war, he was assigned to the Military Medical Academy at the Institute of Forensic Medicine as a staff doctor. See Jeske, Gregor: Die gerichtliche und soziale Medizin in Berlin von 1930 bis 1954 unter Victor Müller-Hess. Berlin 2008, p. 281 f. For Niedenthal's career in post-war Germany, see ibid.

241 Since the Coburg Health Office has no administrative files, it is difficult to make any definitive statements about the further internal structure of the office.

242 Ernst Kretschmer's theories, now considered unscientific, which constructed a connection between physique, character traits, and predisposition to certain diseases, divided people into pyknics, athletes, asthenics, leptosomes, and dysplastics.

243 The list of rules governing what was to be classified as a hereditary disease was established by the "Law for the Prevention of Hereditary Diseases." See Chapter IV2.2.3.

Indicate with a cross to what extent the person concerned was subject to negative or positive selection. The file also contained a separate column for the application, decision, and implementation of sterilization. The fact that the administrative practices of the health authorities linked biological questions of "keeping the population pure" with financial policy issues relating to a reduction in the number of people for whom public welfare had to be provided was evident not least in the design of the hereditary file.

In addition, the health department kept genealogical family trees with all the information on the family circumstances of individuals, which was compiled by the local police or welfare nurses. The welfare workers in particular, who were in close contact with the people cared for by the youth and welfare office through home visits, among other things, were able to provide detailed information on family circumstances and the general "family findings." Erna Puff, born in Rodach in 1877, and Hanna Schmidt, eleven years her senior, served as key informants for the Coburg Health Office.

Ultimately, however, the compilation of the file in Coburg must have progressed only slowly. In the proceedings of the Hereditary Health Court, a uniform database was not used for cases originating from the Coburg Health Office's catchment area until the end of the 1930s.[244] To complete the file, close cooperation between the health office and municipal administrative bodies such as the registry office or the youth and welfare office was therefore necessary. In July 1939, the data collected in the hereditary file to date was expanded to include the register of all persons receiving care created by the Youth and Welfare Office, as stipulated by a directive of the Reich Ministry of the Interior in March 1938.[245] With the approval of department head Bernhard and office director Puff, all data collected in the municipal office was handed over to the health department, thus accelerating the "purification of the national body" and "improvement of the German people" in Coburg through the networking of municipal and state agencies.[246] However, the hereditary file ultimately fell far short of the intended goal of a complete census and hereditary biological inventory of the Coburg population. Nevertheless, it did collect a data set that contributed to the expansion of a persecution network through the collection of information from various offices and institutions.

In addition to compiling the hereditary file, the work of the health department was primarily carried out using pre-printed standardized questionnaires. Once an assessment by the health department became necessary for a wide range of areas of life, the influence and sphere of activity of the department became manifest in many ways in the everyday life of the Coburg population. For example, criminal responsibility, admission to an institution, permission to purchase a motorcycle, the granting of child benefits, marriage, and ultimately forced sterilization could all depend on a corresponding expert opinion from the office.

244 Due to the lack of administrative records from the health office and the hereditary health court, it is not possible to make any precise statements about the process of compiling the Coburg hereditary index.

245 See Vossen, Johannes: Gesundheitsämter im Nationalsozialismus. Rassenhygiene und offene Gesundheitsfürsorge im Westfalen 1900–1950 (= Düsseldorfer Schriften zur Neueren Landesgeschichte und zur Geschichte Nordrhein-Westfalens, Volume 56). Essen 2001, pp. 341–356.

246 See letter from public health officer Dr. Fuchs to the Coburg State Health Office, July 24, 1939. StadtACo A 15324.

Certificates of fitness for marriage

In addition to collaborating in sterilization practices, one of the office's main tasks was to issue certificates of fitness for marriage. Both areas were aimed at controlling reproduction in order to prevent the birth of offspring that were undesirable from a racial hygiene perspective. In direct contrast to the policy of promoting desirable marriages through marriage loans, honorary sponsorships, and the awarding of mother's crosses, the health authorities enforced a policy that stigmatized and prohibited undesirable marriages. Initially, only the granting of marriage loans served as a means of state surveillance of marriages, for which the couples in question had to have their hereditary health certified by a public health officer. The "Law for the Protection of the Hereditary Health of the German People" [247]of October 1935 finally enabled the complete registration and control of marriages and, in addition, subjected them to

The Marriage and Blood Protection Act imposed strict racial hygiene requirements on marriage. The Marriage Health Act prohibited marriage if one of the fiancés suffered from a contagious disease or a [hereditary disease], was legally incompetent or under guardianship, or suffered from a mental disorder that "made the marriage undesirable for the national community."[249] Ultimately, only couples who had a certificate of fitness for marriage from the health department, which provided evidence of a positive hereditary biological assessment by a public health officer, were allowed to marry. After taking a medical history, the health department's examinations also included a categorization of physique according to Kretschmer, a description of signs of "non-German or non-related blood," a detailed description of the skull and face, and an assessment of the mental state of the individuals concerned. The examining physicians were then free to advise or advise against marriage, or to point out temporary or permanent unfitness for marriage. In cases of doubt, even if unfitness for marriage was not certain, the intended marriage could be advised against. At the same time, the health department could advise that, in cases of infertility, marriage should be entered into with another infertile or genetically diseased person. People with hereditary diseases could also be advised to choose an infertile spouse. The extent to which such marriage counseling was actually carried out in Coburg remains unclear.

In practice, however, it was not possible for the health authorities to record all marriages, so that the first implementing regulation for the law already restricted the health authorities to taking action only if the relevant registrars had doubts about a couple's suitability for marriage.[250]Even though the specific implementation of the Marriage Health Act underwent further changes until the outbreak of war and, from the summer of 1936, the health authorities were to be informed of all cases, not just those of doubt, by decree of the Reich Ministry of the Interior, comprehensive hereditary biological control was not possible.

247 See RGBl. I 1935, p. 1246.

248 The list of regulations governing what was to be classified as a hereditary disease was established by the "Law for the Prevention of Hereditary Diseases in Offspring." See Chapter IV2.2.3.

249 RGBl. I 1935, p. 1246.

250 See ibid., p. 1419.

marriages. Nevertheless, the health authorities had created an effective instrument for carrying out selection in the sense of exclusion, in conjunction with the hereditary health courts. Parts of the population stigmatized by racial hygiene were thus restricted in their individual rights and freedom of lifestyle. However, National Socialist health care and differentiation within the "people's community" partially broke with the principles of pure exclusion. Sterilized or genetically diseased members of the national community were therefore not completely excluded from the "national community" as long as they were productive members of society, but instead rendered this service through their sterilization and marriage in accordance with the provisions of Nazi legislation. As was also partly the case in municipal welfare policy, the work of the health department marked municipal political spheres that in some cases broke down the dichotomy between promoting inclusion and pursuing exclusion and showed a mixture and simultaneity of inclusive and exclusive measures in relation to the same population group.

2.2.3 "Eradication": The "Law for the Prevention of Hereditary Diseases in Offspring"

The measures for forced sterilization in particular revealed the full extent of the repressive practices of National Socialist "hereditary and racial hygiene." Legal sterilizations had already been on the agenda in the 1920s as part of a racial hygiene movement, with the USA in particular serving as a model, where eugenically motivated sterilization laws had come into force in several states at the beginning of the 20th century. The "Law for the Prevention of Hereditary Diseases" of July 14, 1933, made the anti-natalist policy of the National Socialists law just a few months after their "seizure of power" and radicalized it. The law prescribed for people with hereditary diseases who suffered from "1. congenital mental deficiency, 2. schizophrenia, 3. circular (manic-depressive) insanity, 4. hereditary epilepsy, 5. hereditary St. Vitus' dance (Huntington's chorea), 6. hereditary blindness, 7. hereditary deafness, 8. severe hereditary physical deformity" and who were "highly likely" to pass on hereditary defects to their offspring, sterilization by surgical intervention. In addition, those suffering from severe alcoholism could also be sterilized. [253]This defined a range of clinical pictures that, according to the logic of Nazi ideology, needed to be eradicated from the "national community," even though heredity had not been scientifically proven and was based solely on empirical hereditary predictions. Contrary to various draft laws from the Weimar period and other countries, the consent of those affected to sterilization no longer played a role in the law, so that the procedure could also be carried out forcibly by means of surgery or radiation. In comparison to previous considerations, the practice of sterilization was now extended beyond institutionalized patients and criminals.

251 See also Christians: Amtsgewalt, p. 159 f. and Wimmer: Ordnung, p. 429.

252 The law was largely based on a draft by the Prussian State Health Council in July 1932, which, however, provided for voluntary sterilizations. See RGBl. 1933 I, pp. 529–531.

253 Ibid., p. 529.

2.2.3.1 Application practice

A total of 917 cases have been handed down by the Coburg Hereditary Health Court,[254] of which 894 dealt with the "Law for the Prevention of Hereditary Diseases in Offspring" and affected 883 individuals. The Coburg Hereditary Health Court was assigned the health authorities of Coburg, Rodach, Lichtenfels, Kronach, and Neustadt bei Coburg. After the Hereditary Health Court was established in 1934, the number of cases opened rose steadily until 1936, in line with the nationwide trend, and then fell sharply again.[255] Particularly after the outbreak of war, the number of cases handled declined dramatically after an implementing regulation of August 31, 1939, stipulated that applications for sterilization could only be made if there was a particularly high risk of reproduction, with the result that between 1939 and 1944, an average of only 22 cases per year were handled. At the same time, all proceedings that had not yet been legally concluded were to be discontinued as of the ordinance's entry into force in August 1939. [256]On December 1, 1944, the operation of the hereditary health courts ended due to the war.

The applicants

The hereditary health court decided on applications for sterilization. Those eligible to apply were the persons concerned themselves, their legal representatives, a civil servant doctor, and, in the case of inmates of a psychiatric clinic, hospital, or prison, the respective director. In the practice of the Coburg Hereditary Health Court, the vast majority of sterilizations were requested by civil servant doctors or the respective medical directors of institutions. In particular, the district medical officer Dr. Oskar Hönisch and the head of the "Counseling Center for Hereditary and Racial Care," the regional court medical officer Dr. Rolf Niedenthal, were the main applicants for the Coburg Health Office's area of responsibility. The health authorities themselves became a key authority in the practical implementation of the provisions of the law and, at the same time, contributed to the programmatic formation of repressive

"hereditary and racial care" program on the ground. It was not uncommon for an application for a marriage health certificate or a marriage loan at the health authorities to lead to the initiation of sterilization proceedings if the doctors involved discovered a suspected hereditary disease in this context. Ultimately, the be-

254 The files of the Coburg Hereditary Health Court also contain cases from the Bamberg Hereditary Health Court. A final provenance review of the holdings by the archives is still pending.

255 Across the Reich, the peak was often reached as early as 1935, especially in courts that had quickly begun their work. Landshut and Munich also recorded the largest increase in sterilization applications in 1936. See Christians: Amtsgewalt, p. 199, and Fischer, Moritz: Zwangssterilisation und "Euthanasie" in Landshut. Das Erbgesundheitsgericht Landshut und die Opfer der nationalsozialistischen "Euthanasie"-Morde (= Schriftenreihe des Stadtarchivs Landshut zur Zeitgeschichte). Landshut 2018, p. 51.

256 See RGBl. 1939 I, p. 1560 f. Ulrike Feder conducted an initial statistical survey of the cases handled by the Hereditary Health Court. However, as some of the data obtained in this survey is incorrect and, moreover, does not refer to the final decision of the Hereditary Health Court but only to sterilizations that have been carried out, it was only used to a limited extent. See Feder, Ulrike: The Role of Social Work in Forced Sterilizations under National Socialism in Coburg. An Analysis of Archival Sources (= Master's thesis, Coburg University of Applied Sciences 2018), pp. 50–56.

Doctors working for the health authorities took on a coordinating role after acting as prosecutors throughout the proceedings, with reports of sterilizations by the population being collated. They also had to forward applications from institution directors to the Hereditary Health Court if they were not licensed doctors.

Reports of hereditary diseases designated by law, which preceded the applications, could, on the other hand, come from broad sections of the population, from treating physicians, or from authorities that had come into contact with the persons concerned. The first implementing regulation of the law had imposed a reporting obligation on physicians who treated people with "hereditary diseases" and even required them to report themselves if there were doubts about the disease or the reproductive intentions of those affected. At the same time, this obligation was also extended to "other persons involved in the treatment, examination, or counseling of sick persons," so that cases of alleged hereditary diseases were also reported to the relevant physicians by medical laypersons. Both family members and midwives or welfare workers could therefore bring cases to the attention of the responsible physicians and report them. Those affected usually did not find out who had ultimately made the reports. According to state regulations, the names of the persons making the reports were not to be included in the files in case the persons concerned requested access to the files. Like the hereditary health courts in Munich and Frankfurt am Main, the court in Coburg did not include reports of alleged hereditary diseases in the case files.

Two-thirds of all persons reported for sterilization were not inmates of a sanatorium, psychiatric clinic, or prison at the time of the application. The rest were mostly transferred from the Kutzenberg sanatorium to the Coburg Hereditary Health Court, an institution that primarily housed long-term psychiatric patients. Here, the director of the institution, Dr. Josef Lothar Entres, and the senior physician, Dr. Georg Bischof, submitted the corresponding applications. [259]Entres, a staunch eugenicist and Catholic, and the Catholic nuns from the Oberzell convent, who had been responsible for the care of the women in Kutzenberg since 1924, were widely regarded as critical of the regime. Entres himself did not join the NSDAP until the end of the 1930s and is said to have refused to give the Hitler salute. Nevertheless, the institution became a hub for eugenics.

257 See RGBl. 1933 I, pp. 1021–1036 and Treyz, Maike: Das Gesetz zur Verhütung erbkranken Nachwuchses (The Law for the Prevention of Hereditary Diseases). In: Voegeli, Wolfgang (ed.): Nationalsozialistische Familienpolitik zwischen Ideologie und Durchsetzung (National Socialist Family Policy between Ideology and Enforcement). Hamburg 2001, pp. 181–209, here p. 182.

258 See Christians: Amtsgewalt, p. 171. For Coburg, it is therefore not possible to determine the ratio of reports to actual applications for compulsory sterilization procedures.

259 Dr. Lothar Entres was born in Würzburg in 1883. As a former student of the racial hygienist Ernst Rüdin, Entres had worked as a psychiatrist specializing in the clinical picture of hereditary St. Vitus' dance and was himself a convinced eugenicist. After working in the mental hospitals in Werneck and Eglfing, Entres, a devout Catholic, came into conflict with the NSDAP and was transferred to the Kutzenberg mental hospital as director in 1935 as a disciplinary measure. See Aas, Norbert: Verlegt – dann vergast, vergiftet, verhungert. Die Kranken der Heil- und Pflegeanstalt Bayreuth in der Zeit der Zwangssterilisation und „Euthanasie" (Transferred – then gassed, poisoned, starved. The patients of the Bayreuth sanatorium and nursing home during the period of forced sterilization and "euthanasia"). Bayreuth 2000, p. 206 and Zenk, Alfons: Die oberfränkische Heil- und Pflegeanstalt Kutzenberg (The Upper Franconian sanatorium and nursing home in Kutzenberg). In: Cranach, Michael von; Siemen, Hans-Ludwig (eds.): Psychiatry under National Socialism. The Bavarian Mental Hospitals between 1933 and 1945. Munich 2012, pp. 123–142.

Measures. In order to accurately record the hereditary biology and family history of individual patients, a separate office, known as the Hereditary Biology Office, was set up, staffed by a nun as a typist, who handled the administrative side of the forced sterilizations.

The institutional cooperation between various health authorities, which wanted to promote sterilizations in line with the regime's policies, was already evident in the procedural motions. For example, the district hospital asked the health department to file a motion to initiate proceedings so that the hospital's doctors could be heard as credible witnesses in the proceedings.[261]The municipal welfare office, which, at the request of the medical officer Dr. Fuchs, provided him with a list of names, birthdays, occupations, and places of residence of all persons cared for by the youth and welfare office for the hereditary registry, also played a decisive role in the sterilization procedures.[262] Meanwhile, the welfare authorities were required to maintain confidentiality regarding the sterilizations.[263]

The profile of the defendants and the diagnosis of "feeble-mindedness"

The profile of those whose cases were reported to and heard by the Coburg Hereditary Health Court under the Law for the Prevention of Hereditary Diseases corresponded to that of other courts. According to the spirit of the law, most of those affected were of childbearing age, with sterilization being ordered for women between the ages of 20 and 40 in particular, and for men even beyond that age. The oldest man to whom the Coburg Hereditary Health Court ordered a sterilization procedure was 65 years old. Although children as young as four were proposed for sterilization, the law was to be applied exclusively to children aged 10 and above. In cases where 10-year-old children were sentenced to sterilization, however, the actual operation was postponed until the presumed age of reproductive maturity at 14·In Coburg, the law was applied slightly more frequently to women, accounting for 52% of all cases. More than half of the cases in which an application for sterilization was filed related to a diagnosis of
"congenital idiocy" or a double diagnosis of "congenital idiocy" and another hereditary disease listed in the law. The next most common diagnoses were schizophrenia and hereditary epilepsy. Hereditary St. Vitus' dance (Huntington's disease), a condition that could be considered a hereditary disease in the strict sense, was only applied for in two cases at the Coburg Hereditary Health Court.

260 See Zenk: Kutzenberg, pp. 125–127.

261 See note by Dr. Zapf, director of the regional hospital. StACo Hereditary Health Court 132.

262 See letter from Dr. Fuchs, public health officer, to the Coburg State Health Office, July 24, 1939. StadtACo A 15324.

263 See State Ministry of the Interior to the welfare authorities, May 31, 1935. StadtACo A 15324.

264 See, for example, the cases of Arno S. StACo Hereditary Health Court 781 or the siblings B. StACo Hereditary Health Court 46, 47, 48, 50. In the following, one or two cases are cited as examples to illustrate the relevant circumstances, but these are only examples of other similar cases.

265 A similar picture emerged in Bayreuth and Landshut. See Paulus, Helmut: Das Erbgesundheitsgericht Bayreuth und seine Tätigkeit von 1934 bis 1944. In: Archiv für Geschichte von Oberfranken 80 (2000), pp. 355–406; Fischer: Zwangssterilisation, pp. 55–73. The practice in Munich differed from this, where, thanks to the cooperation of psychiatric clinics and institutions in the application process, more than half of the applications listed the diagnosis of schizophrenia. See Christians: Amtsgewalt, pp. 173–175.

The diagnosis of "feeble-mindedness" ultimately concealed a multitude of different and difficult-to-define phenomena, which were primarily to be identified by means of an intelligence test. In the case of a diagnosis of "moral imbecility," on the other hand, the result of the intelligence test could also be positive if a hereditary biological predisposition to morally questionable behavior and a tendency toward criminality were suspected. Although the actual heritability of "feeble-mindedness" as well as schizophrenia or "circular manic-depressive insanity" could not be scientifically proven, "feeble-mindedness" was always considered hereditary in the jurisprudence of the hereditary health courts if no exogenous factors such as head injuries or infectious diseases in the brain were responsible for mental impairment. Although this was neither empirically nor scientifically tenable, other disorders within the family of the persons concerned could also be used as evidence of heredity, even if they had no connection to the alleged hereditary disease in question. The sterilization policy particularly targeted mild degrees of illness, which were considered particularly "dangerous to reproduction," assuming that severe degrees of "feeble-mindedness," schizophrenia, "manic-depressive insanity," or epilepsy were much less likely to result in marriage and offspring and thus "wiped themselves out." According to this logic, even an improvement in health was not considered an obstacle to sterilization; rather, any degree of existing or past disorder was considered worthy of sterilization in the eyes of the legislature.

From around 1936, the criterion of life experience was added to the diagnosis of "feeble-mindedness," which was intended to distinguish "feeble-mindedness" from "stupidity," which was limited to the intellect but not to lifestyle. The intelligence test forms were adapted accordingly and a special category for proving oneself in the workplace was added, whereby agricultural workers were asked questions about the use of fertilizer or the different types of grain, for example. The decisive factor was ultimately the extent to which the individual was socially useful and able to integrate into the "people's community," which meant that, in addition to medical and psychiatric criteria, a moral component was taken into account in the diagnosis, based primarily on the ideals and norms of bourgeois life and National Socialist ideas of order. At the same time, this created a new evaluation criterion that was not based on measurable values or scientific categories, but rather on the purely subjective feelings of the judges. Accordingly, the judgments of the Coburg Hereditary Health Court differed greatly from one another. In the case of Max K., for example, sterilization was ordered even though the court had been clearly proven by several parties that he had proven himself in everyday life and at work, while in other cases sterilization was denied for precisely this reason.

Women were also evaluated according to the National Socialist image of women, especially with regard to sexuality, housekeeping, and child-rearing. A particular "sexual drive" or "tendency toward eroticism" in women was always cited in the court's diagnosis as a reason for sterilization, even in women

266 See Gütt, Arthur; Rüdin, Ernst; Ruttke, Falk: Law for the Prevention of Hereditary Diseases in Offspring. From July 14, 1933, together with implementing regulations. Munich 1936, p. 159 f. and Treyz: Law, p. 194.

267 See the case of Max K. StACo Hereditary Health Court 413.

applied to women who had been proven to have been raped. [268] An openly expressed sex drive, frequent changes of partner, illegitimate children, or even an unkempt household could thus substantiate or even constitute the diagnosis of "congenital" or "moral insanity."[269] Young and unmarried women in particular were affected by the diagnostic criteria used. In men, on the other hand, criminality, unemployment, and a tendency to excessive alcohol consumption were more likely to be used as evidence of a lack of intelligence and ability to cope with life and thus of
"feeble-mindedness." The severity of the diagnosis was also differentiated according to gender. Men who were diagnosed as "severely feeble-minded" and often cared for in an institution did not have to be sterilized as they were unable to reproduce, whereas women with the same clinical picture were still to be made infertile if there was a possibility of rape.

The modification in the diagnosis of "congenital mental deficiency" also reinforced a class-specific component inherent in the measures, since the "mentally deficient" belonged primarily to the lower social classes, which, in the regime's view, were
"healthy" social standards and National Socialist ideas of order. Often, therefore, the diagnosis of "feeble-mindedness" was applied to welfare or social assistance recipients, who were branded as "unproductive" for the "national community" and therefore had their individual rights restricted. In Coburg, too, the majority of people reported for sterilization on grounds of "congenital feeble-mindedness" were factory and unskilled workers, and in the case of women, they were often female workers, unskilled maids or daughters living in their employers' homes who had not proven themselves in practical life, partly due to their career prospects. The fact that the register of persons receiving care from the youth welfare office was used as the basis for the hereditary file of the public health officer authorized to bring charges clearly demonstrates this correlation. Thus, the racial hygiene intended in the "Law for the Prevention of Hereditary Diseases" had become social hygiene, which sought to understand and solve social and moral behavior resulting from a certain socialization as a medical problem.

Formal components of the application process

Although it was intended that doctors who considered sterilization necessary should ensure that "the person to be sterilized or their legal representative submits the application," only 17 people took this step themselves, and even here it was not possible to prove conclusively that it was voluntary. Doctors exerted considerable pressure, and patients often did not fully understand the consequences of what they were applying for. As in the case of Edmund S., it could therefore happen that a procedure was initiated by an application from the person concerned, but that this person, upon becoming fully aware of the scope of the law, withdrew the application and ultimately also appealed against the ruling of the health authority.

268 See the case of Rosa T. StACo Hereditary Health Court 826.
269 See the case of Irma H. StACo Hereditary Health Court 303.
270 See Gütt: Gesetz, p. 124. While in most hereditary health court districts women were disproportionately often reported for sterilization with a diagnosis of "congenital mental deficiency," the difference between the sexes in Coburg was not significant.
271 See Treyz: Gesetz, p. 206.

lodged an objection to the proceedings initiated. [272] With only six applications, the initiative to initiate proceedings on the part of the parents or guardians of those affected also remained low, which ultimately pointed to the coercive nature of the undertaking, despite all efforts to propagate the voluntary nature of the measures to the outside world. In some cases, doctors also stated in their applications that the parents concerned had agreed to sterilization and wanted an expedited procedure, which proved to be untrue in the hearings of the hereditary health court and in personal interviews with the parents. In order to counteract this circumstance, attempts were made in the announcement of the provisions of the "Law for the Prevention of Hereditary Diseases in Offspring" to the population to emphasize that the legislature did not intend sterilization to be a punishment, but rather emphasized: "the Sterilization Act is intended to require a person who is not at fault to make the sacrifice of renouncing offspring in the interest of the general public."[273] In addition, the doctors involved began to submit a medical application in addition to the self-submitted applications in order to prevent the proceedings from being discontinued or delayed in the event of a change of opinion on the part of the families concerned.

The application had to be accompanied by a medical justification in the form of an expert opinion and a statement that the person concerned had been informed about the nature and consequences of sterilization. The person to be sterilized was usually informed by means of a short leaflet explaining that the procedure did not impair the ability to have sexual intercourse and was not equivalent to castration.[274]However, numerous statements made during the sessions of the Hereditary Health Court show that this form of information was often completely inadequate and that those affected did not understand the nature of sterilization, as evidenced by a woman complaining that her husband could no longer have sexual intercourse after the operation.[275] In addition, even the minimal form of information provided by the leaflet could be omitted at the discretion of a doctor if it was considered impossible in the case of mentally ill patients such as the inmates of the Kutzenberg mental hospital.[276] On the same grounds, the Hereditary Health Court was permitted, under the third implementing regulation of the "Law for the Prevention of Hereditary Diseases in Offspring," to "provide a person who is to be sterilized and who is unable to represent his own interests due to a pathological mental condition" [277]to appoint a caregiver as legal representative for the proceedings in order to make legally binding statements.

In order to justify an application for sterilization, the court also commissioned a series of examinations and investigations in advance of its decisions, which were intended to at least substantiate the suspicion of a hereditary disease.[278] A medical examination by the health department or, in the case of institutionalized persons, by appropriate physicians for the purpose of issuing the application report was carried out according to a standardized questionnaire that was uniform throughout the Reich. Among other things, they performed a

272 See the case of Edmund S. StACo Hereditary Health Court 791.
273 *Bayerische Ostmark* of June 28, 1935.
274 See Treyz: Gesetz, p. 183.
275 See, for example, the case of Jakob S. StACo Hereditary Health Court 681.
276 See medical certificate dated July 21, 1939. StACo Hereditary Health Court 10.
277 RGBl. 1935 I, pp. 289–292, here p. 289.
278 See Gütt: Gesetz, p. 218.

Family history, documented personal history with regard to any illnesses, mental and social development, and sexual behavior, and made a detailed physical and psychological assessment. In addition to general behavior, they also assessed the mood and affect, the sphere of volition, the state of consciousness, the thought processes of the patients, and any sexual perversions or seizures. The doctors also conducted intelligence tests using specially formulated questionnaires to determine "congenital mental deficiency," which included arithmetic and memory tasks or proverbs, as well as questions about the current form of government and information about figures such as Bismarck or Luther. However, those responsible were also free to use their own questions, which often ended up being political in nature and included basic facts about the leading figures of the Nazi state or the current state of the war. Since the questions used were based on bourgeois norms and the examinations were conducted exclusively by academics, they were ultimately poorly adapted to the realities of life for the rural population and unskilled workers. When those affected were asked to explain concepts such as loyalty, piety, and reverence, or to explain the opposite of bravery, they were measured against bourgeois ideals, ignorance of which led to a diagnosis of "feeble-mindedness." Very few were able to give an informed opinion on the current form of government, which those affected usually described only as "Hitler" or "Führer," or on the significance of Bismarck. Added to this was the fact that many of those confronted with a diagnosis of "congenital insanity" and the required sterilization were completely intimidated during the examination by the health department doctors and were only able to answer the questions to a limited extent. This became particularly clear, as some of the judges themselves recognized, when two intelligence tests with completely different results were carried out during the proceedings.

Police officers from the Coburg police department and the gendarmerie stations in the Coburg district were closely involved in the investigations as informants for the hereditary health court. They conducted investigations into the parents and grandparents, possible siblings, uncles or aunts, cousins, etc., in order to search their medical histories for indications of the hereditary nature of a disease or other diseases within the family and relatives. Detailed family trees containing subjective diagnoses such as "eccentric" were used to substantiate suspicions of hereditary disease. In addition, surveys were conducted on school or professional performance, and in some cases information was obtained from criminal records. The Coburg welfare nurses Erna Puff and Hanna Schmidt also provided the court with information and evidence, for which they were released from their duty of confidentiality for the duration of the proceedings.

In addition, the court requested information from outsiders. It informed teachers and principals about the application for sterilization of their charges and asked them for their opinion, as well as employers. Parish offices were also asked to provide information from church records for the creation of family trees, with particular emphasis on information about illegitimate children.

279 See, for example, the cases of Klara G. StACo Hereditary Health Court 287 and Maria B. StACo Hereditary Health Court 77.

280 See, for example, the case of Jakob S. StACo Hereditary Health Court 681.

children or committed suicide, but also passed on information if individuals were known to be alcoholics or had been institutionalized in a mental hospital. In this context, it also happened that school principals or teachers who were supposed to make judgments about individual students made a clan assessment and extended their judgment to the entire family or to several children in their care.[281]Ultimately, this meant that a number of medical laymen without specific expertise, whose judgments could have a decisive influence on the course of the proceedings, were involved in the diagnostic process. This situation could become particularly problematic if the persons concerned or the lawyers, who were rarely involved, lodged an appeal against the decision of the hereditary health court in the course of the proceedings and requested access to the files. In this case, the families concerned realized that outsiders had passed judgment on them. Especially in smaller village communities, this circumstance could lead to conflicts if, for example, the informants called upon by the court to testify were held jointly responsible for the decision of the hereditary health court and were therefore subjected to hostility.

2.2.3.2 Procedural practice

The Hereditary Health Court, responsible for sterilization issues, consisted of a presiding magistrate, a civil servant doctor, and another doctor who was not a civil servant but was licensed by the German Reich and familiar with hereditary health theory. According to the commentary on the "Law for the Prevention of Hereditary Diseases in Offspring," a National Socialist attitude was also to be a decisive criterion for the selection of the appropriate physicians.[283] This was the first time that legal laymen had been involved in legal proceedings far beyond the decision-making powers of lay judges, and ideas of racial hygiene found their way directly into the German judiciary. In Coburg, the court was presided over by District Court Judge Walter von Schultes and his deputy, District Court Judge Dr. Freiherr Voith von Voithenberg. District Court Judges Godron, Jacobi, and Dr. Hussla also presided over the panel at times. The doctors involved in determining the reproductive capacity of a number of people covered by the law were district doctors Dr. Hönisch from Coburg and his successor Dr. Fuchs, Dr. Müller from Lichtenfels, Dr. Siebert from Kronach, and Dr. Wendrich, as well as district court physicians Dr. Niedenthal, Dr. Burkhard, and Dr. Ficht, and additionally, as non-civil servant physicians, retired senior physician Dr. Heise, specialists Dr. Klauser and Dr. Kaebsch, and medical examiner Dr. Kundmüller. The assessors in the proceedings thus came from the circle of those who were authorized to initiate sterilization procedures in the first place, so that the measures designed to achieve the most comprehensive sterilizations possible were already inherent in the structure of the proceedings. Regardless of the personal attitudes of the individual judges toward Nazi ideology, they actively participated in the enforcement and implementation of the Nazi state's racial hygiene policy.

281 See the case of Johanna K. StACo Erbgesundheitsgericht 441.
282 See Headmaster Erhard H. to the Coburg Hereditary Health Court, July 25, 1935. StACo Hereditary Health Court 44.
283 See Gütt: Gesetz, p. 224.
284 Hönisch remained active at the Hereditary Health Court even after his retirement.

The sessions of the Hereditary Health Court

The closed sessions of the court provided for a personal examination of those to be sterilized. In particular, in cases of a diagnosis of "hereditary dementia," those affected had to perform arithmetic tasks again in front of the judge and doctors or answer questions about well-known men of the Nazi regime, the Four-Year Plan, or the successes of the NSDAP in order to prove their intelligence. Relatives could also be questioned during the hearing. The extent to which the answers were sufficient was subject to the subjective assessment of the presiding judges. However, once the medically questionable diagnosis of "congenital" and thus "hereditary dementia" had been raised and the suspicion had been substantiated by the motion for proceedings with evidence that had been gathered in some cases arbitrarily, it was difficult for those affected to escape the machinery of the proceedings that had now been set in motion. The burden of proof to refute the presumed diagnosis and its heritability now lay with the defendants themselves.[285] They reported, for example, falls or infectious diseases suffered by the persons concerned as children and presented scenarios that ruled out heredity in order to put forward arguments against heritability. However, particularly in the context of the diagnosis of "congenital idiocy," the "family findings" carried great weight, with all abnormalities within the family and circle of relatives being used to substantiate the claim of heredity. The "peculiar personality" of the mother of an affected person alone could be cited by the doctors involved as decisive evidence for the hereditary nature of "feeble-mindedness."[286] The majority of those affected were therefore helplessly at the mercy of the hereditary health court. Ultimately, it was the situational impression of the lawyers and doctors that determined the extent to which they denied individuals the right to a free lifestyle and their own reproduction.

The court was also able to question witnesses again to prove the diagnosis. "congenital idiocy" was common practice. Nurses Erna Puff and Hanna Schmidt also appeared as witnesses in their role as welfare nurses. However, personal conflicts often played a decisive role in the statements made in court and in the reports to the hereditary health court, which could have fatal consequences for the defendants in court. As soon as intra-family disputes or conflicts within a village or town community were brought before the court, or those affected were brought before the Hereditary Health Court at all, the defendants' chances worsened. Even in cases where children wanted to claim that their parents had abused them but were unable to prove it, the corresponding allegation was used against them in the proceedings. [287]In some cases, parents also testified against their own children when they had become a burden to them.[288]The higher the social status of the person or persons making the statement, the more weight this fact carried with the judges, so that statements made by mayors or teachers in particular could have an influence in court. [289]At the same time, however, an entire village community could also stand up for a person affected and unite against the allegations made.

285 See ibid., p. 120 f.
286 See the case of Hans B. StACo Erbgesundheitsgericht 55.
287 See, for example, the case of Elfriede R. StACo Hereditary Health Court 637.
288 See ibid.
289 See, for example, the case of Margarte D. StACo Hereditary Health Court 135.

Make a diagnosis without being able to refute the arguments put forward by the medical applicants. [290]

As a further measure to reach a decision, the court also had the option of admitting those affected to a clinic for several weeks in order to make a final diagnosis under close observation and at the same time to rule out reproduction until a final decision was made. In Erlangen, Professor Friedrich Meggendorfer, director of the university's psychiatric and neurological clinic, wrote the relevant expert opinion in the majority of cases. Especially in cases of doubt regarding "congenital mental deficiency," the expertise of the experienced psychiatrist and neurologist was called upon. He had worked closely with Ernst Rüdin and through his own scientific work, had played a decisive role in the implementation of the "Law for the Prevention of Hereditary Diseases in Offspring." Meggendorfer himself was also appointed as an assessor to the Bamberg Hereditary Health Court.[292] In the vast majority of cases in which the Hereditary Health Court was unable to diagnose "congenital mental deficiency" beyond doubt, Meggendorfer made a clear ruling and confirmed the hereditary disease. The judges of the Coburg Hereditary Health Court then always followed the expert opinions requested of them with the utmost rigor. If those affected lodged a complaint against their stay in a clinic for diagnosis, the Bamberg Hereditary Health Court had to make a decision. If, as usual, this confirmed the admission, it could be enforced and a presentation ordered.[293]Johanna K., whom Oskar Hönisch had diagnosed with "moral insanity" due to her lifestyle and several previous convictions and had therefore initiated proceedings for sterilization, was forcibly admitted to Kutzenberg for observation. Her stay there ended with Johanna K. losing her job and receiving a final diagnosis of "congenital insanity." Until the end, the woman concerned had resisted the enforcement of the sterilization ruling, wanting to prove that her life would be at risk if she underwent surgery, after she had already had to undergo emergency surgery on her abdomen. Ultimately her sterilization was carried out under duress at the Coburg Regional Hospital.

The judgments of the Coburg Hereditary Health Court

A total of 871 individuals were subject to sterilization proceedings before the Coburg Hereditary Health Court. The court issued clear rulings in 842 of these cases after two applications were withdrawn, 24 proceedings were discontinued on the basis of the "Ordinance for the Implementation of the Law for the Prevention of Hereditary Diseases in Offspring and the Marriage Health Law" of August 31, 1939, and one proceeding was suspended.

290 See the case of Margarete S. StACo Hereditary Health Court 804.

291 The racial hygienist Dr. Ernst Rüdin, together with the eugenicist Dr. Arthur Gütt and the lawyer Dr. Falk Ruttke, played a decisive role in drafting the commentary *on* the *Law for the Prevention of Hereditary Diseases in Offspring*. His involvement in the law itself is considered controversial. See Bock: Zwangssterilisation, p. 84, and Vossen: Gesundheitsämter, p. 264.

292 On Friedrich Meggendorfer, see Braun, Birgit: Friedrich Meggendorfer. Person und Ethik eines Psychiaters im Nationalsozialismus. Stuttgart 2017.

293 See Gütt: Gesetz, p. 230 and the case of Philipp C. StACo Erbgesundheitsgericht 121.

294 See the case of Johanna K. StACo Hereditary Health Court 441.

and in two cases, the individuals concerned died before the verdict was handed down. In 667 cases, the court ordered sterilization, while in 192 cases it rejected the application for sterilization.[295] This means that the Coburg Hereditary Health Court had an approval rate of 79% for applications, which is around 80%, a figure that was also recorded in Bayreuth, Cologne, Frankfurt, and Saarland.[296] However, in 48 of the judgments that approved sterilization, there was no medical evidence in the files as to whether the court's decision had actually been carried out. Applications for sterilization were generally rejected on two grounds. Firstly, the court was able to establish infertility and thus a reduced risk of reproduction. This was particularly the case for women whom the court considered to be at the beginning of or already in menopause. [297]Even if physical deformities were so severe that the judges considered the ability of those affected to have sexual intercourse to be limited, surgery was not performed.Secondly,the "Law for the Prevention of Hereditary Diseases" stipulated that the diagnosis of a hereditary disease should be clear. If, during oral proceedings, the judges were unable to be convinced of the diagnosis, particularly in cases of "congenital mental deficiency" based on an intelligence test, or if the expert opinions requested from the clinics only indicated a suspicion of a hereditary disease without confirming it definitively, they rejected the applications in many cases. At the same time, especially in the case of young men, the possibility of mental maturation was taken into consideration and a decision was postponed in order to rule out late mental development. Not only consideration for those affected, but also cost reasons played a role in played a role in these decisions.

However, the case of Margarete S. illustrates the extent to which women, especially in cases of doubt and with a "low degree of mental deficiency," were pressured by decision-makers in hereditary health proceedings to undergo sterilization. In November 1935, the official physician at the Lichtenfels Health Office submitted an application for the sterilization of Margarete S., born in 1908, on the grounds of "congenital mental deficiency," whereupon the Coburg Hereditary Health Court ordered the sterilization. Dr. Entres from the Kutzenberg sanatorium had also wanted to diagnose the patient during a home visit. During the appointment, however, a confrontation arose with her mother and her fiancé, who denied Entres the right to examine her. A farmer from her hometown of Gärtenroth was also appointed as her caregiver for the duration of the proceedings. After an unsuccessful

295 In nine of these cases, the Bamberg Higher Health Court nevertheless ordered sterilization after the doctors who had filed the application appealed against the Coburg ruling.

296 See Paulus: Erbgesundheitsgericht, p. 396; Daum, Monika; Deppe, Hans-Ulrich: Zwangssterilisation in Frankfurt am Main, 1933–1945. Frankfurt 1991, p. 120. Dalicho, Wilfent: Sterilizations in Cologne on the basis of the Law for the Prevention of Hereditary Diseases of July 14, 1933, according to the files of the Hereditary Health Court from 1934 to 1943. A systematic contribution to forensic, social, and sociological issues. Cologne 1971, p. 15 and Braß, Christoph: Compulsory Sterilization and "Euthanasia" in the Saarland 1933-1945. Paderborn 2004, p. 136. In contrast, the Landshut Hereditary Health Court reported a figure of 74% (cf. Fischer: Zwangssterilisation, p. 96) and the Munich Hereditary Health Court reported 86.5%. (cf. Christians: Amtsgewalt, p. 210.)

297 See, for example, the cases of Emma G. StACo Hereditary Health Court 271 and Anna B. StACo Hereditary Health Court 66.

298 See, for example, the case of Richard T. StACo Hereditary Health Court 822.

In February 1936, the Higher Court for Hereditary Health in Bamberg also upheld the ordered sterilization. Margarete S. then hired lawyer Thomas Dehler from Bamberg to intervene in the proceedings in order to avoid the operation. A motion to reopen the proceedings, which again contested the diagnosis of "congenital mental deficiency," cited several statements from former teachers and people from her home village and presented expert opinions from her family doctor, Dr. Bullinger from Burgkunstadt, and the neurologist Dr. Bach from Bayreuth, who both disagreed with the diagnosis. The Coburg Hereditary Health Court quickly rejected the request for a retrial, but the Higher Hereditary Health Court in Bamberg ordered a new diagnosis by Dr. Meggendorfer at the Erlangen Psychiatric Clinic. While the clinic director confirmed the diagnosis of the Coburg Hereditary Health Court, Margarete S. and her lawyer again sought a second opinion, for which she was admitted at her own expense to the University and Neurological Clinic in Frankfurt, where Professor Karl Kleist diagnosed her with a psychopathic disposition, an infantile nature, and intellectual deficiencies, but assessed the risk of "hereditary offspring" as no greater than that of psychopaths, who were not covered by the "Law for the Prevention of Hereditary Offspring." Dr. Adolf Fuchs, director of the St. Getreu sanatorium and nursing home in Bamberg, also spoke out against the diagnosis of "hereditary dementia" after observing Margarete S. However, her family history spoke against her, because her father had suffered from a nervous disorder during the war and, after an unfortunate abdominal operation, from tremors and shaking neurosis, and her maternal aunt had been treated for schizophrenia in Kutzenberg. In her favor were her special talent for domestic and agricultural activities and the fact that she had passed her driver's license test and fully demonstrated her ability to cope with life. Ultimately, the suspicion of a kind of test anxiety arose after her intelligence tests had produced an ambivalent picture. Dr. Niedenthal from the Coburg Health Office, on the other hand, wanted to emphasize that Margarete S. suffered from a "low degree of mental deficiency" and therefore fell under the law, as this had a significant hereditary effect. Professor Meggendorfer had argued along the same lines, assessing her as particularly dangerous in terms of passing on undesirable genetic material. Ultimately, those involved brought the case before the Führer's deputy, whose office expressed considerable doubts about "congenital mental deficiency" in the case of Margarete S., but ultimately wrote to Dr. Herbert Linden at the Reich Ministry of the Interior: "From a fundamental and National Socialist point of view, there is therefore no harm to the national community if Miss S. does not have children."[299] and left the decision to him. Dr. Linden, who played a key role in the euthanasia murders of "Aktion T4," also tended to believe that "the elimination of S. from further reproduction appears desirable in a certain respect" and based his opinion in particular on the expert opinion of Meggendorfer, whom he knew from various lectures. Arguing that the decision should not be based purely on psychiatric considerations, he advocated sterilization and referred the case back to Bamberg.[300] In June 1939, the Bamberg Higher Court for Hereditary Health then issued

299 Staff of the Deputy Führer, Bunk, to the Reich Ministry of the Interior, Dr. Linden, April 21, 1939. StACo Hereditary Health Court 806.

300 Reich Ministry of the Interior, Dr. Linden to the staff of the Deputy Führer, Bunk, May 22, 1939. StACo Hereditary Health Court 806.

a final decision in which the court branded Margarete S. as "primitive, childish, slightly antisocial, psychopathic, intellectually severely deficient with congenital mental deficiency" [301]and ordered her to be sterilized. The proceedings against Margarete S., who was now pregnant, had ultimately dragged on for over five years. In August 1939, the now 31-year-old woman finally had her fallopian tubes removed against her will and her existing pregnancy terminated.

In the case of Ilse D., a worker born in 1922, the Coburg State Health Office filed a request for sterilization in 1943 after she had suffered repeated epileptic seizures. After Ilse D. was discharged from the hospital as a result of her seizures, the director of the regional hospital, Dr. Zapf, requested that she be referred to the health office for assessment with regard to sterilization. Zapf did not want to submit the application to the Hereditary Health Court himself, as the hospital's doctors were to be heard as witnesses in the proceedings and he therefore considered a direct report by the regional hospital to be "inappropriate." The investigations conducted by the Hereditary Health Court into Ilse D. were all favorable for her. The family history revealed only one grandfather who had been institutionalized for alcoholism. In addition, the Coburg police department also submitted a report favorable to the person concerned, after finding no hereditary diseases in the family, no learning disabilities, and no other abnormalities. Even the district medical officer, Dr. Fuchs from the health department, had been unable to find any hereditary diseases after an examination in 1940 and continued to classify her as fully fit for work. Even before the actual hearing of the Hereditary Health Court, Ilse D.'s father had lodged an objection to sterilization and, among other things, had his lawyer Karl Stammberger argue that it was not epilepsy in the true sense of the word, but epileptic seizures that had occurred since the beginning of the war and were related to the nutritional situation. The Hereditary Health Court, presided over by Senior District Judge Jacobi and doctors Dr. Wendrich and Dr. Hönisch, initially ordered her to be admitted to the psychiatric clinic in Erlangen for a further assessment. The attempt by the family of the person concerned to prevent such an admission by means of an expert opinion from a specialist doctor failed. In Erlangen, an encephalography was first performed, which was unremarkable but left Ilse D. completely weakened, with the result that Ilse's father became completely distraught during a visit due to his daughter's condition and had to be forcibly removed by the police. During her entire stay, the doctors did not observe any seizures and found no organic cause for them. The clinic's final diagnosis was "congenital mental deficiency" and genuine epilepsy, which meant that Ilse D. was certified as having two hereditary diseases under the law. Mental impairment was inferred from the fact that the person concerned was not politically knowledgeable, could not name the current form of government of the German Reich and other countries, did not know any ministers by name, and could not interpret abbreviations such as BDM, HJ, or SA. At the meeting of the Coburg Hereditary Health Court on November 29, 1943, sterilization was finally ordered. The attempt to avert the proceedings by dissolving her engagement and the application for a suspension of the proceedings after the

301 judgment of the Bamberg Hereditary Health Court of June 27, 1939. StACo Hereditary Health Court 806.
302 See the case of Margarete S. StACo Hereditary Health Court 804–806.

Attempts to separate from lawyer Stammberger, who was not considered to be providing adequate and appropriate representation, failed. The Higher Court for Hereditary Health in Bamberg also rejected a corresponding complaint in February 1944 on the grounds that, due to the absence of abnormalities in the brain examination, heredity must be assumed. Although there had been no cases of epilepsy in the family, the alcoholic grandfather was nevertheless cited as a hereditary burden. In the end, sterilization could no longer be averted, and Ilse D. underwent the operation on March 28, 1944, at the age of 22.[303]Unlike social differentiation, which, in line with Nazi welfare policy, assessed the contribution of individuals to the "people's community" and determined their "value" based on their service to the community, the enforcement of the "Law for the Prevention of Hereditary Diseases" clearly focused on biological aspects.

Sterilization of party members

Although the diagnosis of "congenital idiocy" also took into account the lifestyle, adaptability to bourgeois and National Socialist values, and working ability of those affected, sterilization could also affect party members or those who had been committed to the regime. Emil F., for example, had joined the NSDAP as early as 1928 and thus
An "old soldier," he was 80% disabled due to war injuries and had been awarded the Iron Cross Second Class and the Front Cross for his service in World War I. In accordance with the National Socialist welfare hierarchy, he would have been given preferential treatment as part of the elevated welfare system for other members of the German people. However, after he was admitted to the Kutzenberg sanatorium and nursing home due to alcohol addiction, he was expelled from the party and recommended for sterilization. Neither his appeal, which led to proceedings at the Bamberg Higher Hereditary Health Court, nor his petition to the Deputy Führer could overturn the ruling of the Coburg Hereditary Health Court. In 1939, Emil F. was sterilized due to hereditary, severe, and chronic alcoholism.

But even here, there were limits to the equality of all members of the national community. The scope of action available to the chairmen of the hereditary health court, or rather the influence that leading Nazi figures had on the state hereditary health court, became apparent when the niece of Mayor Wilhelm Rehlein, born in 1911, was brought before the court. After Dr. Niedenthal, who had filed the application for sterilization, diagnosed the housekeeper's daughter Rosa B. with "congenital mental deficiency" in his medical report and recommended sterilization after she had become engaged, Mayor Rehlein intervened directly in the proceedings. He accused the doctor of intimidating his niece, who had been raised by her grandparents, to such an extent that she was unable to give correct answers in the intelligence test. A second expert opinion was to be prepared by Dr. Hönisch, with Rehlein's wife present during the examination. However, this opinion also confirmed the diagnosis and advocated sterilization, even though Mrs. Rehlein gave a good reference for her niece.

303 See the case of Ilse D. StACo Hereditary Health Court 132.
304 See the case of Emil F. StACo Hereditary Health Court 208.

During the subsequent investigation by the police, Mayor Rehlein was also able to exert considerable influence. The questionnaire on family history, which had to be completed by the police based on the results of their research, was sent to Rehlein himself, who stated throughout that there was no hereditary predisposition. The overall assessment of the police was correspondingly positive for Rosa.

B. because, based on Rehlein's statements, it confirmed that there were no hereditary diseases among her relatives, that although she had learning difficulties, she was not a poor student, and that the examinations as a whole did not give the impression that she was "mental deficiency." After two sessions of the hereditary health court, in which Mrs. Rehlein also participated, the court ultimately rejected the application for sterilization because it could not be definitively convinced of an "existing mental deficiency."[305]

2.2.3.3 Sterilization and appeal practice

After the final ruling, those to be sterilized were requested to have the procedure performed at the Coburg District Hospital within two weeks. Dr. Leo Meier, chief physician of the surgical department of the district hospital, performed the operations. Some of the operations were also performed at the municipal hospital in Bamberg or directly at the Kutzenberg sanatorium, where a surgeon from Bamberg worked with the assistance of the institution's doctors. If the vas deferens could not be visualized in men, the entire testicle was usually removed; in similar cases in women, the entire fallopian tubes were removed.(306)While in most cases sterilization was performed surgically, since February 1936 it had also been possible to perform sterilization by radiation treatment. This option, which was usually equivalent to castration, was used in particular for women over 38 and those who vehemently opposed surgery.

When the verdict was announced, those affected were always informed that in the event of failure to comply, the verdict would be enforced by police force and against their will. If the deadline for performing the sterilization had passed, the relevant doctors at the district hospital reported this to the health department and requested that the "necessary measures" be taken.[308] In cases of continued refusal, those affected were ultimately taken to the state hospital by force with the help of the police and, as in the case of Edmund S., were removed from their homes by force in front of their families and transported away. [309]

Abortions

Abortions were also possible in cases of suspected hereditary disease until the end of the sixth month of pregnancy, whereby a nurse was also appointed against the mother's will and the pregnant woman was

305 See the case of Rosa B. StACo Hereditary Health Court 110.
306 See, for example, the cases of Edmund S. StACo Hereditary Health Court 791 and Margarete S. StACo Hereditary Health Court 804–806.
307 See the case of Dorothea K. StACo Hereditary Health Court 412 and Bock: Zwangssterilisation (Forced Sterilization), pp. 97 and 423.
308 See Dr. Leo Meier to the Coburg State Health Office, June 2, 1936. StACo Hereditary Health Court 441.
309 See the case of Edmund S. StACo Hereditary Health Court 791.

could be terminated at an early stage. It was not uncommon for women to try to become pregnant before the operation in order to circumvent the forced childlessness imposed by the decision of the hereditary health court. Since abortions often had to be performed quickly and should take place while the fetus was not yet viable, the relevant procedures were particularly expedited. In the case of Marie B., where the exact month of pregnancy could not be determined, the Lichtenfels Health Office cooperated in order to expedite the termination of pregnancy and sterilization. At the request of Dr. Hönisch, the health department, without having been involved in the case, issued the officially required waiver of the right to appeal. This was not possible for the Coburg health department, as Hönisch himself had been involved in the decision-making process.[310]At the same time, as in the cases of Martha B. and Hildegard C., sterilizations were also performed surgically in conjunction with forced cesarean sections. Martha B.'s child, for example, was delivered during the operation to ligate the fallopian tubes in the tenth month, even though this significantly reduced its chances of survival. [311]

The legal provisions for terminations of pregnancy also stipulated that, prior to the actual operation, an expert body had to declare the procedure necessary, unless it could not be postponed due to an immediate danger to life and health. To this end, an expert body for terminations of pregnancy was set up at the Coburg district office of the Association of Statutory Health Insurance Physicians, responsible for the areas of Coburg city, Coburg district, Neustadt, Rodach, Kronach, Lichtenfels, and Staffelstein. It was headed by the deputy director of the Association of Statutory Health Insurance Physicians, Medical Officer Dr. Rudolf Klauser, a specialist in surgery and gynecology, with his deputy Dr. Herbert Müller, a general practitioner, and an obstetrician. The review board had each case examined in writing by two doctors. [312]In 1933, Dr. Klauser had taken over the position of first chairman of the Medical-Economic and Association of Statutory Health Insurance Physicians from Dr. Alkan, who had been ousted because of his Jewish origins. [313]

While in the case of clinically precisely definable diseases, the consent of relatives to sterilization could often be obtained—either through acceptance of the given situation or through the coercion conveyed in the procedure—the chance of obtaining consent was much lower in the case of the vague diagnosis of "congenital mental deficiency." However, the prospects of a change in the decision or a successful appeal were slim. One possibility for appealing against the decision

310 See the case of Marie B. StACo Hereditary Health Court 71.

311 See the cases of Martha B. StACo Hereditary Health Court 68 and Hildegart C. StACo Hereditary Health Court 24. What happened to the children and to what extent they survived the early caesarean section is not noted.

312 See *Bayerische Ostmark*, September 26, 1935.

313 Klauser also took a clear stand against his Jewish colleagues regarding the Gleichschaltung (enforced conformity) in the medical profession when, for example, he refused to help Dr. Alfred Masur, the chairman of the Jewish community, after his arrest in 1933 to regain his footing as a doctor, even though Klauser himself had treated victims of the violent escapades of the SA and SS. See *Coburger Nationalzeitung* of April 3, 1933, and Dr. Masur to Dr. Klauser, March 12, 1933. StadtACo A 7870. See also Chapter IV3.1.

The hereditary health court was established at the competent hereditary health court in Bamberg. It also consisted of a presiding judge and two medical assessors and made a final and therefore unappealable decision.[314] In rare cases, those affected also engaged lawyers to appeal in order to increase their chances of preventing sterilization. The Bamberg lawyer Thomas Dehler and Karl Stammberger from Coburg in particular took on cases involving hereditary health matters.

Appeal proceedings

Appeals were particularly successful when the Bamberg Higher Court for Hereditary Health ordered a further expert opinion and admission to a clinic for clarification in order to clarify the diagnosis. In this way, Martha F. was acquitted of compulsory sterilization in the second instance. After learning during her pregnancy that her husband had been unfaithful and had infected her with a sexually transmitted disease, she suffered from postpartum depression after the birth of her child and had a nervous breakdown. Her husband subsequently took her to the Kutzenberg sanatorium, where the senior physician, Dr. Entres, diagnosed her with "manic-depressive insanity" and thus a hereditary disease, and initiated proceedings for the sterilization of the 26-year-old woman. The Coburg Hereditary Health Court ruled in favor of the applicant. A subsequent appeal to the Bamberg Hereditary Health Court of Appeal was supported by her pastor, who spoke up for her and passed on the domestic background information entrusted to him to the court. Although both Dr. Entres and Dr. Niedenthal were in favor of sterilizing Martha F., the court in Bamberg ordered an expert opinion from the Munich Psychiatric Clinic, which did not find sufficient evidence of "manic-depressive insanity" and ultimately resulted in the rejection of the sterilization application.[315] The doctors who submitted the application could also lodge an appeal if the court did not grant their request. In particular, the district court physician Dr. Niedenthal, who was a strict advocate of the "Law for the Prevention of Hereditary Diseases," often used this option when the hereditary health court rejected one of his requests for sterilization.

had refused to give consent.

If a guardian had been appointed for the persons concerned who had to agree to waive the right to lodge an appeal, they were often only presented with a pre-written letter. This letter expressed agreement to the sterilization in brief terms, was already signed "The Guardian," and could then be signed by hand.[316] If, as in the case of Hans B., the municipal youth welfare office and thus Inspector Puff had been appointed as guardian, any appeal by the parents could be rejected from the outset. In this case, the mother wanted to attribute her son's restriction, which had been listed by the court, to a fall, even though he had not committed any crimes, was not prone to alcohol, had not exhibited "immoral" behavior, and did not require welfare, in order to prevent his sterilization before he reached the age of majority. After Puff, as

314 See *Bayerische Ostmark* of June 28, 1935.
315 See the case of Martha F. StACo Erbgesundheitsgericht 230.
316 See, for example, the case of Grete Z. StACo Hereditary Health Court 910.

appointed guardian did not support her in her desire to file a complaint, her arguments came to nothing. [317]

Time and again, individuals whose appeals had been rejected by the Higher Court for Hereditary Health in Bamberg turned to the "Führer" or the Deputy Führer, seeing this as their last hope of averting sterilization. Although this possibility was not provided for in the "Law for the Prevention of Hereditary Diseases in Offspring," a number of those affected made use of it, so that ultimately the office of the Führer of the NSDAP used standardized forms for the procedure. In fact, the proceedings in these cases remained suspended until the Reich leadership had decided whether a case should be examined more closely. However, those cases that can be traced in the files of the Coburg Hereditary Health Court indicate that such a step could delay sterilization for a short time, but in most cases could not prevent it.

Adalbert S., a student born in 1912 who was to be sterilized because he had been diagnosed with schizophrenia, tried to convince the Hereditary Health Court that he was merely suffering from exam psychosis. In the run-up to his exams, the student had been taken by his father to the Würzburg Füchsleinsstraße psychiatric clinic after suffering a nervous breakdown. The clinic there diagnosed him with schizophrenia, appointed his father as his caregiver, and did not hand him the sterilization order, as he was allegedly mentally incapable of absorbing the information. Since Adalbert S. himself was a member of the National Socialist Student Union and the *SA Leibstandarte München Sturm 1 Max Erwin von Scheubner-Richter*, he saw an opportunity to appeal to the Deputy Führer after his appeal to the Higher Court for Hereditary Health in Bamberg had been rejected. However, after the suspensive period had expired without any objection to the Coburg court's decision from the Deputy Führer's staff, Dr. Niedenthal ordered the student's forced sterilization, even though he himself had had doubts about procedural errors.

In addition to the appeal process, another option for preventing the enforcement of the judgment was permanent confinement in a closed institution. Since patients there were under constant observation, this also prevented them from having children. In this case, the judgment of the Hereditary Health Court was suspended for as long as the person concerned was admitted to an appropriate institution and was only enforced upon their eventual release. Margarete S., for example, voluntarily and at her own expense, had herself admitted to the Ottilienheim Absberg, an *institution for mentally disabled girls and women*, after she had given birth to a child who was probably the result of rape.

317 See the case of Hans B. StACo Hereditary Health Court 55.

318 See, for example, the cases of Adalbert S. StACo Hereditary Health Court 790, Emil F. Hereditary Health Court 208, Emil M. Hereditary Health Court 539, Ella H. StACo Hereditary Health Court 326, Margarete R. Hereditary Health Court 633, Margarete S. StACo Hereditary Health Court 804, Josef R. Hereditary Health Court 654, Rosina S. Hereditary Health Court 765, and Marie H. StACo Hereditary Health Court 346. The fact that the involvement of the Führer's office could also be successful is demonstrated by a case before the Landshut Hereditary Health Court, which was ultimately forwarded to the Bavarian State Ministry of the Interior, where the sterilization order was revoked. See Fischer: Zwangssterilisation, p. 115 f.

319 See the case of Adalbert S. StACo Hereditary Health Court 790.

At the age of 17, in 1942, she was diagnosed with "congenital mental deficiency" at the request of her doctor by both the Coburg Hereditary Health Court and, following an appeal, the Bamberg Higher Hereditary Health Court, and sterilization was ordered at the Coburg Regional Hospital. [320]

Deaths

The procedures and the "Law for the Prevention of Hereditary Diseases in Offspring" were criticized throughout the Reich, in particular because there had been repeated deaths during the sterilization of women. In Coburg, too, three women died as a result of the procedures performed on them. At the same time, the procedure could also exacerbate the existing mental health problems of those affected. In addition, at least two of those affected committed suicide after the verdict was handed down and before the sterilization was performed.[323] One reason for this was the social stigma associated with sterilization. Even Nazi propaganda and its portrayal of the measures of the "Law for the Prevention of Hereditary Diseases" as a service to the "people's community" and not as a punishment by the legislature could not eliminate this stigma. Peter B., who was to be sterilized together with his siblings because of hereditary blindness, hanged himself following the ruling of the hereditary health court. He had already clearly communicated that he would take his own life if the proceedings ended in this way, for fear of being teased by his colleagues.[324]Dr. Müller from the Lichtenfels Health Office reported to the Coburg Hereditary Health Court: "On August 18, 1937, I requested the above-named person to undergo sterilization at the Coburg Regional Hospital. I hereby inform the Hereditary Health Court that Moser ended his life by hanging himself on August 21, 1937." [325]

It is not known to what extent the population or those affected outside the complaint process campaigned against the practices of the Hereditary Health Court. Immediately after the enactment of the "Law for the Prevention of Hereditary Diseases in Offspring," the Bavarian Political Police were commissioned to investigate whether propaganda against the law was being carried out in Coburg. [326]After two months of investigation into this matter, the Coburg police department reported that there was no evidence of such activity. [327]

Ultimately, the decisions of the hereditary health court destroyed a large number of life plans. In some cases, men who had been scarred by their experiences in the war and women who suffered from postpartum depression or lived in adverse social conditions were assessed, stigmatized, and punished by the court. Even though the judges and doctors involved made every effort to take into account the background of the

320 See the case of Margarete S. StACo Hereditary Health Court 785.
321 See Feder: Social Work, p. 54 f. On mortality in cases of forced sterilization, see also Treyz: Law, p. 204.
322 See, for example, the case of Johanna S. StACo Hereditary Health Court 783.
323 See the cases of Hans M. StACo Hereditary Health Court 546 and Peter B. StACo Hereditary Health Court 51.
324 See ibid.
325 See Dr. Müller to the Coburg Hereditary Health Court, September 27, 1937. StACo Hereditary Health Court 546.
326 See Bavarian Political Police to the Coburg Police Department, August 30, 1935. StadtACo A 8438.
327 In April 1936, the corresponding investigations were discontinued. See various file notes by police officer Kessel. StadtACo A 8438.

Despite efforts to reach well-founded decisions in accordance with National Socialist hereditary and racial hygiene to the best of their knowledge and belief, the structure of the law and the lack of a scientific basis for the diagnosis of alleged hereditary diseases meant that the wide scope for action granted to those involved by the law ultimately led to arbitrary and widely diverging judgments. If the lifestyle of an individual deviated from the social norm defined by the ideology of the time, for example through the birth of an illegitimate child, unemployment, or failure at school, they were at risk of being brought before the Hereditary Health Court. The establishment of the court thus created a space for persecution in which judges and doctors judged lifestyles, value systems, and norms that were completely foreign to them and often assigned them greater significance. The combination of medical and social diagnostics in the practice of the law made it particularly fatal. The institutional cooperation between the municipal youth welfare office and the state hereditary health court emphatically underscored this.

3 Persecution

3.1 Violence

The use of violence and the process of "de-Jewification" represent two processes that contributed as decisive mechanisms of exclusion within the process of community building to establish a "people's community" practice. Although the concrete use of physical violence was limited to a smaller circle of perpetrators, both practices were processes that affected society as a whole. The use of violence, whereby "from the perspective of the perpetrator, one's own actions or omissions (...) serve to limit, change, suppress, or elicit a certain behavior through the use of coercive measures of any kind"[1], will be considered in the narrower sense below, with a focus on unilateral and direct acts of violence. As a communicative and political act aimed at establishing a new order of coexistence, violence was an indispensable foundation for the establishment and maintenance of Nazi rule.[2] In order to understand the contexts that enabled the emergence of violence, it is therefore essential to examine the situational and structural networks of relationships and interactions in the Coburg area.[3] In addition to violent National Socialists, the victims of violence, and those who publicly tolerated it, the Coburg city police, as an institution with a monopoly on the use of force in urban areas, is a particular focus of attention.

1 Hitzler, Ronald: Violence as an Activity. Proposals for a Typological Clarification of the Concept. In: Neckel, Sighard; Schwab-Trapp, Michael (eds.): Orders of Violence. Contributions to a Political Sociology of Violence and War (= Sociology of Politics, Volume 3). Opladen 1999, pp. 9–19, here p. 13.

2 See Hitzler: Violence, pp. 16 f.

3 See Jureit: Skripte, p. 64.

3.1.1 Normalizing: Political Violence until 1933

3.1.1.1 Acts of wanton destruction

Not least since the experience of violence in the First World War, and to some extent already in In the 19th century, violence was legitimized by necessity and had become normalized in everyday life. Already during the era of the "Northern Border Guard" in 1923 and the accompanying temporary institutionalization of violence through the upgrading and state legitimization of military associations, there had been an increase in unilateral and direct acts of violence against political opponents and Jews in the Coburg area. In Autenhausen, völkisch associations of the Erhardt-Johnsen Brigade attacked the Jewish cattle dealers and brothers Emanuel and Adolf Gutmann, robbed them at gunpoint, and brutally abused them, so that both had to seek medical treatment. While the two men's houses were being ransacked, the entire village was occupied by members of the brigade, who prevented anyone from turning on the lights at gunpoint.[4] In the 1920s, the work of the völkisch associations and organizations primarily led to a steady radicalization of anti-Semitic agitation, with the threat of physical violence being a central element. At the beginning of the 1920s, concrete acts of violence from the völkisch camp were still directed primarily against political opponents.[5]The fact that the Coburg NSDAP, and in particular the SA, prided itself on being the most feared SA in all of Bavaria had a lasting effect on the normalization of violence in Coburg and contributed to the formation of a culture of violence.

With the NSDAP's rise to power in 1929, a dynamic effect and a phase of continuous radicalization began, especially among younger National Socialists who were prepared to use violence ultimately leading to the creation of a *space for violence*.

4 See *Coburger Volksblatt* from September 18 and 19, 1924. The Jewish *C.V. newspaper* reported on the events as follows: "In the night from November 3 to 4, around 11:30 p.m., a gang of about 20 men surrounded the neighboring houses of two Jewish residents of Autenhausen in Upper Franconia. Shouts of 'Open up!' rang out, and when this did not happen quickly enough, the door was broken down, a shot was fired into the apartment, and the gang entered from the courtyard side. Eight to ten young men, equipped with caps, windbreakers, bayonets, and revolvers, demanded money from the poorly dressed men, threatening, 'We are German nationalists, we need money for our cause.' In the neighborhood, the command 'Close the windows' was given wherever a light was visible or a window was open. In the house, the safe had to be opened in the search for money. After money, a gold watch, and a chain had been stolen, the two men were forced to go with them and led out of the village. There, a kind of court martial was held to decide what to do with them. The following dialogue ensued: "Shoot them? Are there spades?" Answer: "No." "Hang them?" "There are no ropes." Finally, it was decided to kill the men, and they were ordered to lie down. They were beaten in the most brutal manner with sticks, rubber truncheons, and sidearms until they appeared to be dead. Then the troop left in the direction of Gmünd. After a while, the seriously injured men, bleeding from head wounds, dragged themselves home with great difficulty. They found protection and shelter in Meiningen's Ummerstadt and later in Gleicherswiesen near Hildburghausen. The two Jewish gentlemen are still seriously ill today." *C.V. newspaper* from
November 23, 1923. See also Asmalsky: National Socialism, p. 78 f. and Wolz, Alexander: Groundbreaking Raid. In: BSZ Unser Bayern 11,12 (2023), p. 25–30. The penalties for those involved ranged from two months to three years in prison with probation.

5 See Chapter I.2.

6 See Schwede: Coburg, p. 32.

7 For the discussion on spaces of violence, see, among others, Snyder: Bloodlands; Baberowski; Metzler: Gewalträume.

succeeded. [8]A decisive factor in this was the constant normalization of everyday violence, which reached a first peak in the early 1920s and became effective again in Coburg from 1929 onwards. The violent clashes with political opponents and the practices of violence employed in the process formed a decisive basis for the increasing violence against Jewish citizens of Coburg – for the perpetrators themselves, those who publicly tolerated it, and the silent bystanders who thus became accomplices.

This phase of violence was characterized by a series of individual actions carried out by SA men and Hitler Youth members in the course of the NSDAP's expansion of power. Rituals were established in the formation of group dynamics. These took the form of tests of courage and were increasingly directed against Jewish residents of Coburg.[9] The violent actions of individual actors came to the fore, who had grown up and been socialized in a social climate characterized by strong aversion to the working class and Jews, and in which this aversion had already become institutionalized and common knowledge in wide circles of society. While this was merely a mindset among the older generation, which was translated into action but did not lead to radicalism, it was the younger generation that, driven by hatred and fear, resorted to more radical forms of action. Even though this led to a generational conflict over the implementation of political goals, many older people tolerated the escapades of the young National Socialists because there was broad agreement on the goals they were pursuing. In addition, against the backdrop of radicalization and brutalization triggered by the First World War, violence was accepted as a means of politics. In the lives of young National Socialists, especially within the SA, violence thus became a communal experience and a defining element of everyday life. It served the often unemployed young men, who had found a field of activity in fighting groups, to vent and channel their frustration about the crisis-ridden development of their own careers. As an organization, the SA offered its individual members community and a sense of purpose, and through its relentless activism and euphoric atmosphere, it allowed its members to experience the "people's community" in their everyday lives.

An incident on the night of December 23, 1929, is characteristic of the extent of anti-Semitic violence and the behavior of all those involved. An electrically lit, five- to six-meter-high Christmas tree, which had been attached to the facade of the Conitzer company for advertising purposes and served as an unmistakable and symbolic

8 Michael Wildt identifies a sharp increase in violence against Jews in the German provinces in 1930 following the NSDAP's success in the Reichstag elections. See Wildt, Michael: Volksgemeinschaft als Selbstermächtigung. Gewalt gegen Juden in der deutschen Provinz 1919 bis 1939. Hamburg 2007, pp. 87–96.

9 The early outbreaks of violence in Coburg have been documented in part, both in relation to anti-Semitic violence (cf. Fromm: Juden, pp. 46–50) and in relation to political opponents (cf. Albrecht: Avantgarde, pp. 133–136). However, the establishment and expansion of the National Socialist sphere of violence can only be adequately understood if both processes are seen and described as part of overarching practices of exclusion. The cases described below do not claim to be exhaustive, but represent the majority of documented cases of violence in Coburg.

10 See Wildt: Volksgemeinschaft als Selbstermächtigung, pp. 87–96; Reichardt: Vergemeinschaftung, pp. 121–125.

This striking symbol of the department store's modernity had already caused quite a stir in Coburg's city center when it was forcibly removed during the night and found the next morning by police officers on Schlossplatz.[11] Police investigations soon identified three suspects from within the NSDAP. The Conitzer company took the initiative and offered a reward for information that could lead to concrete criminal prosecution. Ultimately, however, the perpetrators remained untouched. The Coburg police department cited the strong cohesion and secrecy within the NSDAP camp. It was already apparent that the NSDAP's power and the willingness of the population to help convict the perpetrators were limited. Mayor Unverfähr wrote to the government of Upper Franconia that the Conitzer company's neighbors feared revenge and the businesspeople feared a boycott by the NSDAP.

Damage to property of this kind became more frequent and was seen as the first stage of a new practice of violence aimed at meeting social democratic and increasingly Jewish-marked locations, carrying out the actions threatened in slogans and in the wake-up call against political opponents and the Jewish community, and putting them into practice in the protected centers of Jewish life., to put into practice the threats made in slogans and *wake-up calls* against political opponents and the Jewish community, and to invade the protected centers of Jewish life in the city. In August 1929, emboldened by the NSDAP's victory in the city, National Socialists from outside the city attempted to force their way into the Social Democratic People's House. [13] A group of Berlin National Socialists attempted the same thing around Easter 1930.[14] In early December 1929, the synagogue was marked and damaged by the posting of NSDAP election posters, and in early January 1930, the light bulb was stolen from the lamppost in front of the synagogue, which had provided protection and security at night by illuminating the area around the place of worship. Shortly thereafter, after a bock beer festival in the *Zur Hopfenblüte* pub on Ketschendorferstraße, which was frequented by National Socialists, several members of the NSDAP allegedly damaged the shutters of the house of Abraham Friedmann, a commission councilor, and threw stones at the windows of the community center. The Coburg police forwarded the subsequent complaints from the Jewish community to the public prosecutor's office without conducting any significant investigations and with a reference to the secrecy of the National Socialists. The latter discontinued the proceedings in all cases.

The sluggish and half-hearted investigations and the fact that even the assignment of a detective from the Nuremberg-Fürth police department to investigate the politically motivated criminal acts yielded no results[16]gave the violent members of the NSDAP the impression that they had broad freedom of action.

11 See *Bayerische Ostmark*, March 21, 1936.

12 See 1. Mayor with legal expertise to the government of Upper Franconia, Chamber of the Interior, February 5, 1930. StadtACo A 8521. Hubert Fromm states that the author of this letter was Franz Schwede, but Schwede did not become third mayor of Coburg until six months later. See Fromm: Juden, p. 47.

13 See *Coburger Volksblatt*, August 2, 1929.

14 See police reports on incidents at Easter 1930. StadtACo A 8373.

15 See 1st Mayor with legal expertise to the Government of Upper Franconia, Chamber of the Interior, February 5, 1930. StadtACo A 8521 and Otto Voye to Minister of State Dr. Stützel, January 16, 1931. BayHStA MInn 71718.

16 See Nuremberg-Fürth Police Headquarters to the State Ministry of the Interior, January 31, 1930. BayHStA MInn 71718.

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During interrogations, they reacted "cheekily and defiantly," covered for each other, and mocked the police officer who had moved from Nuremberg, whose assignment in Coburg had been passed on to the NSDAP circles before his arrival, so that they were prepared for his investigations. Even when the Jewish community complained about the anti-Semitic agitation in *the Weckruf*, which was confiscated by the Coburg public prosecutor's office for a short time, but was able to pick up exactly where it had left off when it reappeared, the hopelessness of the Jewish complaints was already apparent.[18] The behavior of the Coburg police department contributed to the escalation and became a contributing factor to the violence. The *Volksblatt* repeatedly complained about the biased attitude of the Coburg city police, asking, for example, "Was the Coburg police powerless, or did it have ties to the rabble that prevented the discovery?"[19] District Administrator Fritsch played down the incidents to the State Ministry of the Interior in Munich and defended the city police.[20] The NSDAP in Coburg also gained additional momentum with the election of Dr. Frick as Thuringian Minister of the Interior, which meant a concrete gain in power for the NSDAP and brought the success of the National Socialist movement within reach.[21] In this space, which initially appeared to be free of sanctions, a new level of violence was ultimately promoted, which now actually turned against individuals.

3.1.1.2 Establishment of rituals of violence

As early as the end of January 1930, the Jewish merchants Altmann and Schloss were separately attacked by large groups of National Socialists. Their reports to the police came to nothing. In the case of Hermann Schloss, police sergeant Trautwein was even in the vicinity at the time of the incident, but according to Schloss, he was slow to come to his aid and later stated that he had heard and seen nothing. Sergeant Matthe, who was called in to investigate the Fritz Altmann case immediately after the attack on the Mohrenbrücke and sent to Mohrenstraße, also reported that he had not heard anything unusual. After incidents of harassment near the synagogue had become increasingly frequent in connection with Jewish holidays, and the investigation into these incidents had also been unsuccessful, Dr. Masur, the head of the Jewish community, sent the police a list of Jewish religious services and requested police protection, initially for the New Year, the Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles. Half an hour before each service, a police patrol was stationed at the synagogue, and further incidents were temporarily prevented. [23]In addition, in January 1930, the Central Association of German Citizens of the Jewish Faith submitted a request to the government

17 Ibid.
18 The complaint was submitted to the government of Upper Franconia by the Regional Association of Jewish Communities.
19 *Coburger Volksblatt* newspaper, December 1, 1930.
20 See letter from the district office executive committee to the State Ministry of the Interior in Munich, January 25, 1930. BayHStA MInn 71718.
21 See Otto Voye to Minister of State Dr. Stützel, January 16, 1931. BayHStA MInn 71718.
22 See *Coburger Tageblatt*, January 27, 1930.
23 See file notes from the police department dated June 9, July 25, September 19, and October 16, 1930. StadtACo A 8521.

of Upper Franconia lodged a complaint, informing the authorities that the Jewish population of Coburg no longer felt safe and requesting intervention. However, the city administration immediately dismissed the Jewish community's fears as unjustified, stating that, "based on police findings, these were probably a few individuals within the NSDAP who were prone to rowdy behavior, for whom the NSDAP leadership could not ultimately be held responsible." Both the district office and the government of Upper and Middle Franconia repeatedly instructed the police to provide the Jewish community with the necessary protection.

At the same time, violence against members of the SPD escalated again. As early as August 1929, the *Coburger Volksblatt* had warned: "The violent riots by Hitler's followers are not merely temperamental outbursts by individual fanatical Hitlerites, no, they are clear-cut, deliberate consequences of National Socialist subversive agitation. The National Socialists want to train brutal violent criminals in their ranks who will stop at nothing, not even political murder." [26] Franz Klingler in particular, who embodied a figure of hatred for the right-wing camp through his work at *the Volksblatt*, became the victim of physical attacks with rubber truncheons and steel rods, which also remained unsolved.[27] Because his trust in the protection of the local police had been destroyed as a result, he resorted to self-defense and only went for walks with a large dog and armed himself.[28] A speech by Klingler at the end of the occupation of the Rhineland in June 1930 was also massively disrupted by members of the NSDAP and the *Stahlhelm*. After a march by right-wing groups got out of control in the market square, the police had to use rubber truncheons to clear the market square and calm the situation. [29]An SPD event with former Reich Chancellor Hermann Müller that took place a little later was also attacked by National Socialists.[30]Although District Administrator Dr. Fritsch publicly downplayed the seriousness of the situation, he felt compelled to assign four state police officers to reinforce the city police at night and to instruct the gendarmerie to monitor the areas around Coburg where National Socialists played a certain role. [31]

In November 1930, violence against members of the SPD finally escalated when, after a rally with Munich public prosecutor Wilhelm Hoegner at the Hofbräu restaurants, they set off for Neustadt near Coburg in five trucks. On the way, they were pelted with stones and bottles by violent National Socialists, causing one driver to lose control of his vehicle after suffering a head injury.

24 1. Legal expert mayor to the government of Upper Franconia, Chamber of the Interior, February 5, 1930. StadtACo A 8521.

25 See Government of Upper Franconia, Chamber of the Interior to the First Mayor of the City of Coburg, January 30, 1930. StadtACo A 8521.

26 See *Coburger Volksblatt*, August 6, 1929

27 See The Executive Board of the Coburg District Office to the State Ministry of the Interior, January 15, 1930. BayHStA MInn 71718; *Coburger Volksblatt* of January 15, 1931, and *Coburger Tageblatt* of January 15, 1930.

28 See: Chief Public Prosecutor to the Attorney General of the Bamberg Higher Regional Court, August 15, 1931, StABa K3/1967 1707.

29 See *Coburger Zeitung*, June 30, 1930.

30 See *Coburger Volksblatt*, August 23, 1930.

31 See: District Office to the State Ministry of the Interior, Munich, January 25, 1930. BayHStA MInn 71718.



Fig. 39: Accident involving a truck carrying SPD members in November 1930

lost control and the truck, carrying around 40 passengers, crashed down a three-meter embankment. Fourteen people suffered minor injuries and two were seriously injured.[32] The next day, the *Volksblatt newspaper* asked: "Are Social Democrats outlaws in Coburg? Is Coburg ruled by the criminal street mob of the swastika-wielders?"[33] But although there were proven links between the police department and the NSDAP, which usually hindered investigations into acts of violence, Police Director Janzen in particular, under increasing pressure due to the escalating violence, had set himself the goal of maintaining order in Coburg. Both the state and city police began initial investigations at the scene of the crime, and City Commissioner Fritsch sent for the chief prosecutor, who ordered the arrest of four suspects. On Janzen's orders, decisive action was now taken. After attempts by the Social Democratic demonstration march to disrupt the event in the run-up to the event, the first temporary arrests had already been made, whereupon a group of National Socialists stormed the police station. Once again, Janzens' swift intervention led to the arrest of, among others, businessman Franz Reuther, who owned a shop in the city center and had always advocated a boycott of Jewish businessmen, and Reinhold Ender, who was already on the list of suspects for several violent incidents and was considered a leader in hall battles, were arrested as alleged ringleaders of the action. Ultimately, 22 people had to answer for the incident on charges of breach of the peace and were sentenced to prison terms of between three and eight months for their involvement in the incident.

32 See the bi-monthly report of the Coburg Police Department dated November 30, 1930. StadtACo A 8499. *Coburger Volksblatt* dated November 29, 1930.

33 *Coburger Volksblatt*, November 29, 1930.

34 See bi-monthly report of the Coburg Police Department dated November 30, 1930. StadtACo A 8499 and *Coburger Volksblatt newspaper* dated May 29, 1931.

The ensuing dispute between Police Director Janzen and the newly appointed Third Mayor Franz Schwede would set the course for future police work in Coburg. On the night of the first arrests, Franz Schwede appeared at the police station in his capacity as Third Mayor and member of the state parliament and demanded the release of his party comrades. Janzen, however, who did not want to accept Schwede's mixing of party office and local political position, sent him away from the station, pointed out that he had exceeded his authority, and reported the incident by telephone to First Mayor Unverfähr.[35] The NSDAP's subsequent campaign against Wilhelm Janzen cost him his job and ultimately his mental health after he was removed from office in January 1931, first transferred to the welfare office and finally into retirement, while being deliberately harassed and terrorized.[36] The signal effect of this event, as well as the understanding of office and the conduct of Janzen's successor Wilhelm Scheel, accelerated the escalation. Like Scheel, the majority of the members of the municipal police department at that time were either members of the NSDAP themselves or sympathizers.[37] In addition, Schwede, as deputy to the first mayor, Unverfähr, who was often absent due to illness, was able to seize control of the municipal police force even before his appointment as first mayor.

The municipal area in the hands of the National Socialists

The seizure of urban space as a social structure through the use of violence, thereby creating a space of violence, was now consistently pursued and a social practice of violence established. At the end of July 1931, violent clashes between National Socialists and their political opponents occurred almost daily, with the blue city police doing nothing to stop them. Members of the NSDAP patrolled the streets of the city at night in small groups, claiming urban space for themselves by exercising the right of the strongest. Schwede was able to recruit Rudolf Günther, born on May 19, 1892, in Erfurt and a repeat offender, as the ringleader. Günther, who later became the leader of the SS storm troopers in Coburg, was intimidating simply by his stature and, at the sound of a whistle, alerted a troop of other NSDAP members to strike.[38] Alcohol consumption often had a disinhibiting effect, and it was not uncommon for plans for attacks to be hatched during evening drinking sessions. [39] From the NSDAP party headquarters,

35 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung* of December 2, 1930, and Secret Justice Council Dr. Josef Schmitt and Dr. Gottfried Schmitt to the Bamberg Higher Regional Court, October 21, 1932. StadtACo Abgabe Rechtsamt. Bei-akte I zur Personalakte Wilhelm Janzen. Janzen later claimed that he had evidence at the time that Schwede himself had issued the order to attack the trucks in the market square. See Janzen to Ludwig Meyer, August 17, 1947. StadtACo submission to the Legal Department. Supplementary file I to the personnel file of Wilhelm Janzen.

36 See Chapter III3.2.1.

37 See: Chief Public Prosecutor to the Attorney General of the Bamberg Higher Regional Court, August 15, 1931, StABa K3/1967 1707. The Chief Public Prosecutor stated that all but one police officer were members of the NSDAP and that the municipal transport manager Schilling, formerly a member of the SPD, now belonged to the NSDAP.

38 See *Münchner Post*, July 17, 1931.

39 See, for example, the statements made by Reinhold Enders in the appeal hearing on the truck incident. *Coburger Volksblatt*, May 29, 1931, and the subsequent description of the Christmas tree theft at the Conitzer & Söhne fashion store. See *Bayerische Ostmark*, March 21, 1936.

At *the Golden Cross* in the city center, the National Socialists, armed with dog whips and other objects, claimed dominion over the inner city for themselves. The restaurant was the hub for the actions of the SS and SA, from which acts of violence were planned and initiated after joint rallies or speaking evenings. This command center, which strengthened camaraderie and group spirit through excessive drinking, a rough tone, and a masculinity lived out in the spirit of the regime, had a dynamic effect that promoted and ritualized violence on the streets.

Beyond the People's House, attacks against the KPD and SPD were now extended to the private homes of their members. On the night of July 22, 1931, around 100 people gathered first in front of the private residence of Fritz Schamberger, tailor and local KPD leader, then in front of the Brauhof, where KPD members also lived, and finally at the district consumer cooperative on Oberer Bürglaß. At the same time, a nighttime battle for control of the city was being fought. On the night of July 23, for example, there was a clash between the NSDAP, SPD, and KPD, attended by local party leaders including Nazi city councilor August Gerspacher and, from the SPD, state parliament representative Klingler, party chairman Reichenbecher, and city councilor Meyer. Instead of acting as mediators, the blue police once again behaved in a biased manner and were thus unable to defuse the situation. A request by Franz Klingler to search the NSDAP clubhouse on the market square, the *Golden Cross*, for weapons was not complied with, and it was also reported that a police sergeant had refused to help Klingler, citing the end of his shift. Ultimately, a major clash was only prevented because Klingler sent for the green state police, who cleared the market square. Six city police officers subsequently had to justify their actions in court, but it could not be proven that they had intentionally failed to pursue a criminal offense.

The attitude of the Coburg police department

During their raids, the Coburg National Socialists could always be sure of receiving special treatment from the police. A confrontation on July 21 in Spitalgasse, during which merchants and NSDAP members Johannes Wasikowski and Philipp Otto drew weapons, was broken up by a police sergeant, but without confiscating Otto's illegally carried weapon. This led to speculation that the SA and SS were being supplied with weapons through the police department and thus apparently by legal means. In this case too, Chief Public Prosecutor Klotz initiated proceedings against three city police officers. The police department itself explained that it did not take more severe action because it was customary for security personnel not to disavow colleagues in front of others while on duty. The government of Upper and Middle Franconia also stated the obvious, that the municipal

40 See Reichardt: Kampfbünde, pp. 446–476.

41 See Police Department to the Executive Board of the Coburg District Office, July 25, 1931. BayHStA MInn 71718.

42 See Chief Public Prosecutor to the Attorney General of the Bamberg Higher Regional Court, August 15, 1931, StABa K3/1967 1707. The police also filed criminal charges against the *Coburger Volksblatt* after it denounced the police for protecting the NSDAP.

43 See *Coburger Volksblatt* of July 27, 1931, and June 11, 1932.

Police officers allowed themselves to be influenced in the severity of their actions by considerations of the political views of the city's leader (...). In the area of responsibility between City Commissioner Dr. Fritsch and Mayor Schwede, who was in charge with his city council majority, the police department consistently followed the NSDAP line and consequently pushed the functioning of the municipal administrative structure to its limits. Not least, the case of Police Director Janzen had made an impression on the officers and demonstrated the consequences that action against the NSDAP could have. [45]In addition, the Coburg public prosecutor's office reported secret instructions within the city police force that the officers could not ignore. [46]

Ultimately, the city police had to increase their night patrols and once again call in officers from the state police, but justified this with appeals by the Reichsbanner Schwarz-Rot-Gold in *the Volksblatt*, in which the intervention of the Ministry of the Interior was announced and the workers were called upon to obey the orders of the police and not to allow themselves to be provoked.[47]Violent clashes between the polarizing political camps, in which weapons were increasingly used, now became a daily occurrence in Coburg. On July 21, 1931, during a scuffle between members of the NSDAP and workers in the market square, a National Socialist drew a revolver and threatened to shoot. A sergeant who arrived at the scene neither confiscated the weapon nor recorded the owner's personal details. [48]On the night of July 25, two National Socialists were attacked by 15 communists and presumably shot at with alarm guns. The next day, a group of at least six NSDAP men harassed two workers on Hutstraße. The mobile squad was summoned by a party member posing as a guard and was armed with alarm guns, dog whips, knives, snap hooks, and leather straps. Once again, the chief prosecutor had to admonish the blue police for not taking swift and decisive action and arresting anyone.[49]

In the official reports submitted by the police department to its superiors, insofar as it reported on the unrest at all, the blame for the clashes was always attributed to members of the SPD or KPD, thereby justifying its own actions.[50]Even though the obvious misconduct of the police officers was criticized by their superiors, it was nevertheless reinterpreted in line with the prevailing anti-socialist climate. Both the chief public prosecutor and the city commissioner and head of the district office, Dr. Fritsch, attributed the tense situation to the work carried out in particular by Klingler, a member of the state parliament, via the *Coburger Volksblatt newspaper*, which in the years when the Social Democrats, together with

44 Government of Upper and Middle Franconia to the State Ministry of the Interior, July 19, 1931. StABa K3/1967 1707.

45 See The District Office to the State Ministry of the Interior, Munich. September 18, 1931. StABa K3/1967 1707.

46 See Chief Public Prosecutor to the Attorney General of the Bamberg Higher Regional Court, August 15, 1931. StABa K3/1967 1707.

47 See *Coburger Volksblatt newspaper* dated July 25, 1931, and letter from the police department to the executive board of the Coburg district office, July 25, 1931. BayHStA MInn 71718.

48 See Franz Klingler to the State Ministry of the Interior, July 23, 1931. BayHStA MInn 71718.

49 See Chief Public Prosecutor to the Attorney General of the Bamberg Higher Regional Court, August 15, 1931, StABa K3/1967 1707.

50 See ibid. and Police Department to the Executive Board of the Coburg District Office, July 25, 1931. BayHStA MInn 71718.

democratic forces held a powerful position in Coburg, "they sowed the wind and now reap the whirlwind."(51)Nevertheless, the CoburgerVolksblatt, under the editorshipof Otto Voyes,did not relent in denouncing the behavior of the National Socialists and the reactions of the police department,(52) even when all higher authorities had decided to turn a blind eye. Nevertheless, under the editorship of Otto Voyes, the *Coburger Volksblatt* did not relent in denouncing the behavior of the National Socialists and the reactions of the police department·even though all higher authorities considered the reporting to be exaggerated·In the left-wing press·the "Nazi street terror" in Coburg also made headlines beyond the region.[55]While the bourgeois press hardly took notice of the clashes, the *Völkischer Beobachter* denounced a "Marxist smear campaign against Coburg,"[56]stylized the Coburg NSDAP and SA as victims of communist attacks, and relentlessly emphasized the impartiality of the Coburg police department.[57]

This widespread reinterpretation of events also had an impact on the practices of the police department. While members of the NSDAP, SA, and SS in particular stood out for their violent behavior and mistreatment was commonplace, the KPD, which had only about 30 members[58] and limited itself to putting up flyers and organizing demonstrations with a few dozen participants, was closely monitored. The danger of communist actions was constantly kept alive in the minds of the population and also of the authorities. Numerous rumors and false reports, spread by the NSDAP among others, created an omnipresent fear of left-wing riots. However, the police surveillance that became routine as a result did not yield any concrete results apart from minor provocative actions, such as the hoisting of the Soviet flag on the Bertelsdorfer Höhe.

"Anti-Semitism in action"

Against the backdrop of the NSDAP's position of power and its violent domination of urban areas, physical violence against Jewish Coburg residents had also taken on new dimensions and initiated "anti-Semitism in action." As groups of young SA men roamed the city district, the physical abuse of older Jewish Coburg residents in particular became a kind of test of courage in the right-wing camp, following a fixed pattern of behavior. Individual young men repeatedly broke away from the groups roaming the urban space, striking completely uninvolved Jewish passersby by surprise from ambush and then fleeing. In an effort to establish a "people's community" topography in the urban space, the attacks and harassment of individuals were now concentrated almost exclusively on the city center and its

51 The Chief Public Prosecutor to the Attorney General of the Bamberg Higher Regional Court, August 15, 1931 StABa K3/1967 1707.

52 See The Executive Board of the District Office to the State Ministry of the Interior in Munich, January 25, 1930. BayHStA MInn 71718; The Executive Board of the District Office to the State Ministry of the Interior in Munich,
September 18, 1931. StABa K3/1967 1707.

53 See, for example, *Coburger Volksblatt*, July 27, 1931.

54 See ibid. and Government of Upper and Middle Franconia to the State Ministry of the Interior, July 19, 1931. StABa K3/1967 1707.

55 See *Münchner Post*, July 27, 1931, *Oberfränkische Kreiszeitung*, July 24, 1931

56 *Völkischer Beobachter*, July 30, 1931.

57 See *Völkischer Beobachter*, August 5, 1931.

58 See Political Report of the Nuremberg Police Department for July 1931. StABa K3 Präs.Reg. No. 875 a.

59 See observation of the KDP by the Coburg police department. StadtACo A 8376.

Main traffic arteries. The city center in particular, with its symbolic locations that also embodied the center of Jewish trade and life, was marked as an area where the Jewish part of the population had to fear for its health and safety and should be avoided.

On May 11, Josef Altmann was walking with his wife along Bahnhofstraße when he was ambushed and struck in the face with a rubber truncheon. He subsequently complained of nervous shock. Simon Rothschild and his wife suffered the same fate while standing on the corner of Spitalgasse and Mohrenstraße, as did Mr. Sandler near his apartment on Nordlehne. Herrmann Ehrlich and his wife were pushed off the sidewalk on their way to Schlossplatz, and Heinrich Zucker and his wife were pushed into a shop window on Spitalgasse·Erich Braun, Siegfried Besser, Max Frank, and Wolf Baumwollspinner reported similar attacks on the street. In some cases, as in the case of Isidor Bissberg, young SA men also broke into the shops of Jewish owners and threatened them. At the same time, the inhibitions against hurling the slogan-like anti-Semitic insults and threats familiar from the *Weckruf* at Jewish fellow citizens face to face had fallen away. Mr. Altmann, for example, was told by a young man that although he was still here, he had better make sure he got to Jerusalem soon. Others were called "Saujude" (filthy Jew), "Judenhund" (Jew dog), or "Juda verrecke" (Juda die).[62]Mr. and Mrs. Besser were threatened with being visited at night and abused. Jewish residents who looked out of their apartment windows in the evening were harassed with shouts and insults, so that they shied away from such behavior in the future. In addition, damage to Jewish businesses also increased. Repeatedly, illuminated advertising signs, such as those at the shoe retailer Weiß und Sandler, were destroyed by stones being thrown at them, a window of Kuno Hirsch's office was smashed and swastikas were stuck on the office sign,[63] the Conitzer department store was pelted with gravel,[64] a pennant belonging to the German Doctors' Motorists' Association was stolen from a car parked in front of the house of the doctor Erich Braun at Spitalgasse 11, and the company sign at Elsbach and Co. was forcibly removed and smashed.[65] In addition, the lighting at the entrance to the synagogue was regularly damaged and rendered unusable.[66]

At the end of 1931, after Schwede became mayor of Coburg, the violence escalated once again. While arbitrary physical abuse from ambush and nighttime property damage continued unpunished, individuals were now being singled out and harassed, as had already been the case with political opponents. Dr. Alfred Masur, a medical officer and prominent complainant, became the focus of the attacks as chairman of the Jewish community. According to reports, the window pane of his practice at Mohrenstraße 26 was broken several times.

60 See Alfred Masur to the Bavarian District Office in Coburg, August 18, 1931. StadtACo A 8521.
61 See memo from the police department dated October 12, 1931. StadtACo A 8521.
62 See Julius Weiß to Alfred Masur, June 27, 1931; memo from the police department dated September 21, 1931. StadtACo A 8521.
63 See memo from the police department dated October 9, 1931. StadtACo A 8521.
64 See memo from the police department dated October 20, 1931. StadtACo A 8521.
65 See Erich Braun to the Criminal Investigation Department, July 9, 1931, and Elsbach und Co. Coburg to the Coburg Public Prosecutor's Office, September 16, 1931. StadtACo A 8521.
66 See Alfred Masur to the Bavarian District Office in Coburg, August 18, 1931. StadtACo A 8521.

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Fig. 40: Caricature of a "Jewish family" by Coburg artist Gustav Lütkemeyer

The door to his hallway was smashed in, his nameplate at the entrance was damaged, and the water supply to his apartment was repeatedly turned off. In the spring of 1932, he once again had to complain about a broken window pane in his study, several pieces of laundry hanging up were smeared with red paint, and he found a dagger stuck in his hallway door.[68] The placement of the dagger in particular was not only a symbolic threat to the safety and integrity of the medical officer, but also one that was more explicit than ever before. The break-in and the concrete intrusion into Masur's private sphere now crossed a new boundary, and the space of violence had been extended from the street to the apartments of Coburg's Jewish residents.

3.1.1.3 Reactive patterns of behavior

The Jewish victims initially continued to pursue legal action and file complaints. As the Coburg police department's delaying tactics became increasingly apparent, it was decided that the best course of action would be to collect the many individual cases and present them together. Both the Bavarian regional association of the Central Association of German Citizens of the Jewish Faith and the chairman of the Jewish community, Dr. Masur, lodged a complaint with the government of Upper Franconia in the summer of 1931. Supported by their belief in law and justice, they appealed with reference to the rule of law and the maintenance of law and order.

67 See memo from the police department dated February 4, 1932.
68 See police memo dated May 5, 1932.

to Bavaria's reputation at home and abroad. In addition to the many reports against unknown persons received by the police department, some of those affected even turned directly to Mayor Franz Schwede, who, at least for the sake of appearances, assured them that he would exert his influence on his party comrades.[69]However, the reality of the sluggish investigations and the lack of help from the police department caused the majority of the members of the Jewish community to lose faith in the functioning of the constitutional state in Coburg. While at the beginning of the anti-Semitic hostilities it was still clear from the letters of complaint that immediate and consistent intervention by the police was expected as a matter of course, as the violence continued, those affected became completely afraid to report it to the police in person. At the same time, it was obvious that resistance would not only have been futile, but also dangerous. Siegfried Besser wrote to Dr. Masur in June 1931: "If you are quick-witted and give such louts a physical lesson, you will have a whole horde on your back in the next few days."[70]

Ultimately, two strategies emerged among the Jewish population in response to the expansion of Nazi violence. On the one hand, Jewish life withdrew further into the private sphere. Large private celebrations such as weddings or anniversaries were increasingly no longer held in public spaces, but shifted entirely to the private sphere and the private homes of members of the Jewish community.[71] At the same time, the Jewish population of Coburg became increasingly reluctant to visit public institutions such as the theater or restaurants, as they feared being harassed or insulted on their way home. [72] On the other hand, they took the initiative to compensate for the authorities' failure to act. Individual Jewish victims of the violent acts set about investigating the perpetrators themselves, gathering evidence, and ultimately presenting the police with a solved case. This was the approach taken by Norbert Tannenzapf, for example, who was assaulted by three men with a whip and other hard objects in the underpass on Lossaustraße. made inquiries and contributed to the actual punishment of a NSDAP member, who was sentenced to a fine of 50 RM or ten days in prison.

During this phase of violence, Coburg city police officers not only covered up for the perpetrators, but also displayed their anti-Semitic attitudes more and more openly. Police Director Scheel insisted on rejecting complaints from the Jewish community, accusing Jews of being unreasonable and pompous, and cynically criticizing Coburg Jews for their lack of gratitude for the existing police protection. While he personally interviewed individual victims who came to see him and

69 See: The Regional Association of the Central Association of German Citizens of the Jewish Faith to the District Government of Upper Franconia, July 30, 1931; Alfred Masur to the Bavarian District Office in Coburg, August 18, 1931; Siegfried Besser to Alfred Masur, June 26, 1931. StadtACo A 8521.

70 See ibid.

71 See various applications for permits for private celebrations submitted to the police department. StadtACo A 8521.

72 See Alfred Masur to the Bavarian District Office in Coburg, August 18, 1931. StadtACo A 8521.

73 See memo from the police department dated October 8, 1931; interrogation transcript dated October 9, 1931. StadtACo A 8521.

When victims who wanted to file a complaint were denied his assistance, he was careful to portray their complaints to his superiors as unjustified and politically motivated against the police department. The police officers assigned to the cases also actively harassed some of the Jewish complainants and covered for each other in their actions. A normalization effect thus occurred in police work after the complaints of Jewish victims and the handling of such violent crimes became *administrative normality*.[76] This established a routine of procedure and action in which, initially, only perfunctory investigations were carried out and, in response to renewed complaints, the proceedings were maintained for appearances' sake. The Jewish accusers were heard again for appearances' sake, but no new investigations were actually conducted. Ultimately, the cases were forwarded to the public prosecutor's office, where they were dismissed, and the victims were always advised to file a private lawsuit.[77] In many cases, police officers did not feel responsible and sometimes refused to help those affected. Even when witnesses were able to name individuals who had participated in the attacks, these individuals usually faced nothing more than a warning. The city administration and the police department consistently took the position that the young men hanging around in the city center and the prevailing series of attacks did not endanger public safety and were therefore not in the public interest, which would have ultimately necessitated more consistent and criminal intervention on the part of the city police.[78]The perpetrators themselves were also instructed in this regard and, in cases where they could be located, always cited only personal motives for the harassment they had committed, making use of Jewish stereotypes.

In terms of public perception of the violent attacks, a normalization effect could ultimately be observed, whereby violence against Jewish citizens became an everyday occurrence, which strongly influenced the reactive behavior patterns of outsiders. In several cases, passersby witnessed acts of violence on the open street without intervening, even when specifically asked to do so by the victims.[80] It was also not uncommon for the perpetrators to be covered by the general public when, for example, property damage, such as at the Conitzer company in the city center, took place in heavy traffic and thus in full view of many people, without any dissenting voices being heard afterwards.[81] In some cases, such as after the insults against the Braun couple, passers-by even corroborated the statements of the perpetrators who had been tracked down, claiming that they were completely innocent. [82] Through their behavior, the passers-by or spectators of the violent acts showed solidarity and legitimacy towards the attackers, thereby becoming accomplices to self-empowerment. However, Jewish victims were not always left helpless. Particularly in attacks against older Jewish citizens of Coburg, the social norm of respect and honor was upheld by part of the population.

74 See memo from the police department dated September 7, 1931. StadtACo A 8521.
75 See Police Department to District Administrator Dr. Fritsch, September 9, 1931. StadtACo A 8521.
76 Gotto: Local Politics.
77 See, for example, Scheel's instruction of September 17, 1931. StadtACo A 8521.
78 See police department memos dated February 6 and 8, 1932. StadtACo A 8521.
79 See interrogation transcript dated October 9, 1931. StadtACo A 8521.
80 See Alfred Masur to the Bavarian District Office in Coburg, August 18, 1931. StadtACo A 8521.
81 See memo from the police department dated October 20, 1931. StadtACo A 8521.
82 See memo from the police department dated October 6, 1931. StadtACo A 8521.

violated the rules of conduct towards the elderly, so that they were outraged by the behavior of the attackers and provided information.[83] However, the case of Hermann Ehrlich showed that the moral courage shown towards Jewish victims did not last long and that the threat scenario in the unfolding space of violence was already very serious. Ehrlich had been helped by a young worker, who subsequently became a victim of violence himself at the hands of a group of National Socialists.

Withdrawal of police powers

The higher authorities, such as the district office and the government of Upper Franconia, found themselves under increasing pressure due to the manifold violations of the law and the corresponding lawsuits and complaints. As early as January 1930, Otto Voye had approached Minister of State Dr. Stützel, reported to him on the events in Coburg, and given him a choice: either he had to initiate state intervention, or the Coburg Social Democrats would be forced to take action to protect themselves. [5] In addition, Franz Klingler, a member of the state parliament, acted as a public complainant and denounced the Coburg police under Schwede not only in the *Coburger Volksblatt newspaper*, but also addressed Bavarian Interior Minister Stützel directly in order to prompt the state government to intervene. [86] As early as the summer of 1931, in view of the escalation of violence on the streets of Coburg, the government of Upper and Middle Franconia, in consultation with City Commissioner Dr. Fritsch, began to consider temporarily transferring all police powers to City Commissioner Fritsch in accordance with Article 52 of the Municipal Code and, if necessary, establishing a state police force.[87] However, it was not so much the growing violence against the Jewish section of Coburg's population and their progressively restricted legal rights that became the stumbling block, but rather the inability of the police department to restore peace and order on the streets of Coburg and to break up the escalating political riots. After consulting with Franz Schwede, the latter attempted to back down in order to avert government intervention and avoid having to relinquish power over the streets of Coburg. He held out the prospect of refraining from directly exercising his party activities in the office of mayor. [88] On July 27, 1931, District Administrator Dr. Fritsch finally spoke directly to the State Ministry of the Interior at a secret meeting in Munich to coordinate further action. However, thanks to the connections of Klingler, a member of the state parliament, to Munich, the district administrator's trip also became public knowledge in Coburg.[89] By now at the latest, Schwede was aware that empty words alone would not be enough to calm the situation. Although Dr. Fritsch continued to be very vague to the local Nazi leader about the plans of the

83 See Siegfried Besser to Alfred Masur, June 26, 1931; Julius Weiß to Alfred Masur, June 27, 1931. StadtACo A 8521.
84 See Alfred Masur to the Bavarian District Office in Coburg, August 18, 1931. StadtACo A 8521.
85 See Otto Voye to Minister of State Dr. Stützel, January 16, 1931. BayHStA MInn 71718.
86 See Chief Public Prosecutor to the Attorney General of the Bamberg Higher Regional Court, August 15, 1931. StABa K3/1967 1707.
87 See Government of Upper and Middle Franconia to the State Ministry of the Interior, July 19, 1931. StABa K3/1967 1707.
88 See ibid.
89 See District Office to the State Ministry of the Interior, Munich, September 18, 1931. StABa K3/1967 1707.

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government, there was a temporary easing of tensions. In the short term, disturbances of public order involving political opponents declined, and the municipal police followed the city commissioner's instructions without reservation, even when these were directed against the NSDAP and one of its organs. However, the attacks on the Jewish community continued unabated, and although Dr. Fritsch himself remarked to the State Ministry of the Interior that he was convinced "that when the time comes, the National Socialists will also ruthlessly use the municipal police as a political weapon" [90], the government refrained from intervening on the advice of the city commissioner. Although it was expected that the majority of the population would welcome the transfer of all police powers to state officials as a measure to restore peace and order in the streets of Coburg, such an intervention in the city's right of self-government still seemed too drastic at that time. Schwede himself had also personally spoken to Bavarian Interior Minister Stützel in this regard.

However, when a further escalation threatened before the election of the Reich President in March 1932 and rumors arose that Hitler wanted to follow the election day from Coburg and possibly seize power from here, the plan was finally put into action. On March 11, 1932, the city and First Mayor Schwede were temporarily stripped of their police powers, which were transferred to the district administrator and city commissioner Dr. Fritsch. From then on, the municipal police had to follow his instructions without restriction. Fritsch first conducted a thorough review of the entire security service in Coburg, set up a patrol service in all parts of the city, and increased the readiness of the state police.[93] As a result, there was indeed a brief decline in anti-Semitic violence, and the situation on the streets of Coburg temporarily calmed down.

From then on, Franz Schwede complained publicly that he had been accused completely unjustifiably and accused both the Jewish community and its leader Dr. Masur, as well as the workers and state parliament representative Klingler, of conducting a smear campaign against the Coburg NSDAP. The city council then passed a resolution by a majority vote objecting to the government's actions and demanding the immediate restoration of police powers. [94]In addition, the NSDAP parliamentary group appealed to the state parliament against the withdrawal of police powers and accused the state government of breaking the law. Interior Minister Dr. Stützel subsequently justified his decision by citing the increase in violence on Coburg's streets against political dissidents, the negligent behavior of municipal police officers, and the fact that Police Director Janzen had lost his job after taking action against the NSDAP.[96] The Coburg NSDAP responded with a resolution in the city council and once again lodged an objection to the decision of the Ministry of the Interior. In it, Schwede claimed, among other things, that the political disputes in Coburg were no more intense than

90 Ibid.
91 See minutes of the city council meeting of May 27, 1932. StadtACo A 8074.
92 See State Ministry of the Interior to the Coburg District Office, March 11, 1932. StABa K3/1967 1707.
93 See letter from the executive committee of the Coburg district office to the State Ministry of the Interior, March 12, 1932. StABa K3/1967 1707.
94 See minutes of the city council meeting of May 27, 1932. StadtACo A 8074.
95 See *Coburger Tageblatt*, June 18, 1932.

in other cities as well, that Janzens' transfer was not for political reasons and defended the Coburg city police under his leadership. Mayor Schwede also accused the Ministry of the Interior of damaging Coburg's reputation and thereby also affecting tourism. [96]Ultimately, the Ministry of the Interior kept its word and, after three months and once the election campaign disputes had subsided, transferred police authority back to the city and Mayor Schwede.

Immediately afterwards, in the summer of 1932, the Jewish community of Coburg had to endure a new wave of violence, which could now be understood as targeted acts of revenge, particularly against Dr. Masur. One such act was the attack on the synagogue in August 1932, where both the padlock on the entrance and the windows were pelted with more than a dozen stones and smashed. However, given the possibility of renewed intervention by the Ministry of the Interior, the NSDAP now made an effort to at least publicly deny responsibility for the attacks. The *Coburger Nationalzeitung* newspaper referred to a staged Nazi assassination attempt, which, as in other places in the Reich, was intended to discredit the NSDAP. The authorities also showed a little more initiative and offered a reward of 100 RM through the *Coburger Zeitung* for information leading to the prosecution of the perpetrators, which was to be awarded at the suggestion of the public prosecutor's office. Ultimately, however, the investigations came to nothing, so that the case had to be forwarded to the public prosecutor's office and closed.[97] From October 1932, it was once again necessary to assign police officers to the religious services of the Jewish community.

Ultimately, the constant attacks and direct acts of violence from the summer of 1931 onwards created a frame of reference in which violence against political opponents and Jews was an accepted course of action. The National Socialists underlined their claim to power by dominating urban areas with violence and imposing "people's community" hierarchies on them. The experience of violence became ritualized for those involved and normalized throughout society. The impact of this process became clear when, at the first peak of the riots in July 1931, high school students at a joint celebration proceeded to smash the windows of the Volkshaus, where the men's section of the Volkschor was holding its singing lesson, and it was only by chance that no one was injured.[98]

After street fights and hall battles had provided the SA and SS with their first opportunities to gain experience and exercise their power, allowing them to demonstrate their energy and combativeness as a form of personal crisis management strategy, from 1929 onwards violence was increasingly carried over into the Coburg population and the circle of victims constantly expanded. The violence used in this process had strengthened and stabilized both Nazi formations internally and formed them into fighting forces. A *communitarization through violence*[99] had thus already taken place in its inclusive and exclusive form before 1933, and the foundations for the independence of violent action had been laid.

96 See *Coburger Tageblatt* of July 16, 1932.
97 See memo from the police department dated August 15, 1932; *Coburger Zeitung* dated September 16, 1932.
98 See *Coburger Volksblatt newspaper* dated July 3, 1931.
99 Reichardt: Communitization.

3.1.2 Enthemmen: Establishment of the "beatings room" in 1933

3.1.2.1 The municipal emergency police

Following Hitler's "seizure of power" and the expansion of the NSDAP's decisive influence throughout the Reich, a new level of violence finally escalated in Coburg. Smaller actions against the empowerment of the National Socialists, such as a propaganda march by about 1,000 workers of *the Iron Front*, quickly petered out in the face of the wave of violence that was now breaking out. A small group of violent National Socialists now experienced a noticeable disinhibition. The first indication of this was an act of destruction motivated by anti-Semitism on the day Hitler was appointed Reich Chancellor. During a large celebration with a torchlight procession and a rally in the market square, in which about 500 people took part, riots broke out on the garden property of the Jewish doctor Dr. Gutmann on the Festungsberg. The entire interior of the garden house and the garden were vandalized. Already at this point, it became clear what outlet had opened up within the ranks of the NSDAP with its gain in power and how great the pent-up aggression behind it was.[101] Already at this point, Hans Rößler, a pastor in Coburg who had learned of the mistreatment of an SPD member while serving as a chaplain at the county hospital, warned "that the national uprising should not be desecrated by the dog whip in the hands of rough lads!" [102] Meanwhile, at the beginning of March 1933, the entire police force marched in close formation alongside the SA and SS at the ceremony marking the appointment of Franz Ritter von Epps as Reich Governor of Bavaria, thereby performatively underlining the subordination of the police force to the party.

Once again, the question of the exercise of police power and thus the monopoly of power in the city was an essential prerequisite for the unfolding disinhibition. During the political upheaval of 1933, the city police, in cooperation with the state police, was initially deployed by Dr. Fritsch from the end of February 1933 onwards, pursuant to § 7 of the "Ordinance for the Protection of the State and the People" of February 28, 1933, to conduct large-scale house searches of KPD members and confiscate communist publications.[104] At the same time, police arrests of KPD members took place as early as March 2, 1933, for which a specific order from the newly appointed Franz Xaver Ritter von Epp as Reich Commissioner in Bavaria was not issued until March 10 and 11. [105] The Coburg population was informed about the searches via the press.

The Coburg citizens' anti-socialism and fear of uprisings by the radical left were now expressed in numerous confidential reports to the police about alleged hideouts of communists or communist weapons caches, but these reports were mostly fruitless. In addition, Coburg residents appeared at the police station

100 See *Coburger Tageblatt* of February 13, 1933.

101 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, January 31, 1933, and *Coburger Volksblatt*, February 1, 1933. The *Coburger Nationalzeitung* announced: "The Jews, however, only peek timidly from behind their curtains, and the Reds, whose rule has now been broken once and for all, are silent and mute, their blasphemous mouths shut."

102 Rössler, Hans: Memories of the Church Struggle in Coburg. In: Yearbook of the Coburg Regional Foundation 20 (1975), pp. 151–178, here p. 156.

103 See instruction from the police department, March 9, 1933. StadtACo A 7870.

104 See District Administrator Dr. Fritsch to the Coburg City Council, March 3, 1933. StadtACo A 7870.

105 See memo from the police department dated March 3, 1933. StadtACo A 7870.

and demanded house searches of their neighbors whom they suspected of communist activities. In order to maintain its reputation, a hairdressing salon felt compelled to publicly announce in the newspapers that it had no connection whatsoever with the arrest of a communist hairdresser.[106]Both the police themselves and parts of the Coburg population now seemed to have fallen into a kind of persecution mania in their search for communists and their weapons caches, rigorously exploiting the new power they had gained in the wake of the National Socialists' "seizure of power" against political dissidents. Even on the street, suspects were arrested for
"standing on the sidewalk and obstructing traffic." [107] Mayor Schwede further fueled this mood, which had been stirred up by the NSDAP, when he called on the people of Coburg to be vigilant and to report any suspected subversive activity to the police immediately during a rally in the market square on March[21, the national holiday] marking the opening of the new Reichstag. A similar appeal had already been announced in the newspaper on March 15, 1933, following a meeting of the most important officials from the party and administration, between Mayor Schwede, government councilors Dr. Heydenreich and Dr. Zagel, police captain Siegel, SA standard-bearer Baczko, state parliament representative Dietrich, and police inspector Scheel.

The establishment of the Coburg emergency police force

The close ties between the NSDAP and the municipal administration, which had been institutionalized since 1929, and the power already accumulated by the NSDAP under Franz Schwede also made it possible to establish an emergency police force on March 2, 1933. This unit, established and organized by district leader Otto Schmidt, SS-Standartenführer Emil Mazuw, and SA-Standartenführer Fritz von Baczko, initially consisted of SS men based in the town hall and later also SA men in the district office. Emil Mazuw was given a room in the town hall specifically for this purpose, which placed the emergency police at the center of power in Coburg. After the dismissal and arrest of Dr. Fritsch as district administrator and the appointment of Baczkos as SA special commissioner for Coburg under Fritsch's successor Dr. Heydenreich, the district office was also completely under the control of the SA and its leader. As a municipal institution paid for by the city administration and supplied by the community kitchen in Ehrenburg, the emergency police force was subordinate to Mayor Schwede and was not identical to the auxiliary police force later ordered by the state and also established in Coburg, which consisted of SA, SS men, and *Stahlhelm members*. [110] Your

106 See *Coburger Tageblatt* of March 14, 1933.

107 See various file notes and investigation reports at StadtACo A 7870. As before, there was little actual potential danger to be seen in the Coburg KPD, so that searches of suspicious boxes, warehouses, or lockers usually yielded no results.

108 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung* of March 22, 1933.

109 See *Coburger Zeitung newspaper* dated March 15, 1933; file note from the police department dated March 15, 1933. StadtACo A 7870.

110 See memo from the police department dated April 10, 1933. StadtACo A 8386; StadtACo A 7864; Coburg State Police to the Public Prosecutor's Office at the Regional Court in Bamberg, November 16, 1949. StACo StAnw Co 900; Coburg State Police to the Public Prosecutor's Office at the Regional Court in Bamberg, May 25, 1950. StACo StAnw Co 900. The amount of food was determined by the city's welfare committee.

By mid-March, the force consisted of 59 SS and 53 SA men, most of whom were already workers and employees of the city and either easily dispensable or completely unemployed, thus making them fully available to the NSDAP for its purposes and providing them with a new task and sense of purpose. The emergency police officers had often already passed through the Coburg labor service camp and its social welfare militarism, where they had been socialized and pre-conditioned in accordance with Nazi ideology and subsequently joined the SS or SA. [112] The hierarchies of the SA and SS remained in place for the emergency police, so that orders were issued according to the usual chains of command. However, the emergency police officers were not equipped with police ID cards, armbands, or badges that would have identified them as auxiliary police officers. Without any instruction on their police duties or powers, and even without a proper oath of office or signature, the Coburg emergency police force was created as an instrument of arbitrariness and terror.

Equipped with this new power and publicly legitimized, armed SS and SA men, who had no training or expertise for this type of operation, now appeared as emergency police officers at the beginning of March and carried out police actions on their own. On several occasions, dangerous incidents occurred due to the incompetence and lack of experience of the emergency police officers, combined with their aggressiveness and radicalism. They were initially deployed to secure important facilities in the city and to patrol with regular police officers. On the night of March 8, for example, an SS guard fired at people he suspected were in some bushes and who did not stop immediately when he shouted at them. Shortly thereafter, an SS man aimed at a passenger car, which he mistook for a wanted vehicle. At the end of March, an SA man fired an uncontrolled shot while loading his weapon.

By mid-March at the latest, the emergency police were also involved in arbitrary "protective custody" arrests, searches, and the guarding of "protective custody prisoners" in cooperation with the police department.[116]The power of the NSDAP in the deployment of the emergency police became evident when Nazi city councilor Ernst Kuhn reported to the police station that a suspicious box had been brought to a worker's apartment and that this incident required an immediate house search. Completely misjudging his own position and his legal powers as a city councilor, Kuhn then led four SS men to the apartment in question, where they found only a projector in the box, which the worker in question had borrowed from the church.

111 No exact figures are available on the size of the emergency police force for the period from its establishment until March 14, 1933. See Coburg State Police to the Public Prosecutor's Office at the Regional Court in Bamberg, November 16, 1949. StACo StAnw Co 900.

112 See judgment of the Coburg Regional Court of September 17, 1951. StACo StAnw Co 907. See also Reichardt: Vergemeinschaftung, p. 121.

113 See Coburg State Police to the Public Prosecutor's Office at the Regional Court in Bamberg, November 16, 1949. StACo StAnw Co 900.

114 See file notes from the police department dated March 8 and 12, 1933. StadtACo A 7870.

115 See police memo dated March 31, 1933. StadtACo A 7870.

116 See Coburg State Police to the Public Prosecutor's Office at the Bamberg Regional Court, November 16, 1949; Coburg State Police to the Public Prosecutor's Office at the Bamberg Regional Court, May 25, 1950. StACo StAnw Co 900.

117 See memo from the police department dated March 14, 1933. StadtACo A 7870.

The emergency police increasingly acted on their own initiative with the tacit approval of the police department.[118]After a former sergeant had informed SS personnel about alleged KPD weapons caches, the SS began taking arbitrary steps to secure them in mid-March, so that the police department could only conclude from the frequent comings and goings of SS personnel from the police station guard room that the SS had become active.[119]This type of deployment of the SA and SS extended the NSDAP's sphere of power into the homes of opponents of the regime and accelerated the disenfranchisement of those who were "alien to the community." The scope for violent National Socialists to take the law into their own hands was expanded within the urban area.

"Protective custody" in March and April 1933

Violence escalated on the night of March 14-15, 1933, against Abraham Friedmann, who had been a central figure of hatred for the National Socialists, especially since the *Schwede affair* in 1929. He was taken from his home by several unknown SS men who, when he asked for a police arrest warrant, replied: "We are the police!"[120] In the Finkenauer Wäldchen, Friedmann was first tied to a tree and his execution was announced. The SS thugs then beat him unconscious and left him lying motionless. After Friedmann dragged himself home that night and was examined by Dr. Masur, while his apartment was continuously monitored by SA or SS guards, he had to be admitted to the county hospital for several days. His medical record listed the diagnosis as "nervous breakdown, consequences of blunt force trauma."[121] The extent of the hatred unleashed against him is evident from the fact that, while he was being abused, new troops repeatedly appeared at his home to drag him away and abuse him, only to have to leave disappointed.[122] The Coburg public prosecutor's office subsequently asked the Coburg city council who was currently exercising police authority within the city of Coburg. [123] The incident, which became public through the press, was indicative of the violence that had already been unleashed at that point.

This use of force was ultimately institutionalized in connection with the wave of "protective custody" measures that took place in March and April 1933, which were ordered in several meetings and through the joint efforts of Schwede, Mazuw, and Werner Faber. By establishing "protective custody" in the "Decree for the Protection of the People and the State" of February 28, 1933, the Nazi state had created a legal basis for state arbitrariness, while giving the municipal level considerable leeway in its actual interpretation and application.

118 As another institution with a monopoly on power, the Coburg unit of the Bavarian state police was also dissolved on March 16, 1933, so that the balance of power could be concentrated even more exclusively on the municipal emergency police.

119 See memo from the police department dated March 12, 1933. StadtACo A 7870.

120 This was testified to by his daughter Senta Friedenreich, who was present in the house at the time of her father's abduction. See affidavit by Senta Friedenreich, April 27, 1953. StANü Reparations Authority III a 3106.

121 See Abraham Friedmann's medical record. StACo StAnw Co 906.

122 See ibid.; *Coburger Tageblatt newspaper* dated March 14, 1933, and undated memo from the police department. StadtA-Co A 8521. It was not possible to determine whether the perpetrators were exclusively emergency police officers.

123 See Coburg Public Prosecutor's Office to the City Council, March 14, 1933. StadtACo A 7870.

space. [124] The arrests took place in a quasi-lawless space, where prisoners were helplessly at the mercy of the emergency police. In accordance with the decree of Reich Governor Epp, communist officials and Reichsbanner leaders were arrested first. After Dr. Fritsch was removed from office, however, this group of people was expanded to include Jews and ordinary members of the SPD, and later also members of the BVP, the Bavarian Royalist Party, and those who opposed the orders of the NSDAP, who were taken into "protective custody." Of the at least 150 documented "protective custody" cases, only 39 actually met the criteria of Epp's original directive.[125] The managing director of the agricultural trade association was arrested "for his own protection" after he failed to comply with the Reich President's call to fly swastika flags on all public buildings for the building of the Agricultural Council on the grounds that it was not a public building. [126]

More and more frequently, the SS and SA, which had divided the city and the district into two separate areas of persecution and power, carried out arbitrary arrests without a specific arrest warrant.[127]However since the police department often refused to accept the prisoners in these cases, or Dr. Heydenreich raised objections, and in order to maintain the appearance of legality, the
"Protective custody orders" were issued and submitted retrospectively, or prisoners were temporarily released and re-arrested shortly afterwards. [128] Maintaining the appearance of due process while acting arbitrarily towards those arrested was a hallmark of the early "protective custody" measures. When SS guards were posted at the retirement home of the preacher Hirsch von Mazuw and helped themselves to Hirsch's cigarettes, Schwede had a report made on the accused and their punishment, and Mazuw replaced the guards. Nevertheless, the empowerment of the SA and SS had led to more and more arbitrary actions. On March 29, retired industrial and naval engineer Klautzsch reported to Mayor Schwede that a truck carrying NSDAP men had arrived at his father-in-law Dr. Weiß's house and wanted to take him into "protective custody" as a Jew, even though he was not of the Jewish faith. Ultimately, it turned out that neither the SS nor the SA had given an order for such an arrest, but rather that some SA or SS men had mistakenly assumed that Dr. Weiß must be a member of the Jewish community because of the Jewish family of the same name in Coburg.[130] In the course of March 1933, the actual police force was increasingly sidelined in police arrests, temporarily even disarmed, and the monopoly on the use of force in dealing with opponents of the regime was completely transferred to the SS and SA. [131]

124 On the practice of "protective custody" in Upper Franconia, see Hofmann: Oberfranken, pp. 157–168.
125 See indictment by the Chief Public Prosecutor of Coburg dated July 15, 1950. StACo StAnw Co 900.
126 See memo from the police department dated March 18, 1933. StadtACo A 7870.
127 See memo from the police department dated March 12, 1933. StadtACo A 7870.
128 See judgment of the Coburg Regional Court dated September 17, 1951. StACo StAnw Co 907.
129 See memo from the police department dated March 16, 1933. StadtACo A 7870.
130 See letter from retired naval architect Klautzsch to Mayor Schwede, March 29, 1933, and letter from Mayor Schwede to retired naval architect Klautzsch, April 5, 1933. StadtACo A 7870.
131 In the postwar period, Coburg police officials stated that they did not intervene because the incidents were political in nature. See various statements in the trial against August Rittweger. Minutes of the public hearing at the Coburg Regional Court on April 12, 1948. StACo Regional Court 315.

3.1.2.2 Torture practices in the town hall and district office

Against this backdrop, a practice of torture became established in the treatment of "protective custody prisoners" in the rooms of the district office at Allee 7 and the so-called *Alte Herberge (old hostel)* in Coburg Town Hall, which belonged to the police administration, was used to accommodate homeless people or traveling craftsmen, and consisted of detention rooms and a guard room.[132]After the SS had initially used the *Alte Herberge* as a guardroom, Mayor Schwede ordered on March 20, 1933, that the rooms be converted into a prison, as the detention cells in the state police barracks and in the district court prison were overcrowded due to the large number of arbitrary arrests.[133]Mazuw ordered that the SS and SA should no longer be on duty at the main police station, but only at the *Alte Herberge*, and that police officers were no longer allowed access there, so that they were completely removed from police supervision, which reacted with increasing helplessness to the unrestricted exercise of power by the SA and SS. On March 21, a decree was issued by Interior Minister Wagner prohibiting any political surveillance of the NSDAP, which further opened the door to arbitrariness on the part of the emergency police.

The first violent excesses were directed against workers and politically active members of the Jewish community. Dr. Erich Braun, a member of the SPD and chief physician in the Workers' Samaritan Federation, was accused of communist agitation and arbitrarily arrested by the emergency police in his home. He was taken to the *Alte Herberge* and mistreated to such an extent that he had to be admitted to hospital and, in addition to visible bruises, was diagnosed with depression.[135] Dr. Martin Baer, who had campaigned for the DDP after the war, suffered a similar fate when he was beaten unconscious with rubber truncheons in the town hall on March 12 and taken to hospital with concussion. [136] An SS operation in Unterlauter also resulted in the severe mistreatment of workers in a restaurant.[137] These events can be seen as a kind of dress rehearsal for a ritualized practice of violence that followed a recurring pattern shortly thereafter. The NSDAP's treatment of political opponents in 1933 was characterized less by spontaneous outbreaks of violence than by targeted acts of disenfranchisement aimed at degrading and intimidating their victims and beating the unrestricted power of the National Socialists into the bodies of their enemies.

132 The *old hostel* at Rosengasse 1 consisted of several floors. The actual hostel and two family apartments were located on the first floor. On the second floor, which was connected to the town hall by a corridor, the prisoners' room was set up and a smaller storage room was also used as a detention room. The actual "flogging room," the guard room for the SS troops, was accessible via a staircase on the third floor. The building complex was demolished in 1938 to make way for the new savings bank building. See judgment of the Coburg Regional Court of September 17, 1951. StACo StAnw Co 907.

133 See memo from the police department dated March 20, 1933. StadtACo A 7870.

134 See memo from the police department dated March 22, 1933. StadtACo A 7870.

135 See medical certificate dated March 31, 1933, and medical records of Dr. Erich Braun. StACo StAnw Co 906. For more on Erich Braun, see also Fromm: Jews, pp. 234–241, and Richardi, Hans-Günther: School of Violence. The Dachau Concentration Camp 1933–1934. Munich 1983, pp. 164–169.

136 See medical record of Dr. Martin Baer. StACo StAnw Co 906.

137 See Coburg State Police to the Public Prosecutor's Office at the Regional Court in Bamberg, November 16, 1949. StACo StAnw Co 900.

The prerequisites for the dynamics that were now unfolding were, on the one hand, the empirical knowledge gained between 1929 and 1933 and, on the other hand, an escalation mechanism inherent in the organization of the emergency police. The normalization of violence, the seizure of urban space and the inscription of "people's community" hierarchies in it, a perceived or actual freedom from sanctions in the absence of penalties, and the ideologically based emotional distance and conviction of the inferiority of the victims brought together several conditions for the creation of a space of violence. The tolerance of previous acts of violence had already suspended the existing constitutional order before 1933, and the use of violence had already been practiced. [138]Now, the regulatory power had also decided to use its monopoly on violence to terrorize opponents of the regime.[139] Whereas before 1933 group dynamics had played a decisive role in self-empowerment, and the "cloverleaf" of four notorious, extremely violent and anti-Semitic SS thugs had been responsible for some of the abuses with the deliberate tolerance of the NSDAP leadership,[140] Schwede, Faber, Mazuw, and Baczko now institutionalized excessive violence. Even though, similar to the later pogrom violence, the events were later portrayed as acts of revenge that arose from the effect, it was a deliberately accepted escalation that was intended to underline the NSDAP's claim to absolute power. Mayor Faber had procured dog whips and rubber cables for the SS teams for their service in the *Old Hostel*, which were used as instruments of torture. Added to this was the lack of rank differentiation, legal instruction, or issuance of other rules of conduct to the members of the emergency police, which gave free rein to controlled lawlessness and promoted a deliberate disinhibition of previously pent-up aggression and desire for revenge. The consumption of alcohol and the joint drinking binges of the emergency police officers in the run-up to the abuses had an accelerating effect. Although SS and SA superiors did not participate in these, they tolerated them.

Abuse at the Coburg District Office

The actual abuse was perpetrated exclusively by members of the emergency police. Emil Mazuw and Fritz von Baczko, who had themselves been appointed as auxiliary police officers, did not participate in the violent excesses, but had violent subordinates in August Rittweger and Arno Fischer, to whom they granted power of disposal and the necessary freedom. In the district office, interrogations were carried out primarily under the deputy SA special commissioner Fischer, who, due to his desire for recognition in the city, had the nickname
"Pimperle Wichtig" (Mr. Important), conducted interrogations that followed a fixed pattern of violence

138 Both the members of the emergency police and the Coburg Nazi officials expected a subsequent amnesty for the abuses committed in 1933. See Coburg Public Prosecutor's Office to the Attorney General at the Bamberg Higher Regional Court, April 22, 1933. Reprinted in: Schütz, Justiz, p. 243 f.

139 See Baberowski; Metzler: Gewalträume, p. 24 f.

140 See interrogation of August Rittweger on April 13, 1949. StACo StAnw Co 78. The Kleeblatt consisted of SS men Curt Mahr, Reinhold Degwitz, Rudolf Bartenstein, and Josef Gazer. Rudolf Bartenstein later became SS guard commander in the "Prügelstube" and died in an accident at the freight station. See *Neue Presse*, August 30, 1947.

141 See Coburg State Police to the Public Prosecutor's Office at the Regional Court in Bamberg, November 16, 1949. StACo StAnw Co 900.

In particular, political opponents from the surrounding rural communities were brought to the district office for questioning about subversive activities or weapons caches. Whenever Fischer was dissatisfied with the prisoners' answers or they refused to answer, he counted to three and tapped his desk with a pencil, whereupon SA men positioned behind a screen jumped out with striking tools and maltreated their victims. The prisoners' heads were always pressed to the floor, their mouths closed, and their feet held down. The constant presence of the thugs behind the backs of those being interrogated embodied a continuous threat scenario that was part of the psychological violence used during the interrogations.[142]As a further means of intimidation and to create an atmosphere of threat, prisoners awaiting interrogation were placed in the anteroom of the interrogation room in such a way that they could already hear the interrogations and abuse of their fellow prisoners. Upon entering the room, the Hitler salute, which only gradually began to establish itself as a form of greeting among the population after 1933, was used as the first element of a demonstration of power. If the workers brought in for interrogation did not greet with "Heil Hitler," they were immediately mistreated, had to leave the room, and re-enter. This procedure was repeated until the persons concerned complied with the coercion. An arrested member of the Bavarian People's Party, who had complained that money had been stolen from his wallet during the confiscation, was taken away and mistreated until he withdrew his accusations during a renewed interrogation. At the end of the abuse, bowls of water were provided so that the victims could wash away traces of blood before leaving the room. If the victims were no longer able to do so, women who had attended the interrogations or waited in the anteroom took over. Several of the victims had to be admitted to hospital as a result and were unable to work for a long time due to the severity of their injuries.

Excessive violence in the "beating room"

The SS carried out their abuse in the guard room of the *Old Hostel*, which soon became known as It became known as the "beating room" or "kingdom of heaven." Under August Rittweger, a practice of violence was established that aimed even more than the district office to degrade its victims. In particular, political opponents such as SPD city councilor Christian Reichenbecher, KPD leaders Christian Hagelgans and Fritz Schamberger, and SPD chairman from Rodach, Edwin Endert, were to be stripped of any will to resist.[145] Here, the abuse was usually carried out before the actual interrogations, and direct violence began immediately after entering the "beating room" in order to make the victims instantly aware of the arbitrariness of the emergency police and their complete lack of rights. This was usually followed by Mazuw or the second mayor, Faber, in an interrogation room in the town hall.

142 See: Chief Public Prosecutor at the Coburg Regional Court to the Attorney General at the Bamberg Higher Regional Court, October 15, 1953. StACo StAnw Co 77.

143 See indictment by Dr. Herold dated October 10, 1956. StACo StAnw Co 77.

144 See Christian Reichenbecher's denazification file. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg City R 56.

145 Since Franz Klingler was in the hospital in March 1933, his son Otto Klingler was held in custody for him under the principle of Sippenhaftung (kin liability). Franz Klingler died on July 15, 1933, after being dismissed from the board of the Coburg State Foundation a week earlier.

[146]After being tortured, the victims were usually thrown down a flight of stairs and placed in a separate prison cell, where their blood-covered bodies were intended to give their fellow prisoners a foretaste of what would soon happen to them. At the same time, the walls, covered with pools of blood and splatters of blood and feces, provided information about what was happening in the "beating room," and the screams of the abused and the sound of blows penetrated the walls, so that everyone waiting could hear them. Through measures such as these, the room of violence that was set up with the "beating room" in the middle of downtown Coburg was already present for many of the prisoners before they became victims of actual, immediate violence, and even those prisoners who were able to leave the *Alte Herberge* without physical injuries were marked by their experiences.

Several elements were used in the "beating room" to humiliate, harass, and wear down the prisoners. After interrogation, prisoners had to walk through a gauntlet of SS men who beat them with rubber truncheons. Others were placed in a circle of SS men in the "beating room," pushed back and forth like a ball, and beaten with objects and pistols until they collapsed. Some emergency police officers had the prisoners clean their shoes, instructed them to sweep the room under their supervision, and abused them if they were not satisfied with the results. A newcomer, a Social Democrat, was ordered by Rittweger to make kindling from rough pieces of wood with his bare hands, which he failed to do without tools. In addition, he had to pick up sausage skins that had fallen under a table, receiving a lash on his buttocks every time he bent down.[148]During the abuse, Rittweger also made it a sadistic habit of giving numbers to the SS men who were beating the prisoners, which then determined the number of blows that were carried out "in time with the threshing flails, as in threshing"[149]. In some cases, prisoners were also ordered to beat other prisoners with a whip. Even while in the prisoners' room, the "protective custody prisoners" were targeted by armed guards from morning to night and threatened with spontaneous shootings in order to emphasize the complete arbitrariness and power of the SS. In addition, a

146 Franz Schwede himself was only marginally involved in the interrogation practices. Due to his obligations as deputy president of the Bavarian state parliament and election speaker for the NSDAP, he was often not present in Coburg during the abuses, but had handed over the reins to Faber, Mazuw, and special commissioner von Baczko. Nevertheless, he was demonstrably present at the decisive meetings, intervened several times in interrogations, inspected the prisoners' quarters, and had himself briefed on the progress in the treatment of opponents of the NSDAP via lists of prisoners. See indictment of the Chief Public Prosecutor of Coburg dated July 15, 1950. StACo StAnw Co 900. After the duties of the city commissioner were transferred to him on April 1, it was also the responsibility of Schwede or his deputy Faber, who can be regarded as the driving forces behind the torture practices established in Coburg, to issue the "protective custody orders" and release certificates. See judgment of the Coburg Regional Court of September 17, 1951. StACo StAnw Co 907.

147 See interrogation of Dr. Engel in Jerusalem on May 19, 1955. StACo StAnw Co 77. In the post-war trials dealing with the violent excesses of 1933, 85 "protective custody prisoners" were found to have suffered the most cruel abuse. See Coburg State Police to the Public Prosecutor's Office at the Regional Court in Bamberg, May 25, 1950. StACo StAnw Co 900.

148 See various witness statements in the judgment of the Coburg Regional Court of September 17, 1951. StACo StAnw Co 907.

149 Statement by Fritz Junghans. Judgment of the Coburg Regional Court of September 17, 1951. StACo StAnw Co 907.

A particularly perfidious practice of mock executions was established, in which prisoners were told that they had been sentenced to death by a court and would shortly be taken to the basement to be shot. The psychological terror was embellished in every detail, with the alleged death row inmates choosing their last meal, writing to their relatives, and expressing their last wishes shortly before the shooting. The prisoners were then lined up in small groups in front of a wall and targeted with rifles. After repeatedly loading and unloading the weapons, it was announced that the execution had been postponed to another time, and those affected were taken back to the prisoners' room, where they had to wait again for their execution.

The leeway that individual SS thugs had in this process becomes clear when individual "protective custody prisoners" were placed under the personal protection of SS-Sturmbannführer Mazuw and were not mistreated or quickly released again. Schwede himself is said to have intervened on behalf of his naval comrade Otto Voye, whose admission to the Dachau concentration camp was prevented. At the same time, individual emergency police officers also settled old scores and, against the backdrop of the prisoners' complete powerlessness, satisfied personal desires for revenge due to neighborhood disputes, previous fights, or complaints filed against them.[152] SS men who were not members of the emergency police were also granted access to the "beating room," where they were given free rein to carry out the abuse. [153]

In most cases, the torture pushed the victims to the limits of their physical and psychological endurance—just enough for them to survive. Many of those who were abused suffered permanent kidney damage from the beatings and urinated black blood for weeks afterward. Surgery was often necessary in the hospital when bruises had to be opened. Many victims also suffered ruptured eardrums as a result of blows to the head. [154] Time and again, prisoners were beaten until they lost consciousness, then doused with a bucket of cold water or briefly taken away, only to have to endure the next round of torture shortly afterwards. Many prisoners had to endure one violent outburst after another for days and weeks on end and – deliberately provoked by their tormentors – live in constant fear of their next visit to the "beating room." It was certain that even after their release, the victims of the "beating room" would be forever marked by the severity of the beatings and the

150 See, for example, statements by Edwin Endert and Christian Hagelgans. Judgment of the Coburg Regional Court of September 17, 1951. StACo StAnw Co 80 and statement by Christian Reichenbecher. Indictment by the Chief Public Prosecutor of Coburg dated July 15, 1950. StACo StAnw Co 900 and judgment of the Coburg Regional Court dated September 19, 1951. StACo StAnw Co 907.

151 In these cases, the prisoners often received a kind of "letter of protection" that shielded them from abuse. See statement by Rudolf Höhn. Judgment of the Coburg Regional Court dated September 17, 1951. StACo StAnw Co 907. SPD city councilor Ludwig Meyer was also spared abuse by SS officer Günther thanks to a fabricated order from Schwede. See statement by Ludwig Meyer. Judgment of the Coburg Regional Court of September 17, 1951. StACo StAnw Co 907.

152 See statement by Albert Brunn. Judgment of the Coburg Regional Court of September 17, 1951. StACo StAnw Co 907 and Schütz, Johann: Justice in the "Third Reich." Documentation from the district of the Bamberg Higher Regional Court, Bamberg 1984, p. 32.

153 See Coburg State Police to the Public Prosecutor's Office at the Regional Court in Bamberg, November 16, 1949. StACo StAnw Co 900.

154 See various medical records. StACo StAnw Co 906.

marked by experiences of absolute arbitrariness and helplessness. Some individuals were unable to recover psychologically from the events and had to be admitted to an institution. [155] Martin Mannheimer, who had to be admitted to hospital due to depression and suicidal tendencies and could only lie there moaning and groaning, wrote to his sister:

> "I can't stand this condition much longer. My nerves, which had already been under strain for some time, are shot. What have I done to deserve this, that I and our entire family are suddenly being crushed by fate like this? Is it the fault of our parents and grandparents that they couldn't break away from the so-called chosen people, with whom we no longer had anything to do, either mentally or personally, or was it our own lack of initiative, our inability to find the courage to break away? After our entire upbringing and our entire attitude toward the environment, everyone who knew us and still knows us personally knows that we are just as attached to our Germany and love our homeland just as much as our friends who have recognized us until now. And now it's all supposed to be over. I am desperate. Is there no one left who believes in us?" [156]

During the abuse, some prisoners also had their teeth deliberately knocked out and their hair shaved off. In addition to the violence actually inflicted, these measures were a visible and initially permanent sign of humiliation and symbolically demonstrated the power over the bodies of political opponents. This stigmatizing humiliation made the exclusion of the now "outsiders"
"aliens to the community" and the proof of the NSDAP's unlimited power remained visible even beyond the "beating room."

Repeated transfers robbed the prisoners of any sense of time and space. Many prisoners first had to endure abuse at the district office and then a stay in the "beating room" in the *old hostel*. Afterwards, the "protective custody prisoners," unless they had to be admitted to a hospital first, were usually transferred to the youth hostel, which Schwede had requisitioned on March 24 for their accommodation.[157] They remained there until they had regained some strength and were then released or transferred directly to the Dachau concentration camp, which had opened on March 22, 1933, the Hassenberg prison camp near Sonnefeld, or other prisons.[158]Upon their release, which usually took place at the police station in the presence of Schwede, the "protective custody prisoners" were instructed that from then on they were only allowed to leave the Coburg district with special permission, were no longer allowed to enter pubs, and had to report to the police station every day at 6 p.m. Any actions against the Nazi state or propaganda for parties that opposed the new government would be punished with police custody.

155 See: Coburg State Police to the Public Prosecutor's Office at the Coburg Regional Court, May 25, 1950. StACo StAnw Co 900.

156 Martin Mannheimer to his sister S. Klein. StACo StAnw Co 906. Emphasis in the original.

157 See Schwede's order of March 24, 1933. StadtACo A 7864.

158 In the spring of 1933, a "protective custody camp" was set up for three months in the castle in Hassenberg in the district of Coburg for 25 "protective custody prisoners" from Neustadt near Coburg, who came from the SPD and KPD circles, after the premises in Coburg had proved insufficient. See Thum, Horst: Das Schutzhaftlager Hassenberg bei Neustadt (Coburg). In: Benz, Wolfgang; Distel, Barbara (eds.): Herrschaft und Gewalt. Frühe Konzentrationslager 1933–1939. Berlin 2002, pp. 231–235.

and transfer to a concentration camp. [159] The "protective custody" of Edwin Endert, chairman of the Rodach SPD local group, is a prime example of the sequence of events in an odyssey of arrests and transfers. He was arrested for the first time on March 10, taken to the police station in Coburg, then to the district court prison, and released again. His second arrest took place on
March 23, where he was initially mistreated at the district office and then at the *Alte Herberge*. After a stay in the detention rooms of the youth hostel, he was taken back to the *Alte Herberge*, then to the district court prison, and [finally] transferred to Dachau, where he was interned until January 4, 1934.

3.1.2.3 Reactions and aftermath

It was not uncommon for workers to be given a set of rules of conduct by Mazuw or Schwede upon their dismissal, which were intended to characterize their future behavior, or to state on record upon their dismissal that they were resigning from their positions in the SPD and leaving the party.[161] At the latest after their stays in Dachau, the police department finally achieved success in its surveillance of political opponents of the Nazi regime. According to police reports, KPD leader Hagelgans, for example, had undergone a "political change in a pro-government direction," while others complied with all orders, at least outwardly, and gave no cause for suspicion of subversive activities.[162] FormerReichsbanner leader Reichenbecher was said to now support the ideas of National Socialism [163] and, according to the police department, the Social Democratic leaders also showed signs of sincere cooperation and had abandoned their hostile attitude toward the Nazi state.[164] The police department later reported that the Jewish residents of Coburg were no longer politically active and therefore did not need to be held accountable in any way.[165] The SS had directed its hatred particularly toward the members of the Jewish community. Fellow prisoners later described the abuse suffered by the 39 Jewish prisoners as particularly brutal and humiliating. They were only allowed to enter the "beating room" wearing their underwear. Siegfried Kohn, for example, had to perform calisthenics in front of an overheated oven and was beaten whenever his movements did not please the SS. August Rittweger also promised the arrested Jews that he would spare them from beatings if they paid for beer for him and his team. Although they did so, none of them were spared the beatings of the drunken guards. The abuse culminated at the beginning of the Jewish Passover, which fell on Good Friday. The suicide attempt by the chairman of the Jewish community, Dr. Masur, who in his desperation tried to slit his wrists in the prisoners' room of the *old hostel*, shows how pervasive the arbitrariness of the SS's treatment was.

159 See notes by Franz Schwede dated April 2 and 7, 1933. StadtACo A 7870.
160 See statement by Edwin Endert. Judgment of the Coburg Regional Court dated September 17, 1951. StACo StAnw Co 907.
161 See, for example, minutes of the Coburg Police Department dated March 22, 1933. StadtACo A 8383.
162 See report by the Coburg Police Department, January 18, 1935. StadtACo A 8376.
163 See report by the Coburg Police Department, November 27, 1934. StadtACo A 8376.
164 See Police Department to the Executive Board of the Coburg District Office, November 27, 1934. StadtACo A 8376.
165 See report from the Coburg Police Department, January 19, 1935. StadtACo A 8376.

to cut open. [166] The case of Dr. Joachim Engel, a physician practicing in Neustadt near Coburg, is another example of the severity of the abuse suffered by Jewish prisoners. The father of Deputy Mayor Faber, Dr. Faber, a medical officer practicing in Neustadt, had repeatedly come into conflict with his Jewish colleague Engel over professional matters and now used his son's power to take action against his rival. It was ostensibly claimed that abortions allegedly performed by Dr. Engel had caused such unrest among the population that Dr. Engel had to be arrested for his own protection. He was arrested on
On March 22, 1933, he was taken from his office by the SA under Arno Fischer and brought to Coburg. Already on the way there, the accompanying members of the SA emergency police brutally beat him with wooden clubs and steel rods in a forest near Oeslau. At the *Alte Herberge*, he was finally taken over by the SS and tortured again for several days until he lost consciousness. Fellow prisoners report that during a visit by Schwede to the prisoners' room at the *Alte Herberge*, he was sleeping on the floor under a table and kissed the mayor's boots, begging him on his knees to spare him further abuse. Dr. Klauser, who treated him after his stay in the "beating room," reported a high fever and deep black-blue discoloration on his back, thighs, and buttocks. The doctor drained 1.5 liters of dark blood from these areas. As a result, Dr. Engel had almost completely lost hearing in his right ear, had limited movement in his left knee, and was restricted in his mobility due to scars on his buttocks and tumors on his testicles.

Public perception of violent practices

While in "protective custody," the members of the Jewish community were ultimately forced to sign a statement drafted in the name of Hermann Hirsch, which was published in the *Coburger Nationalzeitung* on March 31. It read:

> "Public statement against hate propaganda: In view of the hate propaganda in the foreign press, I hereby officially declare on my own behalf and on behalf of all Jewish prisoners in protective custody that all rumors and atrocities, etc., are completely fabricated and untrue. We protest in the strongest terms against the incitement of the foreign press, which only seeks to cast the National Socialist movement in a bad light and discredit it in the eyes of the general public. We demand that these misleading rumors not only be stopped immediately, but also be openly and clearly refuted. We can demand this all the more because we ourselves are in protective custody and can speak from our own experience."[168]

The statement was a response to public reports in the Dutch media, which had been fed accounts of the events in the "beating room" by emigrants from Coburg. Curt Blüth, who had emigrated to the Netherlands, whose father Julius Blüth was co-owner of the department store K. M. Fechheimer & Co. in

166 See witness statements in the Coburg Regional Court ruling of September 17, 1951. StACo StAnw Co 907.
167 See Chief Public Prosecutor at the Coburg Regional Court to the Attorney General at the Higher Regional Court in Bamberg, November 25, 1947, and October 15, 1953. StACo StAnw Co 77. Engel was later questioned in the trial against Arno Fischer in Israel, so that the abuse he perpetrated can be traced in detail compared to many others.
168 *Coburger Nationalzeitung* newspaper, March 31, 1933.

Spitalgasse had been able to convince the police officers to arrest him instead of his father. Julius Blüth had suffered a minor stroke during the planned arrest, so his son, who was visiting Coburg, had stepped in to protect him. After Curt Blüth was released from the *Alte Herberge*, he fled with his parents to exile in the Netherlands, had his injuries documented by a doctor, and, thanks to the mediation of Samuel van den Bergh, the director of Unilever, reported them to the German ambassador, who passed them on to Berlin. At the same time, on March 29 or 30, Abraham Asscher, one of the most influential Dutch Jews and chairman of the Council of the Jewish Community of Amsterdam, addressed the German Reich on Dutch radio for five minutes, asking: "Mr. Goebbels, Mr. Goebbels, what is going on in Coburg?"[169]

Other prisoners also had to sign a statement assuring that they had not been harmed and obliging them to maintain silence about the events at the
"protective custody." Such a declaration had become necessary, among other things, because rumors of the abuse had spread throughout the city. The bourgeois daily press had repeatedly reported soberly that various people who had been injured during the arrests were in the county hospital.[170] Individual SA or SS men boasted about their deeds while drinking in the pub, and in addition, the cries of pain from the victims could be clearly heard at night in the vicinity of the "beating room." A local resident also reported that he was able to see into the "beating room" through a window of his apartment and that blood splatters reaching up to the ceiling were visible.[171] Rumors also reached the rural communities, so that the Coburg police station received reports from the police station in nearby Küps that Coburg residents were saying in the inn that Jews were being beaten up several times a day in the city. Arrests were made repeatedly after individuals reported seeing the "beating room." [172]The events at the *Alte Herberge* became an open secret in Coburg and beyond. Initially, there were no outcries from the population that would have had any real consequences for the SS and SA. A resident living near the town hall complained about the noise at night and asked Nazi city councilor Link to ensure that the neighborhood was at least quiet during the Easter holidays. One or more individuals approached Dean Weiß of Coburg anonymously and demanded that he use his authority and obligation to show charity to put a stop to the beatings.

169 The report on the reactions in Holland is taken from the memoirs of Curt Blüth. Contemporary sources only refer to "the inflammatory propaganda in the foreign press." See Testimony of Curt Blueth, born in Coburg, Germany, regarding his experiences in Coburg and the Netherlands. Yad Vashem 0.3/941.

170 See *Coburger Tageblatt newspaper* dated March 14, 1933.

171 After the SS cleared out the *Alte Herberge*, the municipal housing office allocated the SS men's guard room to a municipal worker, among other things. The worker later reported that "the ceilings, walls, and floors of the punishment room were completely covered in blood splatters. Individual straw mattresses on the bunks in the accommodation rooms were completely soaked in blood, and there were several dried pools of blood on the floor." For this reason, he did not dare to hire a craftsman to do the whitewashing work, but carried it out himself. See judgment of the Coburg Regional Court of September 17, 1951. StACo StAnw Co 907.

172 See daily report from the Coburg police department to the city commissioner dated December 19, 1933. StadtACo A 7868.

> You are the head of the Protestant Church here. Among your atrocities, reminiscent of the dark Middle Ages, is an indelible stain on Coburg and its current rulers. What have you done to date to atone for these terrible crimes? The historian will one day mention your name and ask about your actions today. Surely, dear Dean, you can exert a healing influence on the mayor. You and your colleagues can calm the incited masses from your sacred place. Even if the victims are not all devout churchgoers, even if a large proportion of the poor belong to other faiths, it is still the duty of human beings, the duty of charity, which you always preach, to help them. You can do it. You have a press at your disposal that can enlighten people. You have many opportunities to help. I hope that my words will not go unheard and that I will soon hear of your efforts on behalf of the innocent prisoners in the city, so that trust in God and in you, Father, will grow. On behalf of many citizens" [173]

Despite obtaining handwriting samples from suspects and an expert opinion in which a psychoanalytical evaluation was carried out and an older Catholic woman was suspected of being the author of the letter, the investigation into the author remained unsuccessful. [174]The majority of those who knew about it legitimized the acts of violence by looking away and remaining silent.

The justification of the "protective custody"

Nevertheless, Franz Schwede considered it appropriate to publicly justify the "protective custody" and, indirectly, the abuse that had been carried out. In a speech on the national holiday on March 21, he cited the case of a communist from Oldenburg who had been imprisoned in Coburg for allegedly stabbing an SA man to death and who was said to have been involved in distributing leaflets in Oldenburg calling for murder.[175] The Oldenburg journeyman, who had been proven to have been falsely accused and had been tortured into making a false confession in the "beating room," had to serve as a public example of the communist danger. In this context, Schwede allegedly also said: "What's the big deal if someone gets their ass kicked once?" [176]At the same time, the *Coburg National Newspaper* announced on March 25 under the headline "Protect your women and girls! A practical chapter on anti-Semitism," the arrest of Hermann Baumwollspinner, the son of shop owner Wolf Baumwollspinner, who was charged with allegedly "continued crimes of rape and lewd acts." By stirring up anti-Semitic resentment, the action against members of the Jewish community was to be made to appear appropriate and necessary. Alleged broad support for the KPD by the Jews of Coburg was used as a further argument to emphasize the conjured-up anti-Semitic danger in the city and to portray the actions of the NSDAP as an outburst of indignation in response to this.

173 Anonymous letter to Dean Weiß, undated. StadtACo A 7870. Spelling errors in the original.
174 See expert opinion dated June 20, 1933. StadtACo A 7870.
175 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung* dated March 22, 1933.
176 Statement by former state police officer Franz Kupfer dated August 26, 1946. StACo StAnw Co 901.
177 *Coburger Nationalzeitung newspaper* dated March 25, 1933.

Reinterpreting bitterness. [178] This was despite the fact that police officers who had examined all of the Jewish community documents confiscated from Dr. Masur reported that there was no evidence of any links to the KPD.[179] At the same time, on March 24, the *Coburger Nationalzeitung* published a hostage list of the KPD leadership in Upper Franconia, which had allegedly been found during a house search and contained the names of leading Coburg National Socialists who were to be taken hostage. It can be assumed that the list was compiled by the NSDAP itself and subsequently exploited. [180]Contrary to the reality of the mostly unsuccessful house searches, the aim here was to highlight the effectiveness and success of the measures taken by the NSDAP and the deployment of the SS and SA. The danger posed by the KPD was to be proven by the article's claim that the names underlined in red on the list, which included the two mayors and the leaders of the SA and SS were to be murdered on the instructions of the communists after their arrest. Although such an action would have been completely impossible in Coburg due to the strength of the KPD compared to the SA and SS, the hostage list also served to inflame the members of the emergency police, who were able to justify their actions and the brutality they used by once again conjuring up the specter of a communist threat.

The temporary end of the abuse

At the end of April, the abuse in Coburg finally came to an end for the time being after pressure on the town hall had increased. On the one hand, some of the prisoners' wives had appealed to Schwede and Faber, begging them to release their husbands. Other wives had written to Schwede, attempting to secure their husbands' release by promising that they would join the party However all these pleas were brusquely rejected, and Mrs. Reichenbecher, for example, was driven out of the town hall by Faber with a dog whip when she presented her complaints. On the other hand, both the district administrator Dr. Heydenreich had lodged a complaint with Schwede and the government in Ansbach about the conditions in Coburg [184] and the doctors at the district hospital under Dr. Ludwig Zapf, who had to treat victims of the
"beating room" and had recorded the abuse in detail in their medical records, had also involved the public prosecutor's office.[185] The Bamberg chief public prosecutor subsequently formed his own opinion of the conditions in Coburg and, with the support of the Bavarian State Ministry of Justice, initially wanted to initiate

178 See letter from retired naval engineer Klautzsch to Mayor Schwede, March 29, 1933, and letter from Mayor Schwede to retired naval engineer Klautzsch, April 5, 1933. StadtACo A 7870.
179 See memo from the Coburg Police Department dated March 23, 1933. StadtACo A 8386.
180 Christian Reichenbecher also expressed this assumption in his interrogations. See indictment by the Coburg Chief Public Prosecutor dated July 15, 1950. StACo StAnw Co 900.
181 Specifically, these were Mayor Schwede, Mayor Faber, Standartenführer von Bazcko, SA-Sturmbannführer Gerspacher, SS-Standartenführer Mazuw, SS-Sturmbannführer Rittweger, SS-Führer Lehmann, and the leader of the Nazi intelligence service, Riechers.
182 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, March 24, 1933.
183 See various letters at StadtACo A 8386.
184 See Coburg State Police to the Public Prosecutor's Office at the Bamberg Regional Court, May 25, 1950. StACo StAnw Co 900.
185 See medical records issued by Dr. Hoenisch and Dr. Zapf. StACo StAnw 315.

Preliminary investigation into the incidents in Coburg initiated. The Coburg district office immediately intervened with the Bavarian Ministry of the Interior, and at a meeting on May 4, 1933, at the Ministry of Justice, attended by the Bamberg Attorney General, the Bavarian Minister of Justice Dr. Frank, a ministerial advisor, and the lawyer and deputy mayor Faber, took place, and after further interference by SA leader Röhm, the instruction was issued that criminal prosecution was to be suspended in order not to harm the
harm the "national revolution." The proceedings at the public prosecutor's office in Coburg, whose staff had now all joined the NSDAP, were discontinued. An investigation by SA special commissioner Hager at the government of Upper Franconia also had no far-reaching consequences, and the Coburg NSDAP was able to present many extorted statements from the "protective custody prisoners" who had to assure that they had not been mistreated.

The last documented cases of abuse in the "beating room" had occurred at the end of April. Seven members of the emergency police had already been dismissed on April 18 and were forbidden from entering the guardroom or performing any service for the city.[187] In mid-May 1933, the *Alte Herberge* was cleared and the remaining prisoners were transferred directly to Dachau.[188] On Schwe's orders, the SS guard at the *Alte Herberge* was completely disbanded on May 15, 1933.[189]

The significance of the "Prügelstube" for Coburg and the NSDAP

The recoding of urban space through the use of violence had thus reached its preliminary climax. The creation of a space of violence had been successful, after the groundwork had been laid for it since 1929. The location of the "beating room" in the middle of the city and inside the town hall clearly illustrated the depth of penetration of the violence and power of the NSDAP, which led to an unmistakably increased intensity of persecution in the Vestestadt compared to many other German cities. The violence against those excluded from the "people's community" had a community-building and order-establishing function in the sense of the regime. The National Socialists' claim to power was politically enforced and a new law was successfully established during the transition phase. For the perpetrators of violence, the abuse represented a "purifying" rite of passage in which built-up aggression could be acted out uninhibitedly and "people's community" hierarchies could be radically enforced in a policy of humiliation. At the same time, the incidents served individual SS men, such as the newcomer Emil Mazuw, to assert their position in the Coburg NSDAP. In many cases, a lack of social status was compensated for with particular brutality in the exercise of power in the "beating room," as the members of the auxiliary police were often former unemployed persons or less successful members of the petty bourgeoisie.

At the same time, they lived out a construct of masculinity that was prevalent and propagated in the National Socialist combat leagues, according to which

186 See Schütz: Justiz, pp. 28–34.

187 The exact reasons for these dismissals can no longer be reconstructed. Some defendants stated that they had been dismissed because they had accepted money from the "protective custody prisoners" so that they could escape the beatings. See police memo dated April 20, 1933. StadtACo 7870.

188 See Coburg Police Department to the Public Prosecutor's Office at the Regional Court, May 15, 1933. StadtACo A 8386.

189 See Schwedes' order of March 15, 1933. StadtACo A 8386.

among other things, to protect the honor of the nation through the use of violence. [190] The immediate physical power and strength expressed in violence stood in stark contrast to the complete powerlessness and weakness of the victims of the atrocities. Not only the purely physical injuries, but also the psychological trauma, social discrimination, and impairment of life chances of the abused had lasting effects. On the other hand, the violence conveyed an image of strength, dynamism, and unyieldingness to those who perpetrated it. The higher-level organizations of the SS and the SA offered protection to the perpetrators of violence, contributed to the intensification of the violent excesses, and thus became a key element in the National Socialist expansion of power. As a kind of collective initiation ritual, the establishment of the "beating room" and the abuse in the district office had formed a National Socialist community of perpetrators that was unreservedly at the disposal of the NSDAP and, through its crimes, had already in the first weeks of the "Third Reich" inevitably tied its fate to the success of the Nazi regime. The joint action, in which the individual was protected in his exercise of violence by the community effect, allowed the "politics of action" inherent in Nazi ideology against the common enemy. [192]

The exclusionary function of the events in March and April 1933 had an impact that went beyond the actual abuse. In addition to disciplining political opponents and forcibly excluding "outsiders" from the community, the victims were clearly stigmatized and intimidated in the period that followed. On the one hand, the Coburg NSDAP tried to keep the events in the "beating room" secret from higher authorities. On the other hand, however, the violence served as a threat that spread far into the urban area and made it abundantly clear what could be expected if one opposed the new rulers in even the slightest way. The dog whip used to maltreat the victims in the "beating room" remained a symbol of some SA and SS members, such as August Gerspacher. By constantly carrying the whips and using them against political opponents, a powerful symbol of violence and thus also of the space of violence created in the "beating room" was carried beyond it into everyday life.[193] It is not only Dr. Masur's suicide attempt that shows the biographical rupture caused by the experience of the "beating room" and the experience of complete arbitrariness, humiliation, and the loss of the right to

190 See: Müller, Yves: Männlichkeit und Gewalt in der SA am Beispiel der "Köpernicker Blutwoche" (Masculinity and Violence in the SA: The Example of the "Köpernicker Blutwoche"). In: Hördler, Stefan (ed.): SA-Terror als Herrschaftssicherung. "Köpernicker Blutwoche" und öffentliche Gewalt im Nationalsozialismus (SA Terror as a Means of Securing Power: The "Köpernicker Blutwoche" and Public Violence in National Socialism), Berlin 2013, pp. 130–146.

191 See Reichardt: Kampfbünde, p. 119.

192 Some of the SS thugs ultimately used the experience they gained in the Coburg emergency police force to further their careers. Gustav Arnold, born on May 22, 1897, in Erfurt, was subsequently taken on by the prison administration service and employed as a prison guard at the regional court prison in Coburg. Rudolf Franz Hans Höhn, born on October 14, 1910, in Coburg, became a police officer during the war and then a police sergeant in the Innsbruck police division and an Unterscharführer in the Waffen-SS and Oberscharführer in the SS. SS-Scharführer Meister was later recognized by victims of the "Prügelstube" (beatings room) as a guard at the Dachau concentration camp. Paul Krauss, born on September 16, 1913, in Coburg, also joined an SS Totenkopfverband in July 1933 and, after military training, was deployed to the Dachau and Buchenwald concentration camps. During the war, he rose to the rank of Hauptsturmführer in the Waffen-SS and commanded an assault gun unit. See judgment of the Coburg Regional Court of
September 17, 1951. StACo StAnw Co 907, Rudi Höhn's denazification file. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg City H 319.

193 See August Gerspacher's denazification file. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg City G 65.

could demonstrate their integrity. The escalation of violence in 1933 had permanently shifted the boundaries within the social sphere and the community structure in Coburg and changed the conditions for action in the future. Immediately after the National Socialists' "seizure of power," the social dividing line between
"fellow citizens" and "outsiders." However, while political opponents were still offered the opportunity to cooperate with and submit to the Nazi regime in the period that followed, the exclusion of Coburg's Jews was to be final. Despite the broad base on which the Nazi regime in Coburg was already established in 1933, the use of violence by the SA and SS was one of the most important means of creating the "people's community."[194]

3.1.3 Rationalization: Apparent calm

The escalation of violence in the "beating room" and in the district office was initially followed by a period of apparent calm, which served to secure the power that had already been gained and to raise the profile of the National Socialist regime to the outside world. The aggressive phase of the "combat period" with street fights and hall battles was now finally to be a thing of the past. In the National Socialist double game of wild violence and terror *from below* and controlled National Socialist Jewish policy, which decisively influenced the dynamics of persecution, the latter element was now to predominate. The threat of violence and persecution, as well as the manipulation of fear, became powerful tools of Nazi policy in this phase of violence and maintained the pressure of persecution. Through them, the atrocities of the "Prügelstube" found resonance in everyday life in the "Third Reich" in Coburg. At the same time, the threat was now extended to other sections of the population, and in particular those members of the bourgeoisie who were still hostile or reserved towards the NSDAP were to be intimidated.

The NSDAP's network of control and surveillance

The Dachau concentration camp and the threat of internment were powerful political instruments in dealing with those deemed "alien to the community." The direct and immediate use of violence controlled by the Nazi regime was now shifted from urban areas to the concentration camp, but it still had an impact on those back home through the threat of internment and the experiences reported from Dachau. As early as June 1933, Franz Schwede and Hans Dietrich, together with Hans Schemm, had visited the camp, been shown around by Heinrich Himmler, and shared their experiences with the Coburg population via the *Co-burger Tageblatt newspaper*. In addition to his racist remarks about the prisoners, whom he described as "bastardized promenade mixtures with Jewish, Negro, Mongolian or – the devil knows what – other bloodlines," Dietrich used the report as a clear warning to bourgeois Coburg. He emphasized the "healing" effect of a "stay at the Dachau spa" in [order]to turn even the last of them into "useful members of the German national community" [195]. He goes on to write under the slogan "Through Dachau to National Socialism and the Third Reich":

194 On the effect of violence in the sense of the "people's community," see Wild: Volksgemeinschaft als Selbstermächtigung, pp. 370–374.

195 *Coburger Tageblatt*, June 28, 1933.

> The Dachau camp itself remains a permanent institution as a serious warning and a threatening sword of Damocles for all those who—as one of the leaders of the Dachau SS guard unit put it to us—'are still walking around freely, even though they belong in Dachau and we are eagerly awaiting them.' We had the distinct impression that this referred not so much—at least in this case—to supporters of Marxism and representatives of the working class, but rather to people from a certain other clique who still believe that they must oppose the national and socialist revolution from a narrow-minded, bourgeois, and liberal worldview." [196]

In October 1933, on the instructions of the mayor, all restrictions on released "protective custody prisoners" were lifted, with the exception of the ban on visiting pubs, but those affected were threatened with being sent to the Dachau concentration camp if they continued to maintain a hostile attitude towards the National Socialist state.[197] In fact, after the events in the "beating room" and the district office, the political opposition from the Social Democrats and Communists remained relatively powerless and intimidated. The workers' organizations had been effectively crushed. [198]Although the activities of the now banned workers' organizations continued to be meticulously controlled and monitored in the following period, there was no real reason to intervene. Occasionally, reports were received by the police from Coburg residents that former KPD members had spoken out against Hitler, announced communist aspirations, or made inflammatory speeches, but the accusations often turned out to be a means of resolving personal disputes.[199] In isolated cases, criminal charges were brought and arrests made, for example when the German salute was responded to with "Heil Moscow" or when the government and its members were verbally threatened or attacked. In addition, leaflets with the slogan "Long live the government! Down with the lying mayor Schwede in Coburg!" were found in the city.[200] However, Karl Seidel from the police department reported: "Propaganda activities by the KPD are unlikely to be possible in Coburg, as the predominantly National Socialist population monitors such activities, and the leading figures of the KPD are employed."[201]

The NSDAP's surveillance network, in which a party member was supposed to monitor alleged communist activities in almost every house, was tightly knit and left little room for actual opposition activity. After 1933, the former landlord of the Volkshaus Frenzel ran the Teichmann'sche Schankwirtschaft at Kanonenweg 26, where former KPD members who had been released from the Dachau concentration camp and the former regulars of the Volkshaus gathered. In addition to close surveillance by a police officer assigned specifically for this purpose, all SS sub-leaders of SS-Sturm 1/I/41 also visited the pub individually in civilian clothes on a rotating basis.

196 Ibid.
197 See memo from the police department dated October 19, 1933. StadtA Co A 8386.
198 See also Schmehle: Arbeiterbewegung, pp. 220–233.
199 See Lina R. to the NSBO district leadership in Coburg, July 10, 1933; police interrogations of July 11 and 12, 1933, and report by the police department dated April 3, 1935. StadtACo A 8376.
200 See daily reports from the police department to the city commissioner from December 1/2, 1933, to July 4, 1934. StadtACo A 7868.
201 See report from the police department dated January 9, 1935. StadtACo A 8376.

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and thereby strengthened the control apparatus. [202]At the same time, every private meeting of people who had been organized in the labor movement was monitored and they were questioned by the police. When a meeting of three residents of Ber-telsdorfer Höhe and former KPD members was denounced, the police department conducted extensive interrogations, during which all those involved asserted that they had not engaged in political discussions and would refrain from such private meetings in the future. The threats made by the NSDAP's persecution apparatus became apparent when those affected begged to be spared "protective custody." When Mayor Rehlein demanded that the police take decisive action in this case, all three men were held in police custody for 24 hours and then warned.[203] The population was highly willing to report even the slightest indications, such as the possession of gramophone records with socialist and communist songs. At the same time, former KPD members who lived with their old comrades-in-arms acted as confidants of the NSDAP.[204]After funeral associations had turned out to be centers of resistance from the NSDAP's point of view, they were also closely monitored in Coburg, as former members of the SPD, KPD, and so-called "free thinkers" had gathered there as well.

The case of former labor leader, SPD city councilor, and union leader Christian Reichenbecher also shows how the torture of the "beating room" continued into the period after 1933 and crushed the labor movement. After his release from "protective custody" and the psychological and physical torture he endured there, Reichenbecher was given the choice of either going to Dachau for good or working for the party. Reichenbecher subsequently became a member of the SA reserve and was used by the SA as a figurehead for a reformed Social Democrat. After his "protective custody," he was therefore called up for SA service on October 1, 1933, and had to give speeches at various NSDAP rallies. On November 2, for example, district leader Schmidt announced that Reichenbecher had asked him for permission to speak to his former comrades and that he would grant him this request. Later, he was announced as a special surprise at mass demonstrations.[206] Whereas before 1933 Reichenbecher had sometimes followed Franz Schwede on his appearances outside Coburg in order to correct the NSDAP's statements on the spot, he now appeared at an election rally in the Hofbräugaststätten as a former Social Democratic leader who now publicly professed his support for National Socialism.[207] Here he proclaimed that he was now a convinced National Socialist and that Adolf Hitler was a friend of the workers, and that all the intentions and crimes previously attributed to the National Socialists by the Social Democratic leaders had been proven false with the "seizure of power." Franz Schwede

202 See reports from the police department, November 28 and December 1, 1933. StadtACo A 8376.

203 See reports from the police department dated July 10, 12, and 25, 1935. StadtACo A 8376.

204 See report from the police department dated May 20, 1936. StadtACo A 8376.

205 See police report dated March 24, 1936. StadtACo A 8376. The Flamme association was considered "politically reliable," while the Neue Deutsche Bestattungskasse Berlin (New German Funeral Fund Berlin), whose members were mainly former SPD and KPD members, was more in the focus of the police department.

206 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung* of November 2 and 8, 1933.

207 In 1931, Reichenbecher traveled to Kaiserslautern, where Schwede gave a lecture on *Coburg under National Socialist administration*, and provided a counterstatement. See *Coburger Nationalzeitung* of April 18, 1931.

He then declared that no one had fought as fiercely against National Socialism as Reichenbecher and that it was now clear that "even the most bitter opponent must lay down his arms in the face of the power of Adolf Hitler's ideas."[208]

The special courts established in all higher regional court districts of the German Reich by a decree of March 21, 1933, now also judged all those who expressed criticism of the regime, beyond the circles of the KPD and SPD. Due to the limited rights of defendants before the special courts and their jurisdiction over politically classified crimes, these courts contributed to the abolition of freedom of expression in the Nazi state.[209] Johanna F., who dared to criticize Franz Schwede, was reported and sentenced to five months in prison by the Bamberg Special Court in April 1934.[210] Jewish merchant Julius Plaut was sentenced to six months in prison after passing on a joke hostile to the regime. As evidence, Coburg police officer Rudolf Kessel stated that Plaut was known as an "intrusive and obnoxious businessman," so that he could be trusted to make such a statement. [211]

Pillorying on Coburg's market square

The National Socialists' political struggle could now focus specifically on those bourgeois circles that had enabled their rise to power. During the regime's establishment phase, deterrence was used against political opponents from the bourgeois camp, with direct physical violence playing only a secondary role. In addition to the integrative offer that the regime made to the Coburg bourgeoisie, actions of public humiliation, such as the display of three men in the market square, were intended to serve as negative inclusion and set an impressive example. The initiator of the action was SA member and teacher August Gerspacher, who had already been involved in the abuses in the "Prügelstube" (beating room) and now staged a vendetta in front of the city's public. On September 30, 1933, the two teachers and Stahlhelm members Oskar Engel and Karl Pauli, as well as book auditor Otto Zöllner, were taken from their workplaces and brought to an empty room in the Traube inn under the pretext of an interrogation, where they were forcibly made to wear a sign around their necks listing their alleged crimes.

The sign worn by Oskar Engel, former city councilor for the Citizens' and Economic Block and senior teacher at the Rückert School, read: "I forbade the students to say Heil Hitler." Engel and Gerspacher, colleagues at the vocational school, had come into conflict with each other during the 1929 election campaign. Among other things, Gerspacher had accused his political opponent of embezzling funds during renovation work at the

208 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung* of November 4, 1933.

209 On special courts, see Schütz, Hans: Justice in the Third Reich. Documentation from the Bamberg Higher Regional Court district. Bamberg 1984; Dörner, Bernward: Malice. The law as a weapon. Control, deterrence, and persecution in Germany 1933–1945. Paderborn, Munich 1998 and Kalmbach, Peter Lutz: Das System der NS-Sondergerichtsbarkeiten (The System of Nazi Special Courts). In: Kritische Justiz 50 (2017), pp. 226–235.

210 See the case of Johanna F. StABa Public Prosecutor's Office at the Bamberg Regional Court Rep K 105, Bamberg Special Court 212.

211 Plaut said that his goods consisted of Goebbels' web of lies, Hitler's web of lies, and SA rags. The joke was passed on, reported, and traced back to him. District Administrator Dehler then issued a "protective custody order." See the case of Julius Plaut. StABa Public Prosecutor's Office at the Bamberg Regional Court Rep K 105, Bamberg Special Court 508.



Fig. 41: Exhibition of NSDAP opponents by the SA on the market square in Coburg: Karl Pauli, Oskar Engel, Otto Zöllner, September 30, 1933

Rückertschule heating pipes for his own use and thus defrauding the city of money. Following a lawsuit filed by Engel, Gerspacher was ultimately sentenced to a small fine for defamation. Years later, having acquired extensive power, he sought revenge for this incident. The fact that Engel, in his position as school principal, had reprimanded several Hitler Youth members and that their parents had subsequently turned to Gerspacher gave him reason to take action against him. At the end of September, SA men had already smashed the windows of his home, allegedly fired a shot into the apartment, and left a note in the mailbox warning him that he would soon be in for a real beating, signed "The SA Rollkommando."

The book auditor Otto Zöllner had incurred the wrath of the SA after he pointed out at the Bratwurstglöckle, where an NSDAP event was being broadcast on the radio in honor of fallen SA men, that such a broadcast was inappropriate for the radio and for a restaurant, and asked for it to be turned off. Some women took offense at this behavior and reported it to the head of the Nazi intelligence service, Oskar Schultheiss. He filed a complaint against Zöllner for insulting the SA and, having noticed scorn, ridicule, and excessive criticism of the movement, particularly from intellectual circles, demanded that the matter be dealt with severely. After the criminal investigation department had initially investigated without success and Zöllner denied insulting the SA during questioning, August Gerspacher took action.

212 See judgment of the Coburg District Court in the private prosecution case of senior teacher Oskar Engel against teacher August Gerspacher, May 28, 1930. StadtACo A 6424; Oskar Engel to the Coburg City School Authority,
October 1, 1933, and statement by Oskar Engel before the Coburg Denazification Tribunal on March 5, 1948. StACo StAnw Co 316.

Zöllner also had Zöllner brought into the crowd and made him wear a sign that read "The SA is nonsense."[213]

Karl Pauli, a professor at the Casimirianum Gymnasium who had headed the local DNVP group, had been in increasingly sharp opposition to the NSDAP since the 1931 election campaigns. While the DNVP city council faction had backed the NSDAP and enabled it to seize power, he opposed Schwede outside the city council. After Schwede published a speech in Zwickau in which he directly attacked the German Nationalists, Pauli took a stand against it in a newspaper article. In addition, in March 1933, following the forced dismissal of Dr. Fritsch as district administrator, Pauli sent a protest telegram to the Bavarian Reich Commissioner requesting the reinstatement of the senior government official, which caused "utter outrage" among the NSDAP.[214] The sign that was forcibly hung around Pauli's neck read: "I complained about an SA leader."[215]

Among those arrested was Marianne Höfer, the wife of dentist and lodge member Hans Höfer, who was on trial for contempt of the Minister of Culture, Pg. Schemm. [216]Mrs. Höfer had openly spoken out against a ban on shopping at Jewish stores and declared that she would continue to patronize them. After the *Coburger Nationalzeitung newspaper* had stirred up sentiment against both of them and denounced them as representatives of "high society" who were abusing the "chivalry" and "willingness to reconcile" of the "Führer," Mrs. Höfer was able to secure her release before the actual punishment by appealing to the ringleader of the campaign, Gerspacher.[217]

The three men were finally pushed violently between the ranks of several SA men in the courtyard of the inn and, around noon, accompanied by a drum corps, which was supposed to attract maximum attention, led in a procession past the Rückert School through the Seifartshof, Adolf-Hitler-Straße, through the Steinweg and Spitalgasse to the market square. This was a procedure that was taking place in several places throughout the German Reich at that time. A crowd of passersby had already gathered at the edge of the procession, including many students of the two teachers being paraded. Shortly afterwards, Oskar Engel reported to the city school authorities: "Most of the schoolchildren I met on the way greeted me; many of them looked sad, many people greeted me and waved to me, some people even cried, others were filled with anger. Of course, some people were also happy to see the procession." [219] Engel's description clearly reveals the ambivalence of social upheaval. The natural authority of the respected teacher and the reputation of the established

213 See indictment against legal advisor and auditor Otto Zöllner by the head of the Nazi intelligence service, Oskar Schultheiss, to City Commissioner Dehler, September 23, 1933. StadtACo A 7870 and statement by Oskar Zöllner before the Coburg Denazification Court on June 28, 1948. StACo StAnw Co 316.

214 Minutes of the city council meeting of March 17, 1933. StadtACo A 8074.

215 See German National City Council faction to the government of Middle and Upper Franconia, January 14, 1933. StadtACo A 6424.

216 The proceedings against Höfer were discontinued by the public prosecutor's office. Cf. Memorandum from the police department dated October 20, 1933. StadtACo A 7870.

217 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, September 26, 1933.

218 See, for example, the example from Marburg in Wildt: Volksgemeinschaft als Selbstermächtigung, p. 9 f.

219 Oskar Engel to the Coburg City School Authority, October 1, 1933. StACo StAnw Co 316.

Despite the public display, this prominent figure within Coburg's bourgeoisie still wielded a certain amount of influence. However, the pillorying was intended to break this influence and point to a new social order. The unease evident in the reactions of some passers-by was to be overcome and transformed by normalizing public stigmatization.

In the market square, SA member Karl Hacker gave a speech to a crowd in which he publicly denounced the misdeeds of the three accused and remarked that they deserved to be stoned to death in order to incite those present. Part of the crowd gathered in the market square, which also included many women and children who were curiously watching the events, responded with boos and shouted, "To Dachau!" Despite the concerned faces that Engel had noticed on the march to the market square, no one intervened to protest the humiliation. The observers thus remained not merely spectators of the events, but became active participants who, through their presence, became important actors in the pillorying and gave the event its impact.

With regard to the investigation against tax auditor Zöllner, the police subsequently noted that the witness statements alone did not clearly indicate that Zöllner had taken a position or made statements hostile to the government that would warrant "protective custody" or criminal prosecution. The police department therefore considered parading him through the city to be sufficient punishment. Thus, the sanction, which lacked any criminal basis in its justification and execution, was legitimized by the city administration.

In October 1933, Mayor Schwede finally issued a "final warning to enemies of the state" at a city council meeting and announced the harshest measures.
"against those who still disrupt the work of the National Socialist government in any way" [221]. At the same time, he informed the population that a total of 84 people from the Coburg area had been in "protective custody," 32 of whom had been transferred to Dachau "for treatment" and 10 of whom were still there.[222]Schwede declared the period of upheaval to be over and announced that he would continue to advocate for the release of the remaining prisoners, but that such favors would no longer be extended to men transferred to Dachau six days earlier or to any future inmates. [223]

Limitation of physical violence

At the same time as the public threats, efforts were now being made to put an end to the escapist use of violence by the SS and SA. For the NSDAP, it now proved particularly difficult in the transition from the struggle for power to the maintenance of power to balance the pressure it wanted to maintain on the Jewish population and political opponents with the authority of the state, which was now in its hands. [224] As early as March 1933, while torture was still being carried out in the "Prügelstube"

220 See ibid. and Wildt: Volksgemeinschaft als Selbstermächtigung, p. 9 f.
221 *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, October 14, 1933.
222 These included former KPD members Christian Hagelgans and Fritz Schamberger, as well as the Jewish Coburg residents Heinz Besser, the Zeilberger brothers, and Dr. Erich Braun.
223 See ibid.
224 See also Wildt: Volksgemeinschaft als Selbstermächtigung, pp. 267–300.

had just begun, Franz Schwede warned: "National Socialists of Coburg! SA and SS men! (...) Now that the National Socialist movement has triumphed, beware of being excluded from it. Trust our leader Adolf Hitler!" [225] After the pillorying, August Gerspacher was charged by Stahlhelm leader Prof. Gerstenmeier and sentenced by the Coburg District Court on November 13, 1933, to a fine of 150 RM for false imprisonment of the two Stahlhelm members Pauli and Engel. It is already clear here that the main task of the SA, to organize terror through violence on the streets of Coburg, was increasingly becoming a burden for the NSDAP, which now had to act in a statesmanlike manner. At the same time, in the wake of the "Röhm Affair" in 1934, the SA was also to be eliminated as a power-political factor throughout the Reich. Uncontrolled violence was now an increasing risk to the regime's survival. The Coburg NSDAP's claim to make the city a model National Socialist city now had a moderating effect in the sense that the radicalism of individuals should not cast a bad light on National Socialism as such. In this spirit, in July 1936, Franz Dehler, as head of the district office and city commissioner, insisted that, on the instructions of the Bavarian Political Police, the daily press should refrain from publishing reports of "protective custody."[226] For many SA men, however, it was difficult to accept that the actions with which they had fought for the National Socialist "seizure of power" should now be discontinued and were allegedly damaging to the regime. This resulted in expulsion proceedings against SA men for damaging behavior and failure to obey official orders. [227]

In August 1935, the Bavarian Political Police issued a decree from the Reich Ministry of the Interior prohibiting individual actions against Jews by members of the NSDAP, its branches, and associations. It was specified that, in particular, "criminal acts of damage to property, bodily harm, coercion, trespassing, and unlawful assembly" [228]were to be refrained from and that peace, security, and order were to be maintained by all means. Anyone who opposed the order was to be considered an enemy of the state and a rebel. In order to consolidate the image of peace-loving Nazi Germany in foreign policy, the terror against the Jewish population was to be carried out entirely within the confines of the law and under control from above. The exclusion of the Jewish population was now to be achieved through precise registration campaigns and strict controls. Actions against the Jewish population now also had to be carefully weighed up in the supposedly model city of Coburg. The close intertwining of party and state offices meant repeated tensions for those involved when the demands of the party could not be reconciled with state orders. Mayor Dr. Schmidt, for example, had planned to have wooden signs with the inscription "Jews not welcome!" erected at all entrances to the city, as was done in many other places. The positioning, size, paint, and cost of the signs had been negotiated by the police department, only to have the entire action ultimately canceled four days later on the instructions of the mayor.

225 *Coburger Tageblatt*, March 16, 1933.
226 See Franz Dehler to the editor-in-chief of the Bayerische Ostmark, July 29, 1936. StadtACo A 8386.
227 See various orders regarding SA exclusion proceedings. StadtACo A 8386.
228 Copy of a decree issued by the Reich Ministry of the Interior, August 20, 1935. StadtACo A 8521.

to be demolished again.[229] The background to the mayor's activism was the report that the number of Jews living in Coburg was rising again, which challenged the leaders of "Germany's first National Socialist city" in their National Socialist honor. Nevertheless, Schmidt called for a "defensive struggle against Judaism" in *the Coburger Tageblatt* and threatened "The National Socialist city of Coburg, which has been predominantly anti-Semitic for many years before the National Socialist revolution, has so far refrained from taking any measures in the expectation that the Jews will behave modestly and reservedly towards the German host population in the National Socialist state."[230]

Individual cases of publicly deviant behavior that could cause a stir were punished by the police authorities, who even took individuals into "protective custody" for wilful anti-Semitic acts. A resident of the municipality of Rossach, who had already been taken into "protective custody" for this very reason in August 1935, had to be reminded again about a year later that the gendarmerie and municipal police would be instructed to arrest him if he continued to verbally abuse or physically attack Jews in public. He was told:
"The fight against Judaism is being waged by the state and the party in accordance with the Führer's instructions. Your ridiculous behavior only serves to harm this fight. You were already threatened with internment in the Dachau concentration camp when you were released at the time."[231]

The "fight against Judaism" had now shifted primarily to economic exclusion and "Aryanization." In this area, violence *from below*, a hallmark of the Nazi movement, could not be completely prohibited and stopped. The momentum set in motion in Coburg, following the logic of violence against Jewish businesses, once again generated a series of spontaneous actions on the part of both the SA and the general population. Even during the phase of foreign policy restraint and apparent respite, violent attacks against the Jewish population continued unabated. The actions against Jewish tradespeople and businesses far preceded the official measures and demonstrate the continuing particularly high intensity of persecution in Coburg as well as the importance of local *grassroots* initiatives within the persecution apparatus.

3.1.4 Breaking down barriers: The November pogrom of 1938

On October 20, 1938, a customer visited the textile store of 65-year-old Siegfried Kohn to make him business offers and negotiated with the Jewish merchant for an hour. A short time later, the man returned. In the meantime, he had purchased a knife in a Coburg store and had it sharpened by a grinder. He then attacked Kohn in his cloth warehouse, stabbed him several times with the knife, and fled the scene through the city. The police investigation assumed it was a robbery-murder, but despite several clues, the

229 See police reports dated August 10, 13, and 14, 1935. In April 1935, Hitler had still spoken out in favor of such signs, but in May 1936 they were banned by the Bavarian Political Police. See report by the Bavarian Political Police dated May 4, 1936. StadtACo A 8521.

230 *Coburger Tageblatt*, August 13, 1935.

231 The district office, represented by Dr. Zagel, to Mr. Ludwig K. in Rossach, June 30, 1936. StadtACo A 8521.

The search for the perpetrator, who was identified by traces of blood, was unsuccessful despite appeals to the public by the chief public prosecutor. [232]The exact circumstances surrounding the crime remained unclear, but it was a clear symptom of the beginning of a new wave of radicalization against the Jewish population. This can be classified as part of a pogrom-like atmosphere in late autumn 1938, when foreign policy tensions surrounding the Sudeten crisis resulted in a resurgence of anti-Semitism and also led to a wave of anti-Semitic actions in Franconia, where in many places the Jewish population was attacked and driven out of their homes.

A comprehensive removal of boundaries on violence finally began after the assassination of German embassy attaché Ernst von Rath in Paris on November 7, 1938, by 17-year-old Polish Jew Herschel Grynszpan. After the newspapers, on the instructions of the Propaganda Ministry, reported extensively on the assassination and[and]stylized von Rath as a "blood witness" to the political worldview of the German people, and Coburg prepared for the celebrations of the 15th anniversary of Hitler's coup on November 9, the first riots broke out. Commissioned by the district leadership of the NSDAP, a group of SA men, some of whom were demonstrably under the influence of alcohol, sought out the Jewish Frank family in Mohrenstraße and severely mistreated Max Frank, the former co-owner of the Conitzer company, and his son, driving them out of their apartment. As the owner of the Conitzer & Söhne department store, he had long been able to defy the NSDAP's violence and boycott measures, thus becoming a prominent figure of hatred for the NSDAP.[236] Once again, the SA man Reinhold Ender, who had already been involved in the attack on the SPD truck and was subsequently employed as an auxiliary policeman, and the SA Rottenführer Hugo Roth played a decisive role in this.[237] Abuse of his wife and her sister Ernestine Israelski, who were both bedridden, could only be prevented by the intervention of Catholic nun Maria Lopetia Knapp, who was entrusted with the care of the three elderly people and now stood in the way of the SA. Max Frank succumbed to the injuries inflicted on him here a month later. [238]At the hospital gate, Jewish lawyer Dr. Martin Baer was also pursued by the SA men on their way into town, beaten bloody with an iron rod by the notorious and heavily intoxicated SA thug Hugo Roth in front of a large crowd, and taken to the police station. Baer's cries for help to a passing soldier, whom he pointed out was serving the German Reich, went unheard and motivated Roth to act even more brutally. Baer

232 See *Bayerische Ostmark*, October 21, 1938; *Coburger Tageblatt*, October 21 and 24, 1938. Siegfried Kohn was the brother of Max Kohn, who was convicted of "racial defilement" in April 1938.

233 See various examples in Wildt: Volksgemeinschaft als Selbstermächtigung, pp. 312–319.

234 On the November pogrom, see, among others, Benz, Wolfgang: Gewalt im November 1938. Die "Reichskristallnacht." Initial zum Holocaust. Berlin 2018; Gross, Raphael: November 1938. Die Katastrophe vor der Katastrophe. Beck, Munich 2013 and Pehle, Walter H. (ed.): Der Judenpogrom 1938. Von der "Reichskristallnacht" zum Völkermord. Frankfurt a. M. 1988.

235 See *Bayerische Ostmark* from November 8 and 10, 1938.

236 See Chapter IV3.

237 See Chapter III2.2.2.2.

238 See Adolf Friedländer to the Coburg Tax Office, January 31, 1939. StACo Coburg Tax Office Old Records 221.

He then had to be transferred to the district hospital.[239] The majority of witnesses to the incident remained silent. A few critical comments were suppressed by the immediate arrest of those involved.[240]

On the night of November 10, the frenzied destruction wrought by individuals broke out anew. SA men and party members smashed several windows of Jewish shops, such as Wolf Baumwollspinner's store on Juden-gasse. Windows were also smashed at the Jewish school run by the preacher Hermann Hirsch, the prayer room there was destroyed, and Torah scrolls were burned. On the morning of November 10, SA and party members finally rounded up the Jewish population of Coburg and led them in several rows past numerous passersby on the roadside through the city to the market square. Women and children were then allowed to return to their homes, while the men were held in the gymnasium on Anger, where, according to newspaper reports, a crowd of Coburg residents gathered during the night and shouted insults at the detainees. The arrests were made at the behest of Reinhard Heydrich, head of the Security Police, who had issued orders to select particularly wealthy Jews. Of the 35 Jews arrested, 16 were ultimately transferred to the Nuremberg-Fürth Gestapo for further action. Since the Dachau concentration camp was already overcrowded at that time, the detainees were taken to a prison in Hof. Subsequently, the apartments of Coburg's Jewish population were searched. Since St. Nicholas Chapel was no longer owned by the Jewish community as a synagogue, no damage was done here. A report by the police department on the events concluded with the warning: "The mood against the Jews continues, and it is up to them not to give cause for further action."[246] In the Bavarian Ostmark, it was stated: "You have now been warned, and if the Jews continue their cowardly murders, the population will no longer treat them as leniently as yesterday."[247]

Compared to the brutality of the abuses in March and April 1933, the violence in November 1938 was significantly more moderate. Unlike in 1933, however, it was now much more openly extended into urban areas, and its radical nature was visibly carried into the center of society. The public display of the Jewish population with the train through the city, the arrests, and the

239 See affidavit by Maria Lopetia Knapp dated December 18, 1946. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg City R 223; Neue Presse dated February 14, 1950, and *Coburger Tageblatt* dated February 15, 1950.

240 See numerous witness statements from individuals directly involved in the Hugo Roth denazification proceedings. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg City R 223.

241 Due to the limited source material, it is not possible to reconstruct the destruction in detail.

242 See bi-monthly report for November 1938 to the government of Upper Franconia. StadtACo A 8500.

243 Reprinted in: Döscher, Hans-Jürgen: Reichskristallnacht. Munich 2000, p. 95.

244 The police report mentioned 38 people arrested, while the newspaper report mentioned 35.

245 See bi-monthly report for November 1938 to the government of Upper Franconia. StadtACo A 8500 *Coburger Tageblatt* from November 10 and 11, 1938, and *Bayerische Ostmark* from November 11, 1938. See also the memoir of Anne Rubin, née Forchheimer, reprinted in Fromm: Juden, pp. 99–101.

246 Biweekly report for November 1938 to the government of Upper Franconia. StadtACo A 8500.

247 *Bayerische Ostmark*, November 11, 1938.

The removal to the hall on Anger took place in full view of the public. Once again, the spectators who watched the events from the roadside without intervening, or others who joined in the verbal abuse of their Jewish fellow citizens in front of the Anger gymnasium, became accomplices to the pogrom. The destruction of Jewish shops also took place in full view of the public, with children sometimes joining in, attracted by the escalating violence as if it were a game.

3.2 "De-Jewification": The displacement of Jews from economic life

The high intensity of persecution in the form of violence against Jewish Coburg residents and political opponents of the NSDAP was also reflected in an economic variant of anti-Semitism, which aimed to oust Jewish Coburg residents from economic life, expel them from Germany, and destroy their economic livelihoods. Since a large part of the anti-Semitic stereotypes had manifested themselves in the economic sphere, the associated exclusionary practices also had a particularly high potential for approval and mobilization. The "de-Jewification" or "Aryanization" took place parallel to the process of violence and was closely linked to it. "De-Jewification" in its broadest sense should be understood here as a social process in which the Jewish population of Coburg, the administrative apparatus, the majority of the population, various entrepreneurs, and the acquirers of Jewish property all played a role as actors.[249] "De-Jewification" must therefore be examined both in terms of its chronological progression and the multi-layered approach to Jewish property. As the implementing body of exclusion, the focus is particularly on the administrative practices of the city administration and the state financial administration, and thus on fiscal persecution. In addition to the political and administrative process of "de-Jewification," however, the private law aspect of the transfer of Jewish property to "Aryan" ownership should also be considered. In this area in particular, a series of significant examples illustrate the breadth and variety of the scope and options for action in the process of disenfranchisement.

248 See Klaus Beyersdorf's memoirs. The participation of children in the pogroms was in some cases deliberately encouraged. See Dieter Obst, Reichskristallnacht: Ursachen und Verlauf des antisemitischen Pogroms vom November 1938 (Frankfurt am Main, 1991), pp. 263–270.

249 On "de-Jewification" and "Aryanization," see: Nietzel, Benno: The Destruction of the Economic Existence of German Jews 1933–1945. A Literature and Research Report. In: Archive for Social History 49 (2009), pp. 561–613; Barkai, Abraham: From Boycott to "De-Jewification." The Economic Struggle for Existence of Jews in the Third Reich 1933–1943. Frankfurt am Main 1987; Wojak, Irmtraut; Hayes, Peter (eds.):
"Aryanization" in National Socialism. People's Community, Robbery, and Memory. Frankfurt am Main, New York 2000; Baumann: Munich; Janetzko: "Aryanization"; Einzendörfer: City Administration, pp. 299–324; Janetzko: Displacement, pp. 277–298 and Fleiter: City Administration, pp. 123–176.

250 Due to the disappearance of all relevant files of the Coburg Chamber of Industry and Commerce from the period between 1933 and 1945, a crucial source material is missing for the following chapter. Especially for "Aryanization" in the narrower sense, this deficiency could not be compensated for by parallel traditions.

3.2.1 Boycotting and suppression

3.2.1.2 Independent initiative Repression measures before 1933

The first professional group to be collectively targeted by anti-Semitic hatred and subjected to discrimination and boycott measures by nationalist associations were Jewish cattle dealers, who dominated their profession. It was not only during the anti-Semitic riots that took place during the establishment of the "Grenzschutz Nord" (Northern Border Guard) in Autenhausen that cattle dealers operating in Coburg were targeted by nationalist groups; the *Jungdeutscher Orden (Young German Order)* also exploited and channeled the poor supply situation in the Coburg region in the 1920s into anti-Semitic agitation against Jewish traders. Time and again, the *Jungdeutscher Orden* called for a boycott in its propaganda newspaper or the *Deutschvölkischer Schutz- und Trutzbund*. The NSDAP and the *Weckruf* finally picked up where the *Coburger Warte* had left off. A smear campaign was launched against the Jewish cattle dealer Benno Kaufmann, for example, who was accused of attacking a farmer's wife. The Coburg authorities sometimes translated the outrage expressed by the NSDAP against "the cattle Jews" into concrete action. Following the call in *the Weckruf* in 1926 for a Coburg authority to take action against the Jewish merchant, the police and administrative senate actually decided to revoke his cattle trading license. Only a complaint to the government of Upper Franconia, in which Kaufmann presented an expert opinion from the cattle dealers' association, overturned the decision of the Coburg authorities.[252] Following a Weckruf article that had denounced the Coburg railway station as the "main playground of the cattle Jews," where they allegedly "loitered in order to accost the farmers, who were no strangers to them, upon their arrival or before the departure of the trains" and pressured them into commercial transactions, the Nazi organ called on the supervisory authorities to examine "the extent to which the cattle Jews are entitled to degrade public spaces as the scene of their abhorrent activities."[253] The police department then dispatched officers from the traffic division to the train station on a regular basis, in addition to their periodic Sunday monitoring of the horse trade, to punish any behavior that did not "meet the needs of rail traffic."[254][255]

With a majority in the city council, the NSDAP also set out in 1929 to promote the displacement of Jews from economic life through anti-Semitic economic policies. Because Coburg's largest department stores, the fashion houses Conitzer & Söhne, Fechheimer & Co. and Ernst Zeilberger, and the department stores Leschziner, Max Kohn and Tiez were Jewish-owned,[256] the fight against Jewish department stores was at the top of the National Socialists' agenda. As symbols of modernity with inexpensive production and distribution methods, their extensive range of goods, and their innovative advertising methods, these department stores had also become symbols of "Jewish greed" in the eyes of Nazi propaganda. Under the headline "Das

251 See Fromm: Jews, pp. 103–108.
252 See *Der Weckruf* No. 8 and No. 10, 1926, and No. 16, 1927.
253 *Der Weckruf* of February 10, 1928.
254 Memo from the police department dated February 10, 1928. StadtACo A 10396.
255 See memo from the police department dated February 16, 1928. StadtACo A 10396.
256 See Fromm: Jews, p. 114.

Jewish department store, the ruin of the German businessman," the *Weckruf* had already warned its readers in 1927 about the cheap prices and allegedly poor quality of goods in Jewish stores, specifically addressing this middle-class anti-Semitism.[257] In an extraordinary meeting on December 24, 1930, which was dominated by the annual anti-Semitic sentiment at Christmas due to the Christmas business of Jewish department stores, the city council finally decided to introduce a special tax for such stores in the form of a department store and branch tax from January 1, 1931. The statutory maximum rate of 200% surcharge on trade tax and a 50% surcharge on branches was introduced. [258]Jewish merchants were now also completely excluded from the awarding of municipal contracts, such as the supply of sea fish to the rural hospital.[259] At the same time, the city council made decisions in individual cases to the detriment of Jewish merchants. The shoe store Weiß, which, after the wanton destruction of a neon sign featuring a salamander, renewed its advertising sign with the name Weiß under the new city council, was no longer granted the necessary permit and had to remove the sign again. [260]

With these measures, the NSDAP was able to respond to the mood of a section of its voters after small and medium-sized retailers, who were in competition with department stores, had reinterpreted conflicts over modernization in an anti-Semitic way in their defense against their competitors.[261] Against the backdrop of a continuing decline in the purchasing power of their customers, small and medium-sized retailers in particular felt at a disadvantage compared to the large department stores, which had already paved the way for modern customer service, modern advertising, and modern payment transactions, and were interested in weakening the competition economically. The fear of economic displacement of the retail trade had therefore charged the discussions about economic development in the former royal seat with anti-Semitism. The image of the "greedy Jew" and the warning against a "Jewish takeover" of economic life also provided points of reference for those sections of the population who still rejected radical anti-Semitism. At the same time, it alluded to firmly established *cultural codes* that had been part of the repertoire of anti-Semitic thinking for centuries and were revived during the economic crisis. In this construct, the "creative German" was contrasted with the "greedy Jew."[262]

257 See *Der Weckruf* No. 23, 1927. On anti-Semitic department store propaganda, see Ahlheim, Hannah: "Germans, don't buy from Jews!" Anti-Semitism and political boycott in Germany from 1924 to 1935. Göttingen 2012, pp. 90–105. On the history of Coburg's department stores, see Boseckert: Kauf-und Warenhäuser.

258 See minutes of the city council meeting of December 24, 1930. StadtACo A 8073. A department store tax was also introduced by the NSDAP in 1929 in the form of a bill in the Prussian state parliament.

259 See Faber: Coburg, p. 29.

260 See minutes of the city council meeting of February 13, 1931. StadtACo A 8074.

261 See Bajohr: Aryanization, pp. 42–44, and Bajohr, Frank: Persecution from a socio-historical perspective. The economic destruction of the Jews and German society. In: History and Society, 26/4 (2000), pp. 629–652, here pp. 632 f.

262 See Volkov, Shulamit: Antisemitismus als kultureller Code. In: idem: Antisemitismus als kultureller Code. Munich 200, pp. 13–36; Benz, Wolfgang: Was ist Antisemitismus. Bonn 2004 and Ahlheim: "Germans, don't buy from Jews!"

Karl - Coburg ahead #8.indd 568 Nov. 4, 2024, 6:13 p.m.

Among the younger members of Coburg's population, there was also a growing desire to exclude their Jewish fellow citizens from economic life. Leo Zeilberger, co-owner of the Zeilberger fashion store, describes how part of the Coburg population had been avoiding Jewish businesses since the anti-Semitic mood of 1923, and that this situation could only be offset by the great efficiency of Jewish businesspeople.[263] In January 1929, the newspaper of the Jewish Central Association reported that Jewish retailers in Coburg were denied membership in the retailers' association, that more and more young Coburg residents were boycotting Jewish businesses, and that Jews were being denied access to various established associations through trickery.[264] In the *Coburg National Newspaper*, business owners tried to outdo their Jewish competitors by advertising their stores as German and Christian. For example, the advertisement for the "Christian specialty store for men's and boys' clothing Reuther" consisted of the appeal: "Your children will not marry Jews! Therefore, only shop in German stores."[265] These voluntary self-identifications vividly expressed the desire for exclusion on the part of some business owners. Later, the advertising section of *the Nationalzeitung* was framed by the words "If you only want to buy from the good, you must not go to the Jews! Go to the German merchant, who that is, you can find here" [266], thus marking the separation of Coburg's business world into "German" and "Jewish." In December 1930, the ironic article "Germans, buy only from Jews!" called for a boycott of Jewish shops.[267] On the one hand, these measures served to define or brand "Jewish spheres" within the urban area; on the other hand, such exclusionary practices had an impact on the prevailing mental structures of their audience. Even at this early stage, the line had been crossed into systematic exclusion beyond the measures taken by the party and the administration.

In February 1931, the editorial staff and publisher of *the Coburger Nationalzeitung* decided to launch a special advertising campaign to this end. In a competition, the task was to "describe in writing, both for the general public and for individuals, the disadvantages of any business dealings with Jews, both in buying from Jews and in selling to Jews, using brief examples from your own experience or from what you have observed in others." As a further instruction for the description of the submission, the newspaper specified:

> "1. It must be typical.
> 2. it must be based on personal experience or observation,
> 3. it must be concise and brief,
> 4. It should not contain lengthy considerations, but should culminate in a brief conclusion.
>
> (...) The best entries – with less emphasis on form and more on content – will be awarded prizes."[268]

The prize for the competition with the keyword "Der Geschäftsjude" (The Business Jew) was vouchers that could only be redeemed in "German stores." The winner was to be featured in a

263 See Leo Zeilberger to Dr. Ophir, May 1, 1963. Yad Vashem 0.33/985.
264 *C. V. newspaper*, January 25, 1929.
265 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, October 11, 1930.
266 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung newspaper* dated February 4, 1931.
267 *Coburger Nationalzeitung newspaper* dated December 20, 1930.
268 *Coburger Nationalzeitung newspaper* dated February 14, 1931.

The jury consisted of the editor-in-chief of the *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, Dr. Erich Kühn, the three NSDAP city councilors Faber, Frühwald, and Streng, and the district leader of the NS-Frauenschaft (National Socialist Women's League), Marie Riechers.

A number of Jewish businessmen, represented by the Baer brothers, took legal action against the defamation and obtained a preliminary injunction and a ruling threatening the initiators of the competition with penalties in the event of a repeat offense and prohibiting the publication of the results of the collection of inscriptions. It explicitly stated:

> "The respondents are prohibited, under threat of unlimited fines or imprisonment of up to six months for each case of violation, from calling for a boycott of Jewish businesses by claiming that Jewish businessmen are dishonest, that dishonest business practices are common among Jewish businesspeople, that Jews shirked their military service during the war, that Jews are enemies of the people, that Jews sell nothing but junk, that Jews cheat their customers, and that anyone who takes their money to a Jew will be swindled by them." [270]

Shortly thereafter, however, the newspaper once again openly called for a boycott of Jewish businesses. In the November 28, 1931, edition of *the Nationalzeitung*, which was intended to disrupt the [Christmas] business of Jewish merchants, it stated: "Women who buy from Jews and spurn German goods are committing treason against the German struggle for freedom! Give them the answer!"The Coburg Regional Court, which dealt with the case, saw no reason to intervene because the group of people addressed by the boycott was too vague. Only the Bamberg Higher Regional Court sentenced Dr. Kühn to a fine of 300 marks for "boycotts and offensive statements."

At the same time, the first wave of anti-Semitic violence by the SA, such as the destruction of advertising signs at Conitzer, Weiß, and Sandler, was directed against shops in the city center that were run by Jewish merchants. The goal of Nazi agitation was to stigmatize Jewish business owners in a way that was visible to the entire urban community and to establish boundaries between
"Christian" and "Jewish" businesses in the urban economic area. In the tradition of the völkisch associations, the NSDAP systematically used the boycott in Coburg as a political weapon even before 1933. The *C. V. newspaper* reported as early as June 1931 that the Jewish population of Coburg was being boycotted socially and economically.

269 The companies affected were Fechheimer, Zeilberger, Leschziner, Weiß, Conitzer und Söhne, Stern und Co., Alkan jun. and Rawack.

270 *Coburger Volksblatt*, March 3, 1931.

271 For more on the targeted Nazi attempts to cause disruption during the Christmas season, see Wildt: Volksgemeinschaft als Selbstermächtigung, p. 146 f.

272 *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, November 28, 1931.

273 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung* from February 26, December 19, 1931, and January 9, 1932. For successful lawsuits brought by the C. V. against calls for boycotts, see Wildt: Volksgemeinschaft als Selbstermächtigung, pp. 149–151.

274 According to reports by the C. V., boycott actions before 1933 focused in particular on East Prussia, the Vogtland region, Pomerania, and Schleswig-Holstein. See Wildt: Volksgemeinschaft als Selbstermächtigung, pp. 148 f.

275 In detail, it stated: "As is well known, the situation is worst in Coburg, where a former ducal prince, endowed with ample funds by the republic, holds court and has established a National Socialist residence. The long-established Jewish population of Coburg lives under terror. It is boycotted both socially and economically." *C. V. newspaper*, June 5, 1931.

Assertion strategies of Jewish tradespeople

Jewish merchants attempted to counter this first wave of boycotts and disruptive actions by incorporating the mood within the city into their advertising methods and countering anti-Semitic stereotypes, such as the "greedy Jew" or communist agitation. After unemployment and social policy had become one of the most important political issues of the time, the Conitzer fashion house announced in *the Volksblatt newspaper* in 1931 *that* it would donate 10% of its profits to the welfare office for a certain period of time. The Zeilberger fashion house decorated its shop windows with Hindenburg posters during the 1932 campaign for the office of Reich President.[276]However, such actions provoked even more agitation within the ranks of the NSDAP. In response to the announcement that profits would be donated to charity, a leaflet with a satirical poem was distributed in the city, accusing the fashion house of adding the profits to be donated to the price of its products in order to deceive its customers. It read:

> "A pig is a noble animal Compared to
> this company here,
> Which has no shame In
> Coburg's biggest rag To make
> an offer on
> The worst trash, but whoever buys it Is a
> noble philanthropist, At least according to
> Conitzer.
> For ten percent of the sales in four days
> He wants to take to the office. Will it be
> paid to the welfare office? The stupid
> German is moved
> And believes the Jew is really good!
> The Christian, who skimps on
> everything And carries it to the welfare
> office at a trot But he doesn't talk about
> it, For him, it's a human duty!
> But the Jew, with shouting,
> Calls out: Come here, people, come here!
> Come, support my helpful endeavors. I won't
> give anything myself.
> The 10 percent, I'll tell you, The Jew
> has already added on top The stupid
> goyim doesn't notice, He's too honest
> and too simple He doesn't know that
> the Jew is robbing him Of what he
> gives away, so believe me:
> THE JEW IS A SWINE BEAST!"

276 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, March 12, 1932.
277 In Yiddish, goy refers to a non-Jew.
278 Anti-Semitic defamatory poem. StadtACo A 8521.

The *Coburger Nationalzeitung* also railed against Zeilberger's advertising for Hindenburg, citing this "diabolical confusion of the fronts" [279]as an argument for voting not for Hindenburg, but for Hitler.

Although the strategies of Jewish business owners, intensive advertising, and complaints achieved some success until 1933, Jewish businesses nevertheless suffered a noticeable decline in sales. The Conitzer & Söhne company, which had become the focus of NSDAP agitation as a figurehead of Jewish trade, reduced its taxable sales by around 44% between 1931 and 1933.[280] This figure exceeded the effects of the tense economic situation. In another sector·the wholesale distributor of intestines and meat products Sally Kahn also reported a steady decline in business to the tax office from 1930 onwards·

3.2.1.2 From "wild" to official boycott

After the "seizure of power" and especially after the Reichstag elections on March 5, 1933, in which the NSDAP failed to gain an absolute majority, a valve finally opened for the displacement of Coburg's Jews from economic life. Symptomatic of the mood within the city and the desire to exclude everything Jewish from the cityscape was a petition signed by the residents of Juden-gasse and initiated by the merchant Wilhelm Spanaus, co-owner of a specialty store for glass, porcelain, and crystal gift items, which called on the city council to "save Germany from the Bolshevik threat" and to honor the "rescue of Germany from the Bolshevik threat" by expelling the Jews from the city.specialty store for glass, porcelain, and crystal gift items, calling on the city council to rename Juden-gasse (Jewish Alley) Adolf-Hitler-Straße in honor of the leader of nationalist Germany, Adolf Hitler, in light of the "salvation of Germany from the Bolshevik threat."[282] However, the Coburg city council under Franz Schwede, which acknowledged the "joy over the salvation of Germany" with "joyful satisfaction," considered such an act of victory to be premature. Instead, it called on the

"German-descended population of Coburg" to understand the city council's adherence to the old name as a sign "that the awakened national Germany will not rest until the former restrictions on residence for Jews are once again the symbol of a Germanic nation." [283]

Boycott actions from below

Even before the official order to boycott Jewish businesses, "wild" boycott actions *from below* took place in Coburg, as in other cities and regions, which preceded the regulations *from above* and arose from within society·On March 10, several hundred people gathered in front of the

279 *Coburger Nationalzeitung newspaper* on March 12, 1932.
280 See audit report of the Conitzer & Söhne company, 1938. StACo Coburg Tax Office Old Records 221.
281 See Sally Kahn to the Coburg Tax Office, January 28, 1937. StACo Coburg Tax Office Old Records 236.
282 The residents of Judengasse to the Coburg City Council, March 6, 1933. StadtACo A 7870.
283 Coburg City Council to Mr. Wilhelm Spanaus, March 13, 1933. StadtACo A 7870.
284 See, for example: Janetzko: "Arisierung," pp. 52–54, 57–59.
285 On the controversy surrounding whether the boycott initiative originated from the party base or the party leadership, see Longerich, Peter: Politik der Vernichtung (Politics of Extermination). Munich 1998, pp. 30 f.; Bajohr: Arisierung (Aryanization), p. 44; Wildt: Volksgemeinschaft als Selbstermächtigung, p. 118. On the significance of the boycott movement within society, see also: Ahlheim: "Deutsche, kauft nicht bei Juden!", pp. 53–105.

Conitzer & Söhne fashion store on Spitalgasse and demanded that it be closed. Co-owner Frank was then advised to comply in order to avoid further incidents. Although the police managed to disperse the crowd in front of the store, it simply moved on, gathering in front of the Zeilberger, Alkan, Fechheimer, Kohn, and Katzenstein stores and demanding their closure as well. Here, too, the store owners, fearing for their own safety, followed the advice of the police and locked their doors. A few days later, the same thing happened again, but this time violence was used and a side door was kicked in at the Weiß shoe store.[286]Instead of enforcing the police's monopoly on the use of force, stopping the demonstrators' illegal actions with all available forces, and protecting Jewish citizens, Police Commissioner Scheel reported to City Commissioner von Baczko that the city police were no longer able to control the crowds, that Jewish shops should be closed until further notice, and that shop owners should be instructed to refrain from moving around on the streets of the city.[287]After a joint discussion at the district office, von Baczko finally agreed to the course of action in order to ensure that the police and businesses in the city could resume normal operations the next day. Jewish business owners were to be advised that refusal to close would be considered provocative and would place them outside the protection of the police. In such a case, the police would refuse to accept responsibility for any damage. All Jewish business owners ultimately complied with the order, signed a notice from the police department, and temporarily closed their businesses. Meanwhile, the NSDAP was to prepare a leaflet calling on demonstrators to refrain from gathering in groups. [288] Franz Schwede then called on SA and SS men in the *Coburger Nationalzeitung*: "Be on your guard now that the National Socialist movement is about to achieve its goal of destroying its struggle for justice through injustice. Trust our leader Adolf Hitler! He will also find ways here to banish the department store plague and the elements alien to the people from our economic and public life. (...) Remember how we National Socialists have triumphed: through obedience and discipline, through subordination to the whole. (...) Therefore: do your duty, i.e., carry out only what you are commanded to do."[289]

Meanwhile, due to arbitrary arrests, which can also be seen in connection with the "wild" boycott actions, it had become virtually impossible for many Jewish-owned businesses to continue their regular operations as early as March 1933. In March 1933, Jewish business owners were deliberately arrested, and
"protective custody" was used as an instrument of terror to force Jewish businesspeople to give up their businesses. Moritz and Isidor Bissberg, who owned the *Nürnberger Bazar* white goods, wool, and haberdashery store at Spitalgasse 9, wrote to von Baczko on
March 27, they wrote to von Baczko requesting their release from custody so that they could continue running their business. In their letter, they explained that Mrs. Bissberg was ill, did not know the business, and was afraid to leave the city and her shop

286 See police department memos dated March 10 and 14, 1933. StadtACo A 7870.
287 See Police Commissioner Scheel to City Commissioner von Baczko, March 14, 1933. StadtACo A 7870.
288 See memo from the police department dated March 15, 1933. StadtACo A 7870.
289 *Coburger Nationalzeitung* dated March 16, 1933.

closed. Her staff were now wandering the streets without work, and the ongoing expenses and rent were causing them considerable financial damage. [290] Mrs. Levenbach also sent a letter to von Baczko requesting the release of her husband, who had voluntarily surrendered to the police and was then unexpectedly imprisoned. This brought their cattle trade to a standstill, as Mrs. Levenbach was hardly able to operate without her husband's authority. [291] She received only a reply from Dr. Friedrich Zagel and Emil Mazuw stating that release from custody or a suspension of the sentence was out of the question. It was only through the intervention of the Polish consulate in Munich that Mrs. Bissberg succeeded in securing her husband's release.

The Reich-wide "boycott of Jews"

At the same time, Spitalgasse in particular remained a contested area. As the most important location for inner-city trade, it became the focal point of the struggle for economic supremacy. Eleven Jewish businesses were located here. The boycott of Jewish businesses, doctors, and lawyers, which was proclaimed throughout the Reich on April 1 [and]which, in particular, channeled the SA's activism into orderly channels, therefore found its public expression especially in Spitalgasse. Already on the day before the official start, the *Action Committee for the Defense against Jewish Atrocities and Boycott Agitation* called for "the more than 28,000 National Socialist voters in the city and countryside of Coburg (...) to show (...) that they are determined to wage the fiercest struggle against the alien Jewish people" (294) voters in the city and state of Coburg (...) show (...) that they are determined to wage the fiercest battle against the alien Jewish people" [(294)]and published a list of shops, doctors, lawyers, and cattle dealers to be boycotted. The call for a boycott by Julius Streicher, who had been appointed chairman of the national boycott committee by Hitler, was also announced in the press.[295] In addition, on the eve of the boycott, the shops concerned were marked with boycott signs, thus initiating the boycott early in order to prevent last-minute purchases by the population.[296]On the morning of April 1, the SA and SS finally occupied the entrances to all Jewish shops, distributed leaflets, and took photos of
"Those who still believe in supporting the main culprit of our hardship

290 See Moritz and Isidor Bissberg to the district office, March 27, 1933. StadtACo A 8386.

291 See Ms. Levenbach to the district office, March 29, 1933. StadtACo A 8386.

292 See transcript of the meeting of the Reparations Chamber for Upper and Middle Franconia, October 30, 1954. StANü Reparations Authority III a 3088.

293 These were: the shoe store Stern & Co. (owned by Siegfried Braun), the Alkan linen factory and furnishings store (owned by Albert Sachs), Dr. Ludwig Morgenthau, the cattle dealer Meyer Levenbach, the lawyers and notaries Dr. Moritz and Dr. Martin Baer, the Julius Weiß shoe store, the Nürnberger Bazar (owned by Moritz Bissberg), the men's and women's clothing store
S. Rawack (owned by Siegfried Besser), the department store K. M. Fechheimer (owned by Hugo Fechheimer and Julius Blüth), the department store M. Conitzer & Söhne (owned by Max Frank and Adolf Friedländer), and the clothing store J. Leschziner (owned by Wilhelm Sandler). See the 1931 city directory, pp. 135–138, and the map in Fromm: Juden, p. 422.

294 *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, March 31, 1933.

295 See *Coburger Tageblatt newspaper* dated March 31, 1933.

296 See memo from the police department dated March 31, 1933. StadtACo A 7870. The fact that the apparent legitimization of the boycott actions, which were illegal in themselves, also had an effect on those affected is clear from a request made by Mrs. Alkan, who contacted the police department on March 31 with the request that the signs be removed by the next morning, as the boycott would not officially begin until 10 a.m. on April 1.



Fig. 42: SA men in front of the house of cattle dealer Meyer Levenbach with the sign "Anyone who goes to a Jew is a traitor to the people."

must."[297] The employment office instructed unemployed SA men in particular to report to the bakery of Nazi city councilor Ernst Bernhard on Steinweg, where they were given signs and leaflets and distributed them throughout the city for a small wage.[298] To finance the boycott measures, the NSDAP held collections in various districts.[299] District leader Schmidt and Deputy Mayor Faber addressed the crowd that had gathered in the market square due to the spectacle in the city center, speaking about the necessity of the struggle, which was planned to be "disciplined but ruthless against Jews and their protectors."[300] The *Coburger Nationalzeitung* reported that

"shouts such as 'Hang the Jews!' (...) characterized the mood of the German people, who no longer want to be enslaved by foreign agitators, profiteers, and profiteers"[301]. In addition to patrols through the city, demonstration marches were also held, in which SA men, led by a drum corps and equipped with signs, created the greatest possible resonance in order to draw the attention of the entire population to the measures being carried out.

The boycott officially ended on April 5, 1933.[303] In the period that followed, the people of Coburg had to show how far they were prepared to go in complying with the requirements and preferences of the new regime.

297 *Coburger Nationalzeitung newspaper* dated April 1, 1933.
298 See various statements in the denazification proceedings against Ernst Bernhard. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg City B 153.
299 See memo from the police department dated April 4, 1933.
300 Ibid.
301 Ibid.
302 See *Coburger Tageblatt newspaper* dated April 3, 1933.
303 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, April 3, 1933.

to follow the policies of the Nazi regime. Local and centrally controlled Nazi propaganda had elevated everyday shopping to a political act, thereby extending "national community" negotiation processes to urban and neighborhood infrastructure.[304] The boycott campaigns thus became a key event in balancing new social rules, conventions, and orders, as for the first time concrete action was demanded of the population that went beyond simply looking away or turning a blind eye and verbally expressing anti-Semitism, and entailed a loss for those involved. Beyond the circle of NSDAP, SA, and SS officials, individuals as customers and consumers were now called upon to change their daily routines and, since Jewish department stores offered the widest, most modern, and most affordable range of goods, to do without these goods in their own everyday lives. However, part of the population, especially women, were not prepared to do so. Shops that explicitly identified themselves as "German shops" with signs in the course of the boycott campaigns suffered a decline in customer traffic. At the same time, customer traffic remained high in shops with Jewish owners.

3.2.1.3 The NS-HAGO as the driving force behind ongoing agitation

The Coburg branch of *the Combat League of Small and Medium-Sized Businesses*, which was to be transferred to the *National Socialist Crafts, Trade, and Industry Organizations* in 1933, took the lead in the fight to oust Jews from economic life, with the support of the Coburg City Council and the party leadership. The *Central Committee for the Defense Against Jewish Atrocities and Boycott Agitation* had called for this on March 28, 1933. [306] Under the chairmanship of Karl Hartung, who was also a member of the Coburg City Council, anti-Semitism among the middle class had become concentrated and institutionalized in *the Combat League of Small and Medium-Sized Businesses*. He made it his goal to "hammer into the minds of consumers where they should shop"[307] and now publicly demanded that those who resisted the boycott calls be sent to the Dachau concentration camp.Hartung·together with city councilor and merchant Franz Reuther·became the driving force behind the boycott measures in Coburg and

304 See Longerich: Politics, p. 21.

305 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, July 12, 1933. See also Bajohr: Verfolgung, pp. 639–642.

306 See Longerich: Politik, p. 36.

307 Ibid.

308 See ibid. and *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, July 14, 1933.

309 Franz Reuther was born on November 29, 1900, in Coburg. The businessman joined the NSDAP and SA in 1930 and served as a city councilor from 1933 and as local group leader between 1933 and 1935. His anti-Semitic economic policy stemmed from the same motives as in the case of Karl Hartung. Reuther was also able to derive the same personal benefits from his activities. His rise within the party came to an abrupt end when he was convicted by the district court of the NSDAP district leadership in Coburg for assaulting a waitress with other men at a celebration for the birth of his youngest child in the "Adolf Hitler House," whereupon the woman filed a complaint. Reuther was able to settle the case without conviction at the Coburg Regional Court in the main hearing on July 13, 1935. Nevertheless, his reputation was permanently damaged, so he withdrew from party life. See NSDAP Coburg District Leadership to the District Court of the NSDAO, February 23, 1935. StACo Disqualification Chamber Coburg City R 120. Reuther was classified as Group II by the Regensburg Disqualification Chamber in its ruling of
October 17, 1947, and sentenced to three years in a labor camp. In the appeal proceedings, Reuther was reclassified as a minor offender with three years' probation in a ruling dated April 6, 1948. See Tribunal file Franz Reuther. StACo Tribunal Coburg City R 120.

In his actions, he always tried to go beyond the official instructions on his own initiative. As chairman of the clothing and textiles section of the retail trade association, he called on all the businesses under his supervision to take rigorous action against Jews and Jewish businesses, and as chairman of the Coburg Discount and Trade Protection Association, he threatened to expel anyone who continued to do business with Jews.[310]Hartung promoted his own business by referring to the call by the Deputy Führer Rudolf Hess to give preference to old party comrades in trade and commerce through purchases and contracts, justifying this by pointing to the alleged years of boycotting of National Socialists. [311] In addition, he offered party members double discount stamps when shopping in his store. [312]At the same time, as chairman of the Coburg Discount and Trade Protection Association, he approached the *Coburger Tageblatt* newspaper and threatened that all members of the association would withdraw their advertisements from the newspaper if it continued to publish advertisements from Jewish businesses. The threat was also published in the *Coburg National Newspaper*. After the *Coburg Daily* initially refused to comply with this demand, some of the businessmen actually stopped advertising in the daily newspaper.[313] The Coburg business Hartungs itself had run into considerable financial difficulties in 1932 and 1933, and the owner himself lived in poor circumstances, which fueled his political agitation. [314]

The assertive strategies of the Jewish shopkeepers and their success provoked immediate counter-reactions, particularly from the Kampfbund and the HAGO. They developed a certain momentum of their own and went beyond the instructions of the Reich leadership. The Conitzer & Söhne department store became the focus of HAGO's agitation and was declared by the NSDAP to be a bastion that had to be overcome in the "anti-Jewish defensive struggle." The fact that Max Frank responded to the NSDAP's actions with increased advertising for his company Conitzer & Söhne and had flyers with product offers distributed via the *Coburger Tageblatt newspaper*, which also reached a number of party members, caused great consternation within the party. On the instructions of the NS-HAGO, control mechanisms were immediately tightened, in particular to reinforce the ban on Coburg party members entering Jewish shops.

New forms of anti-Semitic control and violence

In front of the Conitzer & Söhne department store, SA men carried out checks at all entrances in order to record customer traffic and the number of party members who continued to visit the store. The inspectors often carried cameras with them to photograph the department store's customers.

310 See circular from the Retail Trade Economic Group, Clothing and Textiles Section. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg City H 74.

311 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung* of July 28, 1933.

312 See ibid.

313 See Rabatt und Handelsschutz-Verein Coburg (Coburg Discount and Trade Protection Association) to the *Coburger Tageblatt*, July 8, 1933. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg City H 74. The *Coburger Tageblatt* subsequently contacted the Chamber of Industry and Commerce and the Association of German Newspaper Publishers and asked for their help in the matter. See *Coburger Tageblatt* to the Chamber of Industry and Commerce Coburg, July 11, 1933. StACo Spruchkammer Coburg Stadt H 74.

314 For Karl Hartung, see Chapter III2.2.3.1.

315 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, July 22, 1933.

The result was sobering for the NSDAP. A large number of women who were themselves members of the party or whose husbands were civil servants had ignored and disregarded the ban on entering Jewish shops. In addition to an appeal in the *Coburger Nationalzeitung* to all men to educate their wives and children in the spirit of the Nazi state, and numerous threats, the NS-HAGO now also began to compile lists of names and distribute them throughout the city, on advertising columns or in shop windows.[317] The lists, which were headed "List of Shame. Women who still dare to buy from Jews," printed the names of 68 Coburg women on the instructions of city councilor Karl Hartung, merchant Hans Zeitler, and merchant Erich Fischer.[318] In addition, merchant Franz Reuther repeatedly gathered crowds of people in Steingasse and made inflammatory speeches against his Jewish competitors.

While the enforcement of the boycott in Coburg was now taking on new forms of control and violence, the instructions from the Reich leadership of the NSDAP called for restraint. An order issued by the Führer's deputy Rudolf Hess on July 7, 1933, stated:

> "The NSDAP's position on the 'department store issue' remains fundamentally unchanged. It will be resolved at the appropriate time in accordance with the National Socialist program. In view of the general economic situation, the party leadership does not consider it necessary for the time being to take active measures aimed at bringing department stores and similar businesses to a standstill. At a time when the National Socialist government sees its main task as helping as many unemployed compatriots as possible to find work and earn a living, the National Socialist movement must not counteract this by taking away the jobs of hundreds of thousands of workers and employees in department stores and businesses dependent on them. The branches of the NSDAP are therefore prohibited from taking action against department stores and department store-like businesses until further notice. On the other hand, members of the NSDAP are prohibited from advertising for department stores."[320]

On September 12, 1933, Martin Bormann, Rudolf Hess's chief of staff, also instructed all Gauleiters of the NSDAP to stop the defensive campaign against Jewish businesses, primarily out of foreign policy considerations.[321]Although such announcements were primarily intended as appeasement measures toward foreign countries and the economy, and although the NSDAP leadership took little concrete action to stop anti-Semitic activities, they had far-reaching consequences at the local level in that they enabled those affected to defend themselves. For the owners of Jewish businesses, there now seemed to be a legal framework that offered them a means of redress. The managing director of Kauf-

316 Such actions can be found in many German cities. See, for example, the example of Memmingen in: Janetzko: Aryanization, p. 60.

317 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung* of July 25, 1933, and Conitzer & Söhne to the Coburg Police Department, September 20, 1933. StadtACo A 11937.

318 See memo from the Coburg police department dated September 23, 1933. StadtACo A 11937.

319 See witness statements by Josef D., Hermann M., and Otto M. from October 7 and 8, 1948. StACo Denazification Court Coburg City R 120.

320 *Völkischer Beobachter*, July 10, 1933.

321 See VEJ 1/76, p. 242.

Conitzer & Söhne reported the harassment of its female customers by the checkpoints in front of the entrance doors and referred to the announcement made by the deputy leader of the NSDAP in July 1933.

As a result, national authorities also became aware of the events in Coburg. In addition to the *Reich Association of Medium-Sized and Large German Retail Businesses*, which—represented by the trustee of labor Heinrich Hartmann—demanded intervention against the actions of the Coburg local group of the NS-HAGO, the Bavarian State Ministry of Economic Affairs also requested clarification from the Coburg City Council.[323]With the help of the municipal police, who then launched an investigation, the city administration now sought to reinterpret the action as merely a denunciation of persons who violated National Socialist principles, but not as an unauthorized intervention in economic life. Legal advisor Dr. Schmidt assured the Department of Trade, Industry, and Commerce in the Ministry of Economic Affairs that this was merely an educational measure taken by the NSDAP against its party members and that the buyers named were either members of the NSDAP or National Socialist organizations or sympathizers of the NSDAP.[324]Nevertheless, at the beginning of October 1933, the Ministry of Economics and the government of Upper and Middle Franconia warned the Coburg City Council that distinguishing between "Aryan" and "non-Aryan" companies when entering into business relationships would disrupt reconstruction and that the fight against Jewish department stores should only be conducted by legal means in order not to disturb economic peace.economic peace. [325]Karl Hartung and Hans Zeitler of the NS-HAGO were then forced to abandon their pillorying campaign and undertake to cease the boycott measures against the Conitzer & Söhne company. Until 1940, the police department reported monthly, then semi-annually, on the extent to which public disturbances of economic life and harassment had occurred.

The *Coburger Tageblatt*, which was sharply criticized and attacked by the NSDAP for distributing flyers from the Conitzer & Söhne company, also took a stand on the pillorying campaign and condemned the *Coburger Nationalzeitung's* constant calls for a boycott. It accused the paper of hindering the Reich government's efforts to create jobs by jeopardizing the livelihoods of many workers and employees. In addition, the *Coburger Tageblatt* accused its competitor of hypocrisy, since the entire Coburg industry, craftsmen, businesspeople, and even food retailers continued to place orders and contracts with Jewish businesses.

322 See Conitzer & Söhne to the Coburg Police Department, September 20, 1933. StadtACo A 11937.

323 The trustee of Arbeit Heinrich Hartmann Munich to the city of Coburg, September 18, 1933, and the Bavarian State Ministry of Economics to the Coburg City Council, September 19, 1933. StadtACo A 11937. Following the orders of the Reich leadership of the NSDAP, authorities and state institutions frequently intervened on behalf of the victims. See Longerich: Politik, p. 39 f.

324 See memos from the police department dated September 21 and 23, 1933, and Dr. Otto Schmidt to the Bavarian State Ministry of Trade, Industry, and Commerce, September 23, 1933. StadtACo A 11937.

325 See Bavarian State Ministry of Economics to Coburg City Council, October 2, 1933, and Government of Upper and Middle Franconia to Coburg City Council, October 7, 1933. StadtACo A 11937. The Bavarian Ministry of Economics intervened against boycott actions of this kind on several occasions. See, for example, the case of Memmingen in: Janetzko: Aryanization, p. 80 f. In this case, however, the warning had no consequences.

326 See memo from the police department dated October 6, 1933, and memos from the criminal investigation department on disruptions to economic life up to April 5, 1940. StadtACo A 11937.

[327]Due to the "encouraging trend" in the *Tageblatt*'s statement it also printed excerpts from the Jewish *C. V. newspaper*.

Among the population of Coburg, the pillorying campaign sparked a debate and highlighted the social tensions that the transition to the National Socialist social order had brought to light. On the one hand, it was a matter of investigating local initiatives and the high intensity of persecution in Coburg in line with the instructions from the Reich leadership of the NSDAP, as well as realizing the goals of an anti-Semitic economic policy and, at the same time, not driving up unemployment rates further by closing businesses. On the other hand, questions of social status, honor, and prestige now had to be renegotiated against the backdrop of the idea of a National Socialist "people's community." A Royal Prussian reserve captain named Rümmele, who resided in Coburg, had lodged a complaint against the pillory lists with the government of Upper Franconia, emphasizing that none of the women named on the list could dare to file a criminal complaint in Coburg without being subjected to unbearable persecution in the city. In addition to the fact that the masterminds behind the pillory campaign, such as Alfred Riechers, did not have the best reputation, he was incensed that the list also included the former ducal lady-in-waiting Anna Ellen von Anker.[329] With the authority of his officer rank, the complainant sought to save the honor of the women who had been pilloried and upheld a set of values held in high esteem in bourgeois society, which was to become obsolete in the "people's community." While the city solicitor and later mayor Otto Schmidt interpreted this as a symptom of the educational work still to be done by the NSDAP in intellectual circles of Coburg society, he countered that it was necessary for the

> "In order to maintain racial solidarity among the people, and in particular with regard to the (...) recovery of the German commercial middle class, it is absolutely necessary to make known to the National Socialist population of Coburg those persons who, while claiming the state protection of persons and property guaranteed by the National Socialist revolution, but who, on the other hand, have the shamelessness to prove, through their economic support of Jewish businesspeople, i.e., parasites of the economic body who are alien to their own kind and race, that they are not willing to support the goals of the Reich government."[330]

He further accused Mrs. von Anker of failing to fulfill her "obligations to German businessmen based on blood ties" despite her professional ties to a German princely family, alluding to the fact that her grandfather had converted to the Protestant faith but was Jewish according to the interpretation of the NSDAP.[331] The NS-HAGO also attempted to use the *Coburger Nationalzeitung* to emphasize the principles of the new social order, which no longer recognized class distinctions and assigned no significance to rank and title. See

327 See *Coburger Tageblatt* of July 24, 1933.
328 See *C.V.-Zeitung* of August 3, 1933.
329 See transcript of the complaint by Kgl. pr. H. d. R. Rümmele to the government of Upper Franconia, Chamber of the Interior, September 17, 1933. StadtACo A 11937.
330 Dr. Otto Schmidt to the Executive Committee of the Coburg District Office, September 25, 1933.
331 See ibid.

However, attempts were made to reconcile their actions with a Coburg tradition by justifying the pillorying by pointing out that Duke Johann Casimir had erected a wooden donkey as a pillory in the market square.

Since, according to investigations by the NS-HAGO, many female farmers from the Coburg area were among the customers of Jewish shops, the merchant Hans Zeitler sent a letter on behalf of the NS-HAGO to the mayors in the Coburg district, which once again demonstrated the high degree of initiative and activism on the part of the organization. In it, he criticized the fact that farmers' wives did not shy away from "taking money from their German compatriots for local products (...) in order to immediately cash it in at the Jews." [333]

Zeitler called on rural communities to issue orders prohibiting local residents from having any private or business dealings with Jews, and recommended that local councils pass resolutions similar to those already implemented in Sesslach, which prohibited Jews from entering the town. In return, he offered that the butchers' guilds of Coburg and the surrounding towns would give preferential treatment to those communities that complied with the demands of the NS-HAGO when purchasing livestock.

The boycott of Jewish businesses, lawyers, and doctors represented an important step in the desired transformation process toward a Nazi "people's community" due to the internal social negotiation processes it triggered. It led to the negotiation of new rules and norms in the course of communitization. It was intended to draw boundaries in urban space that publicly stigmatized those who were "alien to the community" and destroyed the remaining bridges to them. Although this radical demarcation was only partially successful, the effect of public ostracism and exclusion had a long-lasting impact.

3.2.1.4 Administrative exclusion

The boycott actions of 1933 were followed by a phase of rationalization in the displacement of Coburg's Jews from economic life, in which persecution and boycott shifted from the streets to administrative measures by the party and administration and initiatives by local merchants. As the main agents of Jewish persecution during this period, local authorities had enormous scope for action, so that despite the lack of centralized persecution instructions the intensity of persecution remained consistently high.

Renewed anti-Semitic boycott movement among the population

At the end of 1934 and beginning of 1935, a boycott movement had once again formed among the population, signaling a new wave of anti-Semitic resentment and attacks that was noticeable in many places.[336] After two years of Nazi rule, it was fueled by dissatisfaction with the unfulfilled promises of the "people's community," such as the lack of improvement in the standard of living of the people and the stagnating economy.

332 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, September 26, 1933.
333 NS Trade, Crafts, and Commerce Organization, Hans Zeitler to the mayors of the former Duchy of Coburg, undated. StadtACo A 7652.
334 See ibid.
335 See Gruner: NS-Judenverfolgung, p. 120, and Janetzko: Arisierung, pp. 178–182.
336 See status report from the police department to the government of Upper Franconia for January 1935. StadtACo A 6588.

Fight against "outsiders."[337] The extent to which the population expected exclusion is evident, for example, in inquiries made by a landlord who, in April 1933, asked to be informed of the date by which Jews would have to give up their businesses and leave the city so that he could inquire about other tenants in good time and secure his rental income.

According to the police department, the renewed boycott measures were crushed on the initiative of the district leadership, but they nevertheless contributed to further marking the urban space in terms of exclusion. A group of National Socialist business owners, led and financed by Karl Hartung and in cooperation with the merchant Otto Kuhn[339], to take action against conspicuous window displays in Jewish shops at Christmas 1934, which they claimed would hit German business owners hard. First, large banners were hung above Spitalgasse and Ketschengasse, reading:
"Tell me where you shop, and I'll tell you who you are." However, when this did not bring the desired success, those involved resorted to using a stencil and adhesive labels to mark Jewish shops from the outside with the words "Attention! Jew." In addition, leaflets with the same content were distributed to visitors to Jewish shops. After the Coburg police failed to put a stop to the activities, the campaign had to be discontinued on the instructions of the political police commander in Berlin following a complaint by the Conitzer company. Those responsible in Coburg learned that individual actions against Jews were undesirable and reserved exclusively for the Reich government. However, it was only after the district leadership intervened that Hartung agreed to end the campaign on January 26, 1935. He continued to observe who entered Jewish shops, however.

In addition, from the summer of 1935 onwards, Coburg institutions and businesses took the initiative to deny Jews access and refuse to buy from them. After
On August 21, 1935, the Union Theater took the first step in an agreement with the district leadership, and more and more businesses decided to do the same. In addition to large signs that were now scattered throughout the city, marking shops where Jews could neither buy nor sell, the *Coburger Nationalzeitung* newspaper published a constantly expanding "list of German merchants in Coburg who refuse to do business with Jews of a different race and type." In addition to the Loreley restaurant and the Großmann company, once managed by Abraham Friedmann, the list also included the hosiery store of NS-HAGO chairman Karl Hartung, the Reuther clothing store, and the Reidiger wine shop. In addition, the Coburg Retail Association and the Bakers' Guild instructed their members to participate in the campaign, and according to Mayor Schmidt, all butcher shops in the city and district followed suit.[342] They were instructed by the

337 See Gruner: Judenverfolgung, p. 89 f. and Longerich: Politik, p. 70–74.
338 See Dr. Otto Schmidt to Mayor Schwede, April 27, 1933. StadtACo A 7870.
339 Otto Kuhn was the main suspect in the murder of Siegfried Kohn, but was never convicted. See Otto Kuhn denazification file. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg City K 295.
340 See Dr. Zagel to Mayor Dr. Schmidt, January 18, 1935. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg City H 74.
341 *Bayerische Ostmark*, August 29, 1935.
342 See Mayor Otto Schmidt to the government of Upper and Middle Franconia, September 7, 1935. StadtACo A 10396.

The *Coburg National Newspaper* printing house provided the corresponding signs, which were then displayed throughout the city to further promote exclusion.[343] In October 1935, the *Bayerische Ostmark* summed up the situation as follows: "We understand that the government has banned any individual action against Jews, and we know that our Coburg businesspeople can cope with this scourge even without individual action. However, there are still those who are naive and incorrigible – they should be admonished by the 'Jew signs'." [344]The Wehrmacht also distributed lists of the remaining Jewish businesses in the Coburg district to the companies stationed in Coburg, which the soldiers were to avoid. [345]

At the same time, Karl Hartung, for example, used his connections to the Coburg city administration to reinforce the boycott by giving the welfare office the names of welfare recipients who continued to shop at Conitzer's, and at the same time requested that their welfare benefits be cut off.[346] In addition, he reported individuals to their superiors and demanded their dismissal if they continued to have contact with Jews, as in the case of Reichsbahn doctor Dr. Filser, about whom Hartung complained to the Coburg local health insurance fund, or the merchant Rückert, who was actually denied permission to continue operating a market stall. [347]

When, in February 1936, a traveling Jewish merchant nevertheless entered Karl Hartung's store and got into an argument with the store owner about whether he was Jewish or not, Hartung took the traveling salesman directly to the police station and filed a complaint with the police department for unfair competition and trespassing.[348] The police had to inform Hartung that, due to the existing legal situation, no criminal action could be taken "against this Jewish insolence," but that they would raise the matter with the relevant trade organization and the authorities responsible.[349] Furthermore, individual local groups of the NSDAP arranged for anti-Semitic banners to be hung above the streets in their district, such as in Leopoldstraße, which read "Jews are not welcome in the 'Ortsgruppe Ost'" [350] in order to visually promote their expulsion from the urban space. In fact, customer traffic and revenues of Jewish businesses declined steadily, and most Jewish business owners were forced to reduce their staff.Julius Weiß, the owner of the Weiß shoe store, therefore decided to move his shop from the center of the contested area, Spitalgasse, to Steinweg, in the hope that this would encourage more customers to venture into his store. But even here, only a few were willing to do so.

343 See *Bayerische Ostmark* from August 21, 26, 27, and 29, 1935.
344 *Bayerische Ostmark*, October 28, 1935.
345 See circular letter from M.G. Battalion 6, December 15, 1936. BA-MA RH 83/12.
346 See Karl Hartung to the Welfare Office, August 22, 1934. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg City H 74.
347 See Karl Hartung to the Allgemeine Ortskrankenkasse Coburg, January 24, 1935, and Funke to the Deputy Führer, January 31, 1935. StACo Spruchkammer Coburg Stadt H 74.
348 See memo from the police department dated February 8, 1936. StadtACo A 8521.
349 See memo from the police department dated March 8, 1936. StadtACo A 8521.
350 See *Bayerische Ostmark*, November 30, 1935.
351 See audit report of the Conitzer & Söhne company, 1938. StACo Coburg Tax Office Old Records 221.

Customers who were afraid of being seen used the shop entrance, so that they entered the store through the hidden back entrance.

The exclusion policy of the Coburg city administration

In addition to this public and visible anti-Semitic branding of the city, the displacement of Coburg's Jewish population from economic life was effectively driven forward by a pronounced policy of exclusion on the part of the city administration. In August 1935, Mayor Schmidt, under threat of dismissal, announced to his subordinates that "all civil servants, employees, and workers of the city, as well as their wives and children living in their parents' households, are not to support Jews in business or maintain any social relations with them." He also appealed to businesspeople who were "directly or indirectly involved with Jews in business or social contexts" to "show honesty and tact, and to expect no municipal contracts from the administration of our city, which is based on the National Socialist, i.e., anti-Semitic worldview and is widely known as a stronghold of National Socialism." do not expect to be awarded any municipal contracts!"[353] In addition to the boycott of Jewish businesses by the city administration with regard to the awarding of contracts, he thus extended the municipal boycott to those businesses that did not comply with the boycott themselves, and institutionalized it. At the same time, he put the entire city administration on a course of exclusion, both in the performance of its official duties and in the private sphere.

The displacement of Jewish cattle dealers also impressively illustrates how measures were initiated at the local level without instructions from the Reich government and how the "de-Jewification" was accelerated. The Coburg city administration, primarily the commercial department of the Coburg police, the district leadership, the district office leadership, and the government of Upper and Middle Franconia cooperated in their actions and drove forward the economic displacement. Since this process is significant for illustrating the scope of action available at the local level in the process of displacing Jewish tradespeople, it will be described in detail.

The start of a targeted displacement process by means of regulations was marked by the city administration's attempt in May 1935 to arbitrarily prohibit trade between agricultural businesses in and around Coburg and Jewish cattle dealers, which in fact had no legal basis whatsoever. In addition, a meeting of NSDAP officials decided that any party member who did business with a Jewish cattle dealer would be immediately expelled from the party. The police issued a directive that Jewish cattle dealers were only allowed to enter the train station for the purpose of traveling. The district leadership of the NSDAP then made it their mission to rigorously enforce the trade restrictions with the help of the police department and, to set an example, had four farmers who continued to have contact with Jewish cattle dealers taken into "protective custody."

For even in rural areas, the negotiation process in which the requirements and expectations of the Nazi regime clashed with established routines and traditions in trade had only

352 See meeting of the Reparations Chamber of Upper and Middle Franconia on August 14, 1957. StANü Reparations Authority III JR 3796.

353 *Coburger Tageblatt* newspaper, August 13, 1935.

were difficult to reconcile, led to social tensions and brought some farmers into conflict with the party leadership.[354] This mood was now exploited by the NSDAP and the city administration. As a result, measures against Jewish cattle dealers were justified by the alleged outrage of the national socialist-minded rural population that the cattle trade in the Co-burg district in particular was still dominated by Jewish dealers. There were nine Jewish cattle dealers compared to four non-Jewish dealers, of whom only three were involved in the trade. At the same time, the trade department of the police office spread the paradoxical assumption that Jewish cattle dealers were deliberately provoking such tensions by doing business with National Socialist-oriented farmers in order to "cause unrest and dissatisfaction among the rural population with the measures taken by the state and the party through anti-National Socialist influence on their business customers."[355]The Jewish cattle dealers themselves denied that the mood in the countryside was fundamentally against them, but emphasized that the agitation of the NSDAP and the threat of "protective custody" had caused many farmers to refrain from trading with them.

On the initiative of Mayor Schmidt in his capacity as district leader, the police department was now instructed to take measures to limit the number of Jewish cattle dealers. In addition to checking the validity and regularity of the identity cards issued, the government was also to be asked to what extent the percentage of Jewish traders could be limited in comparison to their share of the population and what arguments should be used to justify this. Schmidt was thus keen to live up to Coburg's reputation as a model National Socialist city by initiating supra-regional anti-Semitic legislation.[357]Without waiting for a response from the government, Schmidt shortly thereafter instructed the police department to revoke the identity cards of the nine cattle dealers residing in Coburg until the matter had been finally reviewed and to inform them that without the cards they were not permitted to engage in any cattle trading, either buying or selling.[358] Since the measures were unprecedented and the legal framework remained unclear at first, the line of argument used to justify the withdrawal of the identity cards proved to be rather weak. While those affected were told that the cards were needed for statistical purposes, it was later argued that, in view of the heated atmosphere in rural communities, this was only a temporary preventive measure to guarantee the personal safety of Jewish cattle dealers, and it was boasted that this had actually prevented riots against Jews.[359]

354 See *Coburg Official Gazette* of June 26, 1935, and Wilhelm Scheel to the Executive Board of the Coburg District Office of November 2, 1935. StadtACo A 10396.

355 Ibid. and circular letter from the Bavarian Political Police dated October 24, 1935. StadtACo A 10396.

356 See complaint by Jewish cattle dealers to the executive committee of the Coburg district office, November 5, 1935. StadtACo A 10396.

357 See Coburg district leadership to the Coburg police department, August 20, 1935. StadtACo A 10396.

358 See memo from the police department dated August 22, 1935. StadtACo A 10396.

359 See Mayor Otto Schmidt to the government of Upper and Middle Franconia, September 7, 1935. StadtACo A 10396.

Jewish cattle dealers unsuccessfully defend themselves in court

The Jewish cattle dealers immediately lodged a complaint, first personally and then through their lawyer, sending a joint letter to the government of Upper and Middle Franconia in which they explained that the measure was unfairly harsh on them, as their savings had been wiped out by inflation and without the cattlebusiness, they would have to lay off their long-standing staff, would no longer be able to pay their rent, and would no longer be able to feed their families.However, District President Hans Dippold made himself an accomplice of the city administration in Coburg by providing information about the necessary legal framework, which had not yet been finalized at that time. He specified the possibility already being considered by the city of how, based on the Reich President's Decree for the Protection of the People and the State of February 28, 1933, the district office and the city commissioner could continue to revoke the identity cards of some of the Jewish cattle dealers.[361]Party officials also intervened in the proceedings when the Coburg district farmers' association demanded that the trade police take the opportunity to "eliminate" the Jewish trader Nathan Ludwig by "not re-admitting him" now that his trading license had been revoked, as he did not possess the "reliability that must be required of a cattle dealer." On October 22, District Administrator Dehler then implemented decisions based on the reasoning submitted by the government of Upper and Middle Franconia, according to which the number of Jewish cattle dealers in Coburg had to correspond to that of "Aryan" cattle dealers on a three-to-three basis. Of the nine Jewish dealers, only Max Levenbach, Jakob Friedmann, and Nathan Wertheimer had their trade licenses returned. Adolf, Emanuel, and Herbert Gutmann, as well as Hermann Strauß, Nathan Ludwig, and Siegfried Stern, on the other hand, were prohibited from engaging in cattle trading personally or on behalf of third parties under threat of "protective custody." This was justified on the grounds of maintaining peace and order and protecting those affected from attacks by the population.[363]At the same time, the three Jewish cattle dealers who had now been re-licensed were informed that their businesses would be closed "at the slightest violation of legal provisions or in the event of a breach of good faith in the cattle trade."[364] The police department continued to allow them to enter the train station only for the purpose of travel and not for commercial transactions, and from then on subjected them to even stricter controls.

360 See Jakob Friedmann, Adolf and Emanuel Gutmann, Nathan Ludwig, Hermann Strauß, Siegfried Stern, Nathan Wertheimer, Meyer Levenbach to the government of Upper and Middle Franconia, August 30, 1935; Dr. Landenberger to the government of Upper and Middle Franconia, September 20, 1935, and complaint by Jewish cattle dealers to the executive committee of the Coburg district office, November 5, 1935. StadtACo A 10396.

361 See ibid.

362 See The Bayreuth District Farmers' Association, Coburg branch, to the Coburg Trade Police, September 21, 1935. StadtACo A 10396. After the measures in Coburg had already been completed, a circular from the Bavarian Political Police arrived here, which also aimed to restrict cattle trading by Jews and demanded clarification of the relationship between "Jewish" and "Aryan" cattle dealers. See circular letter from the Bavarian Political Police dated October 24, 1935. StadtACo A 10396.

363 See memo from the police department dated October 22, 1935. StadtACo A 10396.

364 Ibid.

365 See ibid. and memo from the police department dated October 30, 1935. StadtACo A 10396.

However, the Ministry of Economics intervened again and instructed the city in a letter dated October 28, 1935, to return the identity cards to the cattle dealers and to follow the prescribed procedures in the event of their confiscation. The city immediately complied in the cases of the six individuals concerned, whose identity cards had still been confiscated, but on Dehler's instructions, the cards for 1935 were marked with a note stating that they were not valid in the administrative district of the Co-burg district office and the cities of Coburg, Neustadt bei Coburg, and Rodach bei Coburg, so that trade remained prohibited there.[367] At the same time, on November 21, the police department ordered the cattle dealers concerned to officially give up their business in Coburg, as the ban on cattle trading also included the maintenance of cattle trading facilities and the use of stables in Coburg.[368] With the exception of Herbert Gutmann, who was employed by the company Adolf und Emanuel Gutmann, the five Jewish traders refused to accept their identity cards, which had become useless to them due to the restrictions imposed on them, and to agree to cease trading. They again lodged a complaint with the government of Upper and Middle Franconia. Pointing out that there were also front-line soldiers among the Jewish cattle dealers and that, according to the Ministry of Economics, no measures should be taken against Jewish businesses until the implementing provisions of the Nuremberg Laws had been enacted, a complaint was also lodged with District Administrator Dehler.

Once again, a consultation process took place between the Coburg city administration and the government of Upper and Middle Franconia, in which the Coburg police department sought to make the bans on Jewish traders as comprehensive as possible. Police Commissioner Oberender, who had pushed for the exclusion of Jewish cattle dealers, raised the question of whether the trade licenses of the cattle dealers in question should be revoked entirely, since they were no longer allowed to trade at their place of business, but such trading would no longer be permissible without a traveling trade license.[370] The government of Upper and Middle Franconia and Government Councilor Derks now declared the ban on the use of the stables in Coburg and the demand to close down the business to be unlawful.[371] Ultimately, the dealers concerned were allowed to continue using their stables in Coburg, but they were prohibited from both displaying their livestock for sale and concluding sales transactions there.[372] Since these regulations also made it impossible to carry out everyday cattle trading, those affected once again refrained from displaying their identification cards. [373]

366 See Bavarian State Ministry of Economic Affairs, Department of Trade, Industry, and Commerce to Mayor Schmidt, October 28, 1935. StadtACo A 10396.

367 See order of District Administrator Dehler dated November 16, 1935. StadtACo A 10396.

368 See order of the police department dated November 21, 1935. StadtACo A 10396.

369 See memo from the police department dated November 27, 1935, and Markus Stern, Siegfried Stern, Hermann Strauß, Adolf Gutmann, Robert Gutmann, Emanuel Gutmann, Nathan Ludwig to the district government of Upper Franconia, November 27, 1935, and complaint from Jewish cattle dealers to the executive committee of the Coburg district office, November 5, 1935. StadtACo A 10396.

370 See Coburg Police Department to the District Office Executive Board, December 5, 1935. StadtACo A 10396.

371 See the government of Upper and Middle Franconia to the executive committee of the Coburg district office, December 11, 1935. StadtACo A 10396.

372 See memo from the police department dated December 20, 1935. StadtACo A 10396.

373 Only Nathan Ludwig allowed himself to be handed these, but stated that he would no longer be able to use them.

While the dispute over the identity cards of the six Jewish cattle dealers dragged on from August to December 1935, during which time they were unable to conduct any business, at the end of the year they were informed once again, in response to their applications for cards for 1936, that the regulations would also apply to the following year.[374] To this end, the police department sought the opinion of the district administration and the district chamber of agriculture, which also spoke out in favor of continuing the measures that had been enacted. [375] An application by Herbert Gutmann to register his own livestock trading business was also rejected, even after Jakob Friedmann, one of the three licensed Jewish livestock traders, was permanently unable to work due to illness. [376]Regular unannounced inspections by the trade department of the municipal police subsequently revealed that the stables of the livestock traders concerned were mostly empty. Under the given circumstances, profitable trade was no longer possible. Complaints regarding violations of the imposed trade restrictions were therefore unnecessary. [377] In 1937, the Bavarian Livestock Association finally decided that identification cards would no longer be issued to non-Aryan farm managers in the Staffelstein district. [378]

The example of the identity cards for Jewish cattle dealers is not the only one that shows how persecution aimed at driving out the Jewish residents of Coburg had become *administrative normality* for the Coburg city administration. In particular, the unannounced checks ordered by the Bavarian Political Police on the trade department of the city police were used by officials to harass Jewish tradespeople. During an inspection of the Jewish butcher Julius Wertheimer in October 1935, the fact that Wertheimer had not yet recorded the working hours of an apprentice from the previous week on the day of the inspection was sufficient for Police Commissioner Oberender to file criminal charges against the business. In addition, the police commissioner, acting on behalf of the Bavarian Political Police, quickly ordered a series of further inspections of the butcher's shop, which can only be interpreted as harassment. While he initially carried out an inspection with the trade supervisory office, during which the whitewashing of a workroom was ordered and the implementation was regularly checked, Oberender also arranged visits by the district doctor and a food technician from the Bavarian State Research Institute for Food and Beverages in Erlangen.

The approval procedure for itinerant trade licenses

Another area in which the regulatory interventions of the trade department of the police office, combined with anti-Semitic regulations imposed by the city authorities, had a negative impact on the economy

374 See memo from the police department dated December 30, 1935.
375 See memo from the police department dated December 14, 1935.
376 See letter from the Staffelstein district farmers' association to the Coburg police department, December 21, 1936, and memo from the police department dated November 20, 1936. StadtACo A 10396.
377 See memos from the police department dated March 25 to September 1, 1936.
378 See memo from the police department dated February 12, 1937. StadtACo A 10396. Hubert Fromm's statement that six Jewish cattle dealers were still licensed in Coburg in 1938 therefore only partially corresponds to the available sources. See Fromm: Juden, p. 108.
379 See circular from the Bavarian Political Police dated October 18, 1935, and the Coburg Police Department to the Bavarian Political Police, October 25, 1935. StadtACo A 10396.

The approval procedure for itinerant trade licenses was another means of promoting exclusion. Once again, the city administration made full use of the scope for action available to it in terms of expulsion. In this case, however, the initiating and driving force was to be found in the NSDAP and the city council, whereas Albin Weschenfelder, the official responsible for issuing itinerant trade licenses, tended to insist on compliance with the existing legal framework.

In January 1937, the Coburg Mitte local group of the NSDAP approached the police department for the first time with a request to refuse Wolf Baumwollspinner a traveling trade license.[381]As for Baumwollspinner, peddling was the last resort for many Jewish tradespeople to earn money after their shops became less and less profitable due to the successful boycotts. In order to cover their running expenses and taxes, pay their suppliers, and feed their families, Jewish merchants, after exhausting all their savings, usually had to take their goods directly to their customers and hope for a certain amount of sales. Wolf Baumwollspinner, who had owned a shop in downtown Coburg for over 30 years, describes how he first cashed out and borrowed against his life insurance policies, withdrew his savings, and sold valuables such as his piano to compensate for the decline in sales. After failing to rent or sell his shop, he was forced to obtain a traveling trade license in order to be able to sell any goods at all.[382] When the son of a cotton spinner was transferred to Dachau in 1933 for alleged moral crimes and the father subsequently attempted suicide, the leader of the Mitte Lang local group insisted on taking Wolf Baumwollspinner into custody. He claimed that "not only the son, but also the father is involved in Jewish machinations, otherwise he would not have resorted to suicide." [383]

In August 1937, businessman and city councilor Ernst Kuhn once again approached the trade police and demanded that, due to the increased number of applications for itinerant trade and peddler's licenses from Jewish citizens of Coburg, a certificate of no objection from the state police be obtained in all cases. As early as 1936, the Bavarian Political Police had instructed that the strictest standards be applied to Jewish applicants and that approval be denied at the slightest suspicion of high treason, treason, or subversive activities.[384]Kuhn warned that the Coburg police department was not taking the seriousness of the situation into account, as he saw sufficient evidence that all Jewish merchants in question were suspected of subversive activities and should therefore be denied permits altogether.[385]Weschenfelder, who had been a member of the NSDAP since 1933, forwarded the applications to the district leadership and higher authorities, justifying his administrative actions by pointing out that some of the Jewish traders had been engaged in itinerant trade for years under the same legal situation and that there had been no violations whatsoever.

380 In June 1937, following the separation of the executive police and the police administration, Weschenfelder was transferred to the latter authority as police secretary. See personnel file Albin Weschenfelder. StadtACo A 12899.

381 See Coburg Mitte local group to the trade police, January 19, 1937. StadtACo A 10395.

382 See Wolf Baumwollspinner to the Trade Police, March 11, 1938. StadtACo A 10395.

383 Coburg Mitte local group to the trade police, January 19, 1937. StadtACo A 10395.

384 See resolution of the Bavarian Political Police dated March 23, 1936. StadtACo A 10530.

385 See Ernst Kuhn to the Trade Police, August 14 and 25, 1937. StadtACo A 10395.

officially known that there were indications of unreliability within the meaning of the provision, and that the government of Upper and Middle Franconia had emphasized that belonging to the Jewish race alone did not constitute grounds for the unreliability of the applicant. He also argued against holding Wolf Baumwollspinner responsible for his son's actions. He pointed out to his superiors that if the trade license were refused, Jewish traders would lodge complaints and the supervisory authority would have to rule in favor of the applicants on the basis of existing law.

Mayor Rehlein finally referred the matter to the Council of Administrative Advisors for a decision. At the time of the decision, the council was dominated by merchants and included Ernst Kuhn, who had initiated the strict exclusion policy. The Administrative Advisory Council now decided that Jewish merchants who applied for a traveling trade license and who had any other income from renting houses, land, or shops should be denied a license.[387] On this basis, the moderating actions of police officer Weschenfelder were also curtailed by the administrative leadership in the future. Simon Rothschild, who had been active in itinerant trade for over 40 years, had his application for an itinerant trade license approved by both the district administration and the employment office. However, due to the decision of the administrative advisory board, he was denied a permit because of his ongoing rental income, so Weschenfelder forwarded the application to Rehlein again and pointed out to him that there was nothing against Rothschild and that he would take the matter to the appeals board. Rothschild had previously explained to the police trade department that his income was greatly reduced by mortgage interest and taxes and that he could not make a living with an additional annual turnover of less than RM 2,000 from his shop.[388] Weschenfelder proceeded in the same manner with the applications of Eduard Plaut and Wolf Baumwollspinner, who had also declared that the income used to reject their applications was in no way sufficient to cover their living expenses without additional income.[389]However, the administrative advisory boards upheld the refusals to issue itinerant trade licenses on the grounds of protecting Coburg's retail trade and eliminating competition that was unacceptable to it.[390] Following the issuance of the negative decisions, the Jewish applicants received a bill for 3 RM plus a 20 percent surcharge, which they had to pay to the administration. Wolf Baumwollspinner was the only one to lodge a complaint with the government, but withdrew it after a few weeks without giving any reasons. [391]In July 1938, peddling was finally banned for Jews throughout the Reich.

386 See Albin Weschenfelder to Alfred Sauerteig, February 14, 1938. StadtACo A 10395. See also Albin Weschenfelder's denazification file. StACo Denazification Chamber Coburg City W 127.

387 See minutes of the meeting of the administrative advisory boards on March 1, 1938. StadtACo A 10395.

388 See memo from the police department dated March 5, 1938. Albin Weschenfelder to Wilhelm Rehlein, March 5, 1938. StadtACo A 10395.

389 See Wolf Baumwollspinner to the Trade Police, March 11, 1938, and Eduard Plaut to the Trade Police, March 14, 1938. StadtACo A 10395.

390 See minutes of the meeting of the administrative advisory boards on March 28, 1938. StadtACo A 10395.

391 See Wolf Baumwollspinner to the Trade Police, April 9, 1938; memo from the Main Office dated April 29, 1938. StadtACo A 10395.

The administrative actions of police secretaries Oberender and Weschenfelder clearly demonstrate the scope of action available to the administration in the process of removing Jewish tradespeople from economic life. Although the result, economic exclusion beyond the general provisions, was identical in both cases, it is nevertheless clear what politically motivated interpretative powers individual officials in the Nazified city administration had at their disposal.

3.2.2 Liquidation and "Aryanization"

3.2.2.1 Elimination of Jewish businesses by the end of 1937

The consequence of excessive violence, stigmatization, and boycott campaigns was an initial wave of liquidations and "Aryanizations" of Jewish businesses, whose owners mostly emigrated. The dynamic that arose from the interaction of official and party measures solidified into a systematic destruction of the livelihoods of Jewish businesspeople. In addition to the use of violent measures, the economic weakness of Jewish companies and the instrumentalization of tax legislation were deliberately used as leverage to eliminate Jewish businesspeople from economic life. The increased intensity of persecution in Coburg demonstrably brought Jewish businesses into economic distress even before April 1933, so that the economic predicament could be used as a starting point for closing down businesses. Particularly with regard to Jewish department stores, which were the focus of public interest and targeted agitation, the measures taken by the party, the city administration, and individuals had already had an effect in 1933 and ended in a series of liquidations.

The ruin of Jewish fashion and department stores

The NS-HAGO and the NS city administration deliberately drove the Zeilberger fashion store at Steinweg 16 into ruin. The owners, brothers Heinrich and Leo Zeilberger, who had both fought in World War I, had already become the focus of anti-Semitic agitation by nationalist associations in the 1920s. The brothers had expressed concern about the anti-Semitic sentiment in Coburg very early on and had taken a clear stand against it as democrats and chairmen of the Reich Association of Jewish Front Soldiers.[392] A series of articles in the *Coburger Warte* newspaper, entitled "Zeilbergerei," subsequently accused the Jewish department store of fraud, among other things, and even at that time, the fashion store was the victim of anti-Semitic vandalism. [393] The Zeilberger brothers themselves were also physically attacked on several occasions. In June 1924, a large group of SA men harassed the owners of the fashion house on their way home from a visit to a restaurant and accused Leo Zeilberger of insulting the "Führer." Zeilberger shot and wounded two men. Since he acted in self-defense, no proceedings were brought against him. However, when one of the injured men died in 1929, Zeilberger was blamed in NSDAP circles. [394] As a result, the boycott movement also targeted the Zeilberger brothers from 1928/29 onwards. In addition

392 See Leo Zeilberger to Dr. Ophir, May 1, 1963. Yad Vashem 0.33/985.
393 See *Coburger Warte* Nos. 8, 9, 10/1923.
394 See Leo Zeilberger to Dr. Ophir, May 1, 1963. Yad Vashem 0.33/985 and *Coburger Tageblatt*, June 14, 1924.

Fueled by the general economic crisis, which had a particularly long-lasting impact in Coburg, and the anti-Semitic tax policy of the city administration, the fashion house was forced to go into liquidation in 1931, after composition proceedings had already been opened against the company in 1929.[395] The company's subsequent activities consisted solely of liquidation activities such as the sale of inventory items, the collection of outstanding debts, and the termination of rental agreements.[396] The owners subsequently planned to convert the lucrative business premises for use as a Wohlwert store, the German subsidiary of the American Woolworth retail chain, which represented a new business model in which goods were openly displayed on sales tables for customers and fixed prices were set. The increasingly hostile sentiment toward Jewish businesspeople could have been circumvented in this way, as the owners no longer had to be in constant contact with their customers in this business model. Contracts had already been drawn up with the purchasing company Grohag and its subsidiary Wohlwert GmbH in Leipzig. The city administration had initially granted a permit. However, when the fashion house held a total clearance sale with the approval of the Coburg Chamber of Commerce, the NSDAP became aware of its plans and called for protests against the Zeilberger brothers bringing "Jewish department store capital" to Coburg. At a protest rally, Mayor Schwede, among others, incited hatred against the Jewish entrepreneurs and initiated a resolution calling on the city council to prevent the Zeilbergers' plans by all means necessary.

In fact, the city administration withdrew its previously granted approval. On the one hand, it refused to allow the owners of Steinweg 16 to carry out the renovation work for technical reasons. On the other hand, criminal charges were brought against the company for alleged violations of trade regulations due to the total sell-out. However, a subsequent penalty order of 50 RM each had to be withdrawn.Ultimately, however,the specific renovation work and the conversion of their business could no longer take place. On March 12, 1933, Leo and Heinrich Zeilberger were taken into "protective custody," mistreated in the *Alte Herberge*, and then transferred to Dachau, where they remained imprisoned until 1936. When the Zeilberger brothers were no longer able to meet their tax obligations from prison during the liquidation proceedings and a lease failed due to reprisals against Jewish businesses and intervention by the Nazi HAGO, the city of Coburg initiated foreclosure proceedings against them.[400]Although their mother, Rosa Zeilberger, obtained a suspension of the proceedings before the Coburg District Court, the

395 See Ernst Zeilberger to the Coburg District Court, November 22, 1929. StadtACo A 11331.

396 See Modehaus Zeilberger to the Coburg District Court, August 2, 1932. StadtACo A 11331.

397 To protect the retail trade, fixed-price shops had already been banned in towns with fewer than 100,000 inhabitants in 1932, which the NSDAP referred to here. See RGBl. I 1932, pp. 125, 571.

398 The dispute arose because Bernhard Zeilberger, who had not been involved in the dissolved company, ran a men's tailor shop in the same building and continued to sell men's ready-to-wear clothing and textiles there. The charge was therefore circumvention of the sell-off regulations.

399 See Leo Zeilberger to Dr. Ophir, May 1, 1963. Yad Vashem 0.33/985.; *Coburger Volksblatt*, January 7, 1933, and partial decision of the Reparations Chamber for Upper and Middle Franconia, November 14, 1953. StANü Reparations Authority III a 5532.

400 See ibid., statement by Bernhard Zeilberger dated March 26 and April 12, 1933. StACo Coburg District Court, Foreclosures 84 and Legal Aid Department of the IRSO to the Reparations Authority for Upper and Middle Franconia, November 15, 1950. StANü Reparations Authority III a 5532.

City administration under pressure to continue with the foreclosure sale. [401]Once again, the Zeilberger brothers successfully defended themselves against the measures taken against them and brought the proceedings to a halt. However, the tax and levy obligations on the vacant building continued uninterrupted after the tax office had reduced the family's tax rates in the cheap procedure, but the city administration did not follow suit despite the reduced income. This was one of the ways in which the hostile attitude of the city treasury officials toward Jewish business owners was expressed. After their release from prison, Leo and Heinrich Zeilberger paid the taxes due, had the auction notice deleted, and persuaded the tax office to waive all amounts attributable to the business premises from 1933 onwards. Due to the requirement to leave Germany within four months, they ultimately sold the property on Steinweg to Walter Willeke for RM 52,500, including inventory, below market value, with a purchase agreement dated April 5, 1937.[403] While their mother Rosa Zeilberger, who was the co-owner of the property, subsequently moved to Frankfurt, Leo and Heinrich emigrated to Palestine. [404]

The company K. M. Fechheimer & Co. Manufaktur- und Modewaren, Damen- und Kinderkonfektion sowie Wäscheausstattung, which had been located at Spitalgasse 12 since 1891, also closed its store in March 1933. Both owners, Julius Blüth and Hugo Fechheimer, had emigrated to the Netherlands as a result of targeted harassment, boycotts, and "protective custody."[405] The company was eventually liquidated and the business premises in Spitalgasse were auctioned off by the local court on
April 20, 1934. The Coburg Savings Bank was awarded the property as the highest bidder and leased it to the merchant and NS-HAGO chairman Karl Hartung, who ran a textile and haberdashery store there. In December 1939, the savings bank finally sold the property to Hartung.

"Aryanization" in 1933

The "Aryanizations" that took place in 1933, in which Jewish businesses passed into the hands of "Aryan" , were characterized by the fact that Jewish owners, whose economic power had already been weakened by the general economic crisis and Nazi propaganda, advertised their businesses on their own initiative after the experiences of 1933 and sold them at an economically unfavorable time in order to enable a quick sale and accelerate emigration. In the phase leading up to the tightening of the "Aryanization measures" and laws of 1937, there was

401 See City Treasury to Notary II Ehrlicher, March 16, 1934. StACo Coburg District Court, Foreclosures 84.
402 See Rosa Zeilberger to Coburg City Treasury, February 17, 1936, and City Treasury to Notary II Ehrlicher, Coburg, March 2, 1936. StACo Coburg District Court, Foreclosures 84.
403 One Reichsmark from 1933 had approximately the purchasing power of €4.70 in 2021. One Reichsmark from 1937 had approximately the purchasing power of €4.50 in 2021. See Deutsche Bundesbank: Purchasing power equivalents of historical amounts in German currencies. URL: https://www.bundesbank.de/resource/blob/615162/13c8ab8e09d802ffcf2e5a8ae509829c/mL/kaufkraftaequivalente-historischer-betraege-in-deutschen-waehrungen-data.pdf (last accessed on November 29, 2022).
404 Legal Aid Department of the IRSO to the Reparations Authority of Upper and Middle Franconia, November 15, 1950. StANü Reparations Authority III a 5532.
405 Julius Blüth died in exile in the Netherlands in 1936.
406 See registration form dated December 30, 1948. StANü Reparations Authority III a 4084.

However, buyers of Jewish businesses still had sufficient leeway to pay the previous owners a purchase price that was reasonably in line with market conditions. Despite the increased intensity of persecution in Coburg, it was still possible at this point to include the *goodwill* of the business, which consisted of the reputation of a company, its product range, its established customer base, and its business relationships, in the sales contracts.[407] Ultimately, however, fiscal persecution meant that Jewish sellers usually received only a small portion of these purchase prices. Another characteristic feature of these "Arisierungen" was that the new owners quickly changed the company name after taking over the business in order to remove the stigma of a Jewish business, but continued to run the stores, most of which had been established in downtown Coburg for decades, with the existing product range and, in most cases, the existing staff.

Isidor Bissberg, the owner of the *Nürnberger Bazaar* at Spitalgasse 9, for example, sought a buyer for his store immediately after his release from "protective custody" by placing an advertisement in *the Fränkischer Kurier newspaper*. Armin Hoffman subsequently took over Bissberg's store, including the warehouse, inventory, employees, and two apprentices, with a purchase agreement dated September 15, 1933. Instead of the 15,000–20,000 RM requested in the advertisement, the sale was concluded for 25,000 RM. Hoffman's parents vouched for their son, who continued to run the store under the name *Coburger Bedarfsartikelhaus Armin Hoffman*. [408] The situation was similar at the Stern shoe store, which was owned by the Braun family. After their son Dr. Erich Braun had been arrested three times by June 1933, severely mistreated, and finally transferred to the Dachau concentration camp, his parents Siegfried and Clara Braun decided to leave Coburg. After selling off the entire inventory of the Stern shoe store, Siegfried Braun advertised his store in the trade journal *Schuh und Leder* in August 1933 and offered to sell it to a "Christian buyer."[409] With a purchase agreement dated August 20, 1933, Clara and Siegfried Braun sold their shoe store, which had been in Coburg for over 36 years, together with its furnishings and inventory, to Kurt Sitte for 21,650 Reichsmarks. [410]

Julius Fleischmann, who had owned a fish shop on Steinweg since April 1914, came under the scrutiny of the police in March 1933 because, among other things, the postal surveillance office had intercepted letters from Fleischmann to his sister in Prague in which he stated that, following the death of his wife, he wanted to liquidate his shop and start a new life in the Czech Republic. He was quickly suspected of a foreign exchange offense. During an interrogation conducted against this background, the fishmonger stated that he could not maintain the business due to declining revenues and that seizures had already had to be carried out in the previous year. Fleischmann, who supplied the rural hospital with sea fish

407 See Köhler, Ingo: Werten und Bewerten. Die „kalte“ Technik der Arisierung. In: Berghoff, Hartmut; Kocka, Jürgen; Ziegler, Dieter (eds.): Wirtschaft im Zeitalter der Extreme. Beiträge zur Unternehmensgeschichte Österreichs und Deutschlands. Im Gedenken an Gerald D. Feldman (= Schriftenreihe zur Zeitschrift für Unternehmensgeschichte, Band 20). Munich 2010, pp. 316–336.

408 See settlement proposal by the Reparations Chamber at the Nuremberg-Fürth Regional Court, April 5, 1963. StANü Reparations Authority III a 3088.

409 See transcript of the advertisement from *Schuh und Leder* dated August 8, 1933. StANü Reparations Authority III a 3335.

410 See purchase agreement dated August 20, 1933. StANü Reparations Authority III a 3335.

411 See transcript of Fleischmann's interrogation. StadtACo A 7870.

who had been responsible for this, was particularly affected by the municipal ban on contracts. During the night of March 25 to 26, the merchant was taken into "protective custody" for allegedly supporting the Communist Party of Germany (KPD). Since Fleischmann was a Czech citizen, a consular lawyer from the Czech Consulate General submitted a request to the police department, emphasizing the Czech's active military service in the Austrian army and pointing out his diabetes, which could make imprisonment a serious health risk. Although von Baczko responded negatively to this intervention, Fleischmann was released from "protective custody" after a few days. Since his shop had to remain closed due to his absence, the police department now carried out meticulous surveillance. Together with one of Fleischmann's competitors, the merchant Paul Brückner, who also owned a specialty fish shop on Steinweg, the police officers checked whether Fleischmann had removed all spoiled goods from the store in accordance with regulations.[413] In April 1933, Julius Fleischmann left Coburg, initially heading for Weimar, and eventually emigrated to Czechia[414] , where the Coburg Residents' Registration Office classified him as one of those "fellow citizens who fled across the border for no reason other than fear, influenced by the propaganda of the ruling party."[415] While he was in "protective custody," his landlord, the merchant Ernst Bräcklein, had already sold and retained the perishable goods and other items in return for his rent claims. After Fleischmann's emigration, Bräcklein took over the store with its inventory as the owner, renovated the business, and continued to run it under his own name. No purchase price was paid·taking into account the value of the business.

The "Aryanization" of the Conitzer & Söhne department store

The Conitzer & Söhne department store, which was a particular focus of NS-HAGO, was also unable to resist the pressure of persecution for long. In 1908, Conitzer & Söhne acquired the building at Spitalgasse 19 and built a modern department store on the site in 1910. As a branch of the Conitzer stores and a subsidiary of the main store of the same name in Gotha, owned by two nephews of the group's founder, Max Frank and Adolf Friedländer ran the Coburg branch independently. Only the purchase of goods and business policy were controlled centrally.[417] At the latest since the department store had threatened, in the *Schwede case*, like the Großmann company, to no longer cover its energy needs from the municipal utilities if their employee Schwede continued his anti-Semitic agitation, it had become the target of the NSDAP's systematic policy of displacement. Despite the enormous decline in sales, the company was subjected to salary cuts, layoffs, cancellations, and quantity restrictions.

412 See lawyers and notaries Leidert and Neumann Berlin to the municipal police office in Coburg and from Baczko to lawyers and notaries Leidert and Neumann Berlin, April 3, 1933. StadtACo A 7870.

413 See memo from the police department dated March 29, 1933. StadtACo A 7870.

414 The files of the residents' registration office list emigration to Karlsbad, while the files of the reparations authority list emigration to Rausnitz.

415 See list of emigrants in the Coburg district office, March 4, 1934. StadtACo A 8386.

416 See settlement of February 27, 1957. StANü Reparations Authority III JR 3867.

417 See excerpt from the commercial register. StANü Reparations Authority III JR 3867 and Boseckert: Kauf- und Warenhäuser, p. 60 f.

The manufacturers were prohibited from reducing orders for goods already placed under threat of confiscation, as was the closure of the store.

The department store had already been up for sale in 1935, but the city administration denied permission to several interested parties because the Coburg Retail Association had spoken out against the continued existence of a department store in Coburg. Only the apron manufacturer Moritz Döring was approved as a buyer by the city administration. He had the support of Ernst Bernhard as his advocate and, as compensation for his lack of party membership, wanted to prove his loyalty to the party and the Ministry of Economics by making donations in the form of free curtains and runners for business premises and local party offices.

On August 1, 1936, the business was sold for RM 148,000 to Moritz Döring, who took over the building, all the fixtures and fittings, the inventory, and everything that was fixed to the walls, bands, rivets, nails, masonry, and earth, with RM 46,000 set aside for the warehouse and RM 5,000 for the inventory. On the day the contract was signed, Döring had to pay RM 35,000 to the sellers to settle outstanding debts for goods. A further RM 20,000 was to be paid immediately to the shareholder Adolf Friedländer in Berlin once the land register had been completed. No actual stocktaking or inventory was carried out before the purchase was completed. Moritz Döring also seamlessly took over the existing insurance policies and service contracts for the staff, enabling him to continue running the business immediately without any renovation work or new purchases, as the handover took place on the day the contract was signed.[419] Döring received a special exemption from the city to continue the business, even though the takeover of a retail outlet was prohibited under Art. 1 § 2 (1) of the Retail Trade Protection Act. The Coburg Chamber of Industry and Commerce and the commercial department of the police office had also approved the sale and continuation of the store by Döring. The continued employment of the managing director Jablonka and a certificate from the Chamber of Commerce stating that Döring himself also had sufficient expertise justified the exemption within the meaning of the law. In order for the business to be declared a textile store rather than a department store in the future, Döring was required to carry only manufactured goods, interior decorations, men's items, ready-made clothing, and haberdashery and fancy goods in his assortment and not to add any new items.

The sale was therefore made at a price far below value for the former owners of the department store. Adolf Friedländer informed the Coburg tax office: "During the sale on August 1, 1936, it became apparent that I had to sell the business, including the property, at a price far below its actual value. This circumstance has the effect that not only has my share in the company, as proven on January 1, 1935, been lost, but I will also be required to pay several thousand marks in the course of the final settlement."

418 See registration form dated December 4, 1948. StANü Reparations Authority III a 1328; Lisa Friedländer to the Reparations Authority of Upper and Middle Franconia, December 3, 1950; Notary Schröter to the Reparations Chamber for Upper and Middle Franconia, April 13, 1951. StANü Reparations Authority III a 3896.

419 See purchase agreement dated August 6, 1936. StANü Reparations Authority III a 3896.

420 See transcript of the letter from Mayor Schmidt dated August 20, 1936. StANü Reparations Authority III a 3896 and RGBl. I 1933, pp. 262–264.

was."[421] In fact, the purchase price was offset by liabilities of RM 150,582.04, resulting in a loss of RM 2,582.04.[422] After Max Frank lost his entire fortune in the sale of his business and was even left with debts, he had to live on financial support from his relatives and found it difficult to cover the necessary costs of medical care for his seriously ill wife.[423] He died in Coburg in December 1938 after being mistreated during Kristallnacht. His wife Jenny moved to a retirement home in Würzburg in 1939, was deported from there, and died in Theresienstadt in 1943. Adolf Friedländer had already moved his residence from Coburg to Berlin in 1930, emigrated from there in 1939, and died in exile in Birmingham in 1944.

The Max Kohn department store at Steinweg 38 also closed after the first wave of persecution in 1933. Max Kohn then worked as a merchant. After being accused of "racial defilement," he was first imprisoned in the Dachau concentration camp and then in the Buchenwald concentration camp, where he died in October 1941.[424] In 1936, the Leschziner department store at Spitalgasse 21 also closed, and its owner, Wilhelm Sandler, left Coburg for Ilmenau, from where he was deported and murdered in Auschwitz in 1943.[425] The Jewish department stores and fashion houses of Coburg had thus ceased to exist. It was not only the Aryanizers themselves who benefited from the massive displacement policy in Coburg. Indirect beneficiaries were also those retail stores whose Jewish competitors had now been eliminated and whose owners – driven by middle-class anti-Semitism – had often contributed to exclusion in large and small gestures.

The abandonment of Jewish livestock trading businesses and the case of Dr. Sadler

Similarly, Jewish cattle dealers were forced to gradually close their businesses due to the smear campaign against them and the city administration's deliberate policy of exclusion. Benno Kaufmann left Coburg in 1933 after a smear campaign against him and moved to Nuremberg. The owners of the Gutmann livestock trading business had been victims of anti-Semitic abuse in 1922 and were also among those abused in the "beating room." The experience of the Nazis' propensity for violence caused Adolf Gutmann to suffer a heart attack when his son was arrested in 1933, leaving him unable to work for a long time.[427] In December 1936, the livestock trading business went into liquidation.[428] Jakob Friedmann left on an indefinite trip in December 1937, vacating his apartment and storing his furniture in a room in the house.[429] Prior to this, his authorization to

421 Adolf Friedländer to the Coburg tax office, October 20, 1936. StANü Reparations Authority III a 3896.
422 See information from the Coburg tax office dated March 13, 1951. StANü Reparations Authority III a 3896.
423 See Max Frank to the Coburg tax office, April 1, 1937, and Max Frank to the Coburg tax office, June 1, 1937. StACo Coburg Tax Office Old Records 229.
424 See Chapter IV2.2.1.3.
425 See Coburg residents' register. StadtACo Coburg city address books from 1931, 1943, and 1937 and Fromm: Jews, p. 114. Caesar Caspary, the owner of the Tietz department store at Steinweg 11, had already died in 1932. His wife Alice left Coburg in November 1933 for Nuremberg.
426 See Coburg resident registry. StadtACo.
427 See Adolf Gutmann's medical records. StACo StAnw Co 906.
428 See letter from the Staffelstein district farmers' association to the Coburg police department. December 21, 1936. StadtACo A 10396.
429 See memo from the police department dated December 30, 1937. StadtACo A 10396.

His livestock trading business was revoked due to unfair business practices, which meant the end of his livestock trading business. Nathan Ludwig closed his livestock trading business and worked as a laundry representative. The butcher Julius Wertheimer also sold his business on Steinweg to Arthur Roth in 1936 and emigrated to the USA with his family.Hermann Strauß also deregistered his cattle trading business by March 1938, bringing Jewish cattle trading to a virtual standstill. The Leo Sachs wholesale gutter and butchery supplies business at the freight station was Aryanized before 1938. On October 18, 1937, the company was sold for 11,200 RM, well below its value, to Christian Zeitler, who was also active in the intestine industry. After the company was no longer supplied with goods by intestine suppliers, the widow Bella Sachs was forced to sell and advertised in an intestine magazine. After Christian Zeitler's death, his heirs were able to resell the business for RM 30,945, taking into account the actual value of the company, which was estimated at RM 20,000 by the price authorities.

However, the damage caused by "Aryanization" was not limited to the immediate material loss suffered by Jewish companies. Anti-Semitic economic and exclusionary policies, and their exploitation by private individuals, also destroyed opportunities for economic expansion and the development of prosperous businesses, or transferred them to "Aryan" buyers. The example of chemist Alfred Sadler, who was on the verge of establishing his small business in the plastics industry with entrepreneurial risk-taking and a willingness to invest, bears witness to this.

Since April 1929, Alfred Sadler and Julius Klein had been running a trading company for ceramic-technical insulation products as partners at Kanonenweg 35. Alfred Sadler, who had earned his doctorate in chemistry in Würzburg, had expanded the company by purchasing machines for a Bakelite press, thereby significantly increasing its value and bringing it up to the latest standards in thermosetting plastics technology. The patent for the synthetic resin Bakelite, which was the first industrially manufactured plastic, had expired in 1927, enabling Dr. Sadler to bring this innovative and versatile plastic to Coburg with his investment.[435]On January 2, 1933, the company was renamed Julius Klein Nachfolger Dr. Sadler, and Dr. Sadler continued to run it alone as a retail merchant. [436]After the company's expansion required considerable investment against the backdrop of the general economic crisis, Sadler accumulated tax and supplier debts. Faced with anti-Semitic hatred directed at him and his family and the threat of being sent to a concentration camp, Sadler ultimately decided that the future of his business could not lie in the Vestestadt. He sought to emigrate to England and made his first trip there in December 1935, during which he secured several large orders for his factory. After he

430 See Bavarian Livestock Association to the Coburg Trade Office, December 18, 1937. StadtACo A 10396.
431 See list of Jewish businesses from August 1938. StadtACo A 11291.
432 See Coburg resident registry. StadtACo.
433 See memo from the police department dated March 10, 1938. StadtACo A 10396.
434 Leo Sachs had already died in January 1925. See settlement of April 21, 1952. StANü Reparations Authority III a 5136. The Darmhandlung Sally Kahn was also abandoned in 1938. Its owner emigrated to the USA.
435 See Baekeland, Leo Hendrik: Bakelite, a new synthetic resin. Chemiker-Zeitung 33 (1909), pp. 317–318.
436 Julius Klein became a limited partner in the porcelain wholesaler Klein & Co.

Having left the German Reich on April 4, 1936, his domestic assets were confiscated on May 22, 1936, pursuant to a decision by the Coburg District Court at the request of the public prosecutor's office. In August 1936, the guardian ad litem ultimately had to file for bankruptcy after the state had confiscated the

A compulsory mortgage of RM 75,000 had been imposed on the building and machinery as "Reich flight tax." Since he had used the liquidated assets from transactions concluded in England to finance his stay in England without the approval of a German foreign exchange authority, on October 12, 1936, the Coburg Magistrate's Court sentenced Dr. Sadler in absentia to three years' imprisonment, a fine of RM 65,000, and the costs of the proceedings for offenses against the foreign exchange regulations of the German Reich. [437] Ultimately, his factory and machinery were sold without his consent and without payment.[438] Martin Kaiser acquired Kanonenweg 35, together with the company located there, from the bankruptcy estate in May 1937 for only RM 24,000. Together with Oskar Gaudlitz, an electricity plant owner from Gräfenthal in Thuringia who had moved to Coburg in the summer of 1937, Kaiser founded the general partnership Gaudlitz & Kaiser in June 1937 on the basis of the existing business, the machines, the dies, and the stocks of materials, semi-finished and finished products. The general partnership thus built its business model on the basis of the Jewish company, or, according to the partnership's deed, continued Sadler's business of manufacturing pressed parts from synthetic resins.[439] In 1939, the Gaudlitz und Kaiser company was finally dissolved, with Oskar Gaudlitz taking over the assets and liabilities of the business as determined on December 31, 1938, without the company name, and paying Martin Kaiser a settlement balance.[440] The Oskar Gaudlitz OHG pressing plant subsequently expanded its operations with a number of machines and was already able to report a net profit of RM 269,297.13 in 1941. [441]

The case of Großmann & Kisch AG

One of the most prestigious "Aryanizations," which was the focus of public interest in Coburg and a symbol of the enormous and early persecution

437 The verdict was overturned on July 17, 1950, by the criminal division of the Coburg Regional Court. See decision in the criminal proceedings against Alfred Sadler by the criminal division of the Coburg Regional Court, June 17, 1950. StANü Reparations Authority III a 1957.

438 See decision in the criminal proceedings against Alfred Sadler by the Criminal Division of the Coburg Regional Court, June 17, 1950, and Dr. Stammberger to the Regional Court Compensation Division in Bayreuth, March 15, 1951. StANü Compensation Authority III a 1957.

439 See document of the general partnership Gaudlitz & Kaiser dated September 22, 1937. StANü Reparations Authority III a 1957.

440 See document dated January 12, 1939. StANü Reparations Authority III a 1957.

441 See Development of the Capital Account Oskar Gaudlitz, July 31, 1950, and List of Machinery Purchased Since 1938, May 27, 1950. StANü Reparations Authority III a 1957. In the course of the reparations process, a settlement was reached on July 26, 1951, according to which the heirs of Oskar Gaudlitz paid Alfred Sadler 35,000 RM and the property, together with the assets of the OHG, remained with the current owners. The applicant was also obliged to pay any proceeds from his compensation claim, which arose from the fact that the purchase price at the time had not been made available to him, to the respondents. See settlement of the Reparations Chamber of Upper and Middle Franconia dated July 26, 1951. StANü Reparations Authority III a 1957.

The case of the meat and sausage factory Großmann & Kisch AG is a prime example of this pressure in Coburg. In this case, it was not a Jewish business per se that passed into the hands of "Aryan" owners, but Jewish entrepreneurs who were forcefully pushed out of the company. The exclusion of one of Coburg's most prominent Jews, CEO Abraham Friedmann, and his share of the company's assets in the form of common and preferred shares from C. Großmann & Kisch AG developed against the backdrop of the NSDAP's expansion of power in Coburg into a deliberate attempt by various political actors to destroy Friedmann's livelihood.

The Großmann company, which had been converted into a stock corporation in 1922, was affiliated with the Kisch & Co. company in Berlin in 1930 at the suggestion of Dresdner Bank, whereby the Kisch company headquarters in Berlin became a branch office of the Großmann company. While Karl Kisch and Tobias Großmann now headed the company's supervisory board, the executive board consisted of two Jewish members, Abraham Friedmann and Emil Heilbron, a retired Berlin commercial court judge. Since Friedmann owned half of the preferred shares and a considerable amount of the common shares, giving him a corresponding amount of voting rights, and since he was closely associated with the company's founder, Tobias Großmann, and the commercial director, Schütz, he, as generaland authorized signatory on the board of directors, he had significant voting power within the company and, thanks to his dominant position in terms of capital, also played a key economic role in the company. He was represented on the supervisory board by his son-in-law, Dr. Martin Friedenreich, among others.

As early as 1930, there were calls for Friedmann's dismissal, but he was able to fend them off, not least thanks to the intervention of the lending Dresdner Bank, which itself was considered the "Jewish" institution among the major banks.[443] Finally, however, Friedmann was systematically ousted by the Coburg members of the supervisory board. After being severely mistreated and threatened with his life, Friedmann moved to Berlin in 1933 to live with his daughter Berta Landauer, which meant he was no longer able to fully exercise his rights as a member of the board and shareholder in Coburg. On March 20, the supervisory board announced in the *Coburger Nationalzeitung* that Friedmann had resigned as a member of the company's board.[444] At a supervisory board meeting in Berlin on March 25, 1933, Friedmann's employment contract, as well as that of board member Heilbron, was terminated without notice for allegedly unlawful withdrawals of money in 1931.[445] This step was largely driven by State Bank Director Andreas Hager.

442 See Senta Friedenreich's application for restitution to the Central Registration Office in Bad Neuheim, December 14, 1948. StANü Reparations Authority III a 3082.

443 See transcript of the minutes of the supervisory board meeting of April 30, 1930, at the Legal Aid Department of the JRSO to the Reparations Chamber of Upper and Middle Franconia, April 21, 1953. StANü Reparations Authority III a 3082. On Dresdner Bank, see Ziegler, Dieter: Die Dresdner Bank und die deutschen Juden. Munich 2006.

444 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, March 20, 1933.

445 Specifically, this involved an amount of approximately RM 4,000, which was listed in a trust report that had already been approved by the general meeting of Großmann AG. See transcript of the minutes of the supervisory board meeting of July 14, 1933, in the transcript of Martin Friedenreich's memo on the evaluation of the original files of Großmann AG dated March 7, 1953. StANü Reparations Authority III a 3106. In the run-up to the meeting, State Bank Director Hager had already inquired with a Coburg magistrate whether the facts of the case would be sufficient for Friedmann's immediate dismissal. See transcript of the minutes of the supervisory board meeting.

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by the Bavarian State Bank Coburg in consultation with the bank's board of directors. The commercial councilor and owner of the doll and toy factory and export company Hans Leh, retired factory director Leonhard Meckel, and retired bank director and chief representative of the Gotha Insurance and Banking Group Ehrhard Marx, who together held a majority on the committee, also acted in Hager's interests.[446] Apart from abstentions by Wilhelm Kleemann, the Jewish director of Dresdner Bank Berlin, and Karl Kisch, as well as the dissenting vote of Dr. Friedenreich, the supervisory board members voted in favor of the move, which left Friedmann without a livelihood. A severance payment was not approved, as the supervisory board felt it would be unacceptable to the public. Against the backdrop of Großmann AG's poor balance sheet, which had resulted in particular from the merger with Kisch AG in the prevailing economic climate, there were fears for the company's reputation and thus its capital in view of the boycott campaigns active in Coburg at the time. Hager was therefore additionally keen to limit the salaries of the two board members retroactively from October 1, 1932. This was a proposal aimed solely at deliberately destroying the economic basis of the two Jewish board members. Friedman's son-in-law, Dr. Friedenreich, and Director Kleemann of Dresdner Bank vehemently protested against the proposal, and the latter resigned from his seat on the supervisory board at the end of the meeting.

At the general meeting of Großmann AG on June 6, 1933, in the Hofbräugaststätten, Hager and Leh agitated against the two Jewish board members, reported on Friedmann's allegedly excessive expenses, and blamed the two for the heavy losses suffered by Großmann AG, which had led to the sale of the Berlin branch. They painted a picture in which the supervisory board had been actively deceived by Friedmann and Heilbron and the supervisory board members themselves had been powerless against the "Jewish financial industry," alluding to the collaboration between Dresdner Bank and Friedmann. In doing so, they perpetuated the distorted image of the "greedy and overpowering financial Jews," as they were called in Nazi jargon, and shifted the responsibility for the current financial situation of Großmann AG away from themselves. With regard to the newly elected supervisory board at the meeting, the *Coburger Nationalzeitung* subsequently reported: "Tobias Großmann, Jud Kleemann, Belitz, and Jud Kisch have resigned. Meckel, Marx, Leh, and Hager have stepped down. Jud Friedenreich has not resigned.

Meeting of April 30, 1930, at the Legal Aid Department of the JRSO to the Reparations Chamber of Upper and Middle Franconia, April 21, 1953. StANü Reparations Authority III a 3082. In the Heilbronn case, Großmann AG stated in proceedings brought against the company by the Commercial Court Council before the Berlin Regional Court that the dismissal had taken place because the defendant, as a Jew, was unacceptable in Coburg, a stronghold of National Socialism. See transcript of Martin Friedenreich's memo on the evaluation of the original files of Großmann AG dated March 7, 1953. StANü Reparations Authority III a 3106.

446 Commercial Councilor Tobias Großmann and Tsar Ferdinand's court marshal Edmund Weich, whom Friedmann had secured a seat on the supervisory board for, had recently resigned from the supervisory board due to old age and death, respectively. Bank director and deputy board member Dr. Belitz of Dresdner Bank had automatically resigned from the supervisory board after his dismissal. See transcript of Martin Friedenreich's memo on the evaluation of the original files of Großmann AG dated March 7, 1953. StANü Reparations Authority III a 3106.

447 Since Kleemann's dismissal had already been decided shortly after the meeting, he was able to vote in the bank's interests without having to vote against Friedmann personally.

448 See transcript of the minutes of the supervisory board meeting of Großmann & Kisch AG on March 25, 1933. StANü Reparations Authority III a 3106.

Newly elected: Hans Leh, Andreas Hager, Fritz Linke, Albert Schramm, Franz Fischer, Hans Otto Tischer, and Dr. Weise (motion by Pg. Kuhn)."[449]

The supervisory board received numerous applications for the vacant position on the executive board of Großmann AG. Through direct political influence from the NSDAP, Fritz Linke, a timber merchant proposed by the district leadership of the NSDAP, was appointed as the new executive board member despite the clear unease of some supervisory board members regarding his appointment procedure. Linke had not submitted an application and was also unwilling to comply with the supervisory board's request to at least put in writing how he intended to run the business. However, both the general meeting and the supervisory board complied with the instructions of the district leadership.

At the same time, the supervisory board, chaired by Hager, attempted to nullify Friedmann's entire influence on the company and to avert a lawsuit on his part seeking to invalidate the supervisory board's decision or a salary payment in accordance with his contract. To this end, attempts were made to obtain evidence of an alleged breach of his official duties as a member of the Executive Board, for example by trying to prove that his travel expenses were too high and having the post office check his telephone charges for private calls.[451] To intensify the legal proceedings, the supervisory board transferred all lawsuits initiated against Friedmann to attorney Dr. Schmidt, Schwede's closest associate, who had already defended Schwede against Friedmann.[452] The allegedly improper withdrawal of funds, which had been known to the supervisory board since the end of 1931, was now construed as balance sheet fraud, and at the supervisory board meeting on April 12, 1933, it was decided to threaten Friedmann and Heilbron with prosecution by the public prosecutor's office if they insisted on their claims. Dr. Friedenreich was also urged to resign from his supervisory board position, which he did in December 1933. As a result, the supervisory board of Großmann AG was finally "Aryanized." Ultimately, criminal charges were indeed brought against Friedmann, whereupon Friedmann was arrested in Berlin, brought back to Coburg, and placed in pretrial detention for two weeks. After no criminal charges could be proven against him, his lawyer, Dr. Thomas Dehler, succeeded in getting him released, whereupon Friedmann fled to Switzerland.Friedmann's lawsuit against Großmann AG for a salary and partial claim of RM 67,000, and thus the businessman's renewed attempt to defend himself against the injustice done to him, was dismissed by the regional court as a result of his flight.

449 *Coburger Nationalzeitung* newspaper, June 7, 1933.

450 See excerpt from the minutes of the supervisory board meeting of Großmann & Kisch AG on July 14, 1933, in the transcript of Martin Friedenreich's memo on the evaluation of the original files of Großmann AG dated March 7, 1953. StANü Reparations Authority III a 3106.

451 At the supervisory board meeting on July 10, 1922, it was decided that the costs of Friedmann's private telephone connection would be borne by the company, as it was mainly used for business purposes. See transcript of the minutes of the supervisory board meeting of July 10, 1922, at the Legal Aid Department of the JRSO to the Reparations Chamber of Upper and Middle Franconia, April 21, 1953. StANü Reparations Authority III a 3082.

452 See excerpt from the minutes of the supervisory board meeting of Großmann & Kisch AG on October 9, 1933, in the transcript of Martin Friedenreich's memo on the evaluation of the original files of Großmann AG dated March 7, 1953. StANü Reparations Authority III a 3106.

453 For Thomas Dehler, see Chapter IV2.2.

454 See Senta Friedenreich's application for reimbursement to the Central Registration Office in Bad Neuheim, December 14, 1948. StANü Reparations Authority III a 3082 and affidavit by Senta Friedenreich, April 27, 1953. StANü Reparations Authority III a 3106.

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Once again, Friedmann's physically and mentally weakened state was exploited to completely ruin him financially and economically. At a supervisory board meeting on July 16, 1934, at which no representative of Friedmann shares was present, the preferred shares, which carried twenty times the voting rights and deferred dividends and thus decisive influence over the company, were converted into ordinary shares. This abruptly ended Friedmann's dominant influence on Großmann AG due to the voting rights associated with his share capital·Friedmann's shareholdings, which were distributed among various banks and amounted to 22,720 RM of common shares at the Bayerische Staatsbank Coburg, 33,320 common shares and 12,000 converted preferred shares at Vereinsbank Coburg, and 36,600 common shares at Dresdner Bank, was subsequently converted into new Großmann shares, used to offset Friedmann's debt balances, and the remaining amount was sold to other banks without the owners' authorization or involvement.[456]

Friedmann's residence at Ketschendorferstraße 2 and the outbuilding belonging to Friedmann at Casimirstraße 6 had been encumbered since April 1930 with a mortgage of 40,000 RM with Dresdner Bank since April 1930 and were placed under forced administration following a decision by the Coburg District Court on June 28, 1934, when Friedmann was no longer able to pay the interest on the mortgage after his dismissal and had not yet made any repayments on the liabilities.[457] The Dresdner Bank·which had since been "Aryanized"[(458)] ·initiated its foreclosure sale on March 5, 1935.[459] After Friedmann had sought a temporary suspension of foreclosure under the "Law on Further Measures in the Field of Foreclosure" of May 26, 1933, the Coburg District Court rejected this on the grounds that the law could not be applied because Friedmann's dismissal was based on political rather than economic reasons.[460]Friedmann suspected that the bank wanted to

455 In the restitution proceedings, in which Friedman's two daughters demanded reimbursement for the common and preferred shares as well as damages for the destruction of their livelihood, were concluded by a settlement with Senta Friedenreich, in which Großmann AG had to pay her 10,000 RM, pursuant to a decision of the Reparations Chamber for Upper and Middle Franconia dated September 29, 1954, and by a decision dated November 20, 1954, with a compensation payment of 10,000 RM to Bertha Landauer. An appeal by Bertha Landauer to the Reparations Senate of the Munich Higher Regional Court was dismissed. See settlement of the Reparations Chamber for Upper and Middle Franconia of September 29, 1954; Decision of the Reparations Chamber for Upper and Middle Franconia of November 20, 1954, and decision of the Reparations Senate of the Munich Higher Regional Court of December 28, 1955. StANü Reparations Authority III a 3106.

456 See information from the Bavarian State Bank dated February 11, 1953, and information from the Coburg Volksbank dated February 6, 1953. StANü Reparations Authority III a 3106. Since the Dresdner Bank's records were lost during the war, it was unable to provide any information on how Friedmann's share packages were handled. Only the documents relating to the restitution proceedings are available here. See Historical Archive of Commerzbank AG. HAC–500/27967–2001 Volume 1.

457 See Dresdner Bank to the Coburg District Court, April 23, 1935. StACo District Court 36579.

458 On the expulsion of Jews from Dresdner Bank, see Ziegler, Dieter: Die Verdrängung der Juden aus der Dresdner Bank 1933–1938. In: VfZ 47 (1999), pp. 187–216.

459 See decision of the Coburg District Court dated June 20, 1935. StACo District Court 36579.

460 See Abraham Friedmann to Notary II Coburg Ehrlicher, July 2, 1935. Decision of the Coburg District Court of July 8, 1935. StACo District Court 36579. While Friedmann was not granted debtor protection in the foreclosure proceedings on the grounds that his dismissal was based on political rather than economic reasons, the opposing party in the compensation proceedings attempted to ward off the claim for compensation by arguing that it was

or "one of her 'business friends' into possession of a valuable piece of real estate in return for a disproportionately low consideration" [461]. A reminder from Friedmann to the district court and an appeal to the Coburg regional court were rejected in August 1935. The Bamberg Higher Regional Court also rejected Friedmann's objections in September 1935.[462] Friedmann was not granted protection from enforcement. Max Brose and Ernst Jühling acquired the property as the highest bidders on
November 26, 1935, for the purpose of establishing company apartments for RM 41,000, which was just above the value of the mortgage and thus far below the actual property and market value.[463] Abraham Friedmann eventually emigrated from Switzerland to France to join his daughter Senta Friedenreich, where he died in 1938 after stomach surgery as a result of chronic heart failure.[464]

The sale of the tobacco and spirits wholesaler Sally Hecht at Albertsplatz 5a, which had been in existence since 1900, showed that until 1937, the buyers of Jewish businesses could also use their leeway in the interests of the Jewish previous owners. The decline in sales was so severe that the business assets, which had been RM 18,049.85 on January 1, 1933, had fallen to only RM 6,743.94 by December 31, 1936.[465] The authorized signatory Max Hecht, the owner's son, was one of the victims of abuse in the "beating room." When Erwin Derks purchased the business in early 1937

in Friedmann's case was not a matter of political persecution. In both cases, Friedmann and his descendants suffered massive injustice against the backdrop of the current legal situation, which could not be challenged in court.

461 See Abraham Friedmann to the Civil Chamber of the Coburg Regional Court, September 1, 1935. StACo Local Court 36579.

462 See decision of the Coburg Regional Court of August 13, 1935, and decision of the Bamberg Higher Regional Court of September 10, 1935. StACo Local Court 36579.

463 StACo Local Court 36579. To settle the claims of Friedmann's heirs, Brose and Jühling paid DM 25,000 in a settlement dated May 21, 1953. See settlement of the Reparations Chamber of Upper and Middle Franconia dated May 21, 1953. StANü Reparations Authority III a 3082. Since Sen-ta and Friedrich Friedenreich also had to flee Paris after the German occupation, they no longer had any documents as evidence in the reparations proceedings. For this reason, the restitution claims against the banks involved were dropped. See affidavit by Martin Friedenreich, October 27, 1950. StANü Reparations Authority III a 3106.

464 See Coburg resident registry. StadtACo and Legal Aid Department JRSO a the Bayreuth Reparations Chamber, April 27, 1953. StANü Reparations Authority III a 3106. Gregor Schöllgen's description of the "Aryanization process" by Gregor Schöllgen must be criticized in light of the source material. In his attempt to interpret Friedmann's dismissal and expropriation as not politically motivated, he presents the fictitious scandal surrounding illegal withdrawals of money, which was used to eliminate Friedmann, as lawful. Furthermore, he fails to recognize the fact that the forced sale of Friedmann's property was a direct consequence of his persecution and the "Aryanization" of Großmann AG. In his argumentation, Schöllgen refers to the statement of the notary Ehrlicher, who was involved in the foreclosure and restitution proceedings and who falsely claimed in the post-war period that Friedmann had not paid any interest on his mortgage since 1930. This false statement ultimately formed the basis of the defense's argumentation strategy in the restitution proceedings, which sought to prove that Friedmann had been insolvent even before the Nazis came to power and that the foreclosure sale was therefore not the result of political persecution. This strategy would have been successful insofar as the reparations laws defined the period from January 1933 onwards as the only period in which persecution was possible. The fact that Friedmann's mortgage in 1930 was also taken out in the context of massive harassment and a widespread Nazi smear campaign against him was to be legally disregarded due to this circumstance. See Schöllgen. Brose, pp. 71–73.

465 See tax audit of January 5 and 6, 1937. StACo Coburg Tax Office Old Records 233.

The warehouse was acquired at a purchase price of RM 9,347, and outstanding accounts and shop fittings were settled to the satisfaction of both parties. In the purchase agreement dated
February 25, 1937, both the goodwill value of RM 1,200 and an obligation on the part of the authorized signatory Max Hecht to provide information in the amount of RM 250 were included in the calculation. After the takeover, he remained employed in the store for three months on full salary to instruct the new owners in the management of the business after his father had moved to the Jewish hospital and retirement home in Würzburg, where he died in 1942. Max Hecht emigrated to Colombia and later moved to the USA.

By the end of 1937, about half of Coburg's Jewish businesses had been "Aryanized" or liquidated without any state-directed, systematic displacement, putting Coburg above the Bavarian average. Gunzenhausen, where a pogrom had already taken place in 1934, and Regensburg had similarly high displacement rates, whereas Nuremberg, Augsburg, and Bamberg had rates of just over a third.[467] In addition to the high intensity of persecution and the small-scale structure of the city, where it was well known who was a Jewish business owner, the composition of industries and the high proportion of Jewish retail stores in Coburg were also responsible for this.[468] The fact that the displacement rate was particularly high among Jewish department stores and cattle dealers proves the effectiveness of the boycott campaigns and the exclusionary policies practiced locally, combined with the long-lasting effects of the economic crisis in Coburg until 1937. Whereas elsewhere the loyalty of rural customers to Jewish cattle dealers often enabled them to survive for longer, the targeted exclusion policy of the Coburg city administration counteracted this effect.

3.2.2.2 Systematic and controlled displacement

At the end of 1937 and beginning of 1938, pressure from the Reich government to continue the "Aryanization," which led to laws that significantly advanced and radicalized the "de-Jewification process." At the same time, a *race for enrichment* [469] began in the process of dispossession. The scope of action for Jewish business owners was gradually reduced, and the displacement process was mutually intensified by initiatives at the local and regional levels. At the same time, the scope that allowed buyers of Jewish businesses to make a payment for a company's *goodwill* narrowed. In November 1937, the chambers of industry and commerce were first instructed to register all Jewish companies in their area of responsibility, and a 10% reduction in raw material and foreign exchange quotas for Jewish businesses was decided.[470] It was not until January 1938, however, that the Reich Ministry of Economics issued an internal definition of what was to be understood as a "Jewish business." In April 1938, the "Ordinance on the Registration of Jewish Assets" [471] laid the foundation for state access to Jewish assets. From then on, all Jews whose assets exceeded 5,000 RM were required to register.

466 See purchase agreement dated February 25, 1937, and Max Hecht to the Derks family, January 10, 1949. StANü Reparations Authority III JR 3868.
467 See Janetzko: Aryanization, pp. 178–182.
468 See ibid., p. 327.
469 Bajohr: Aryanization, p. 265.
470 See ibid., p. 183 and Bajohr: Aryanization, pp. 218 f.
471 See RGBl. I, 1938, p. 414.

obliged to register, list, and evaluate their property. On the other hand, the order made the acquisition of a Jewish-owned company subject to the approval of a higher administrative authority, in Bavaria's case that of the district president.[472] For the Gau territory of the Bavarian Ostmark, Gau economic advisor Dr. Ludwig Linhardt was tasked with overseeing the "Aryanization" of Jewish businesses. [473] All negotiations regarding business takeovers had to be submitted to the Gau economic advisor for review before completion to determine whether the party would recognize the sold company as "Aryan." District economic advisor Rehlein collected all "Aryanization projects" in the Coburg district in order to promote "the swiftest possible and systematic elimination of Jews from the economy of the Bavarian Ostmark district."

The "Third Ordinance to the Reich Citizenship Law" of June 14, 1938 now also officially defined a Jewish business. It stated:

§ 1. (1) A business is considered Jewish if the owner is Jewish.
(2) The business of a general partnership or a limited partnership is considered Jewish if one or more personally liable partners are Jewish.
(3) The business of a legal entity is considered Jewish
a) if one or more of the persons appointed as legal representatives or one or more of the members of the supervisory board are Jewish,
b) if Jews have a decisive share in the capital or voting rights. A decisive share in the capital is given if more than a quarter of the capital belongs to Jews; a decisive share in the voting rights is given if the votes of the Jews reach half of the total number of votes. (...)
§ 3. A business is also considered Jewish if it is actually under the dominant influence of Jews. [476]

In July 1938, the commercial department of the police office began compiling lists of Jewish businesses in coordination with the Chamber of Industry and Commerce, party offices, and the job placement office headed by Councilman Kuhn, in accordance with instructions from the Reich Minister of the Interior. Since the aim was to identify businesses in which former Jewish owners were still secretly involved, the Coburg Chamber of Industry and Commerce instructed businesses that had already been "Aryanized" to submit affidavits businesses, in which the business owners had to assure "that Jewish capital no longer plays a role in the businesses they have taken over and that the businesses are no longer under the dominant influence of a Jew."[477] No actual investigations were conducted in this matter after the Chamber of Industry and Commerce apparently

472 See order based on the regulation on the registration of Jewish property of April 26, 1938. RGBl. I, 1938, p. 415.
473 On the Gau economic advisors, cf. Stremmel, Ralf: Die Gauwirtschaftsberater der NSDAP. Zum Profil von Funktionsträgern zwischen Partei und Wirtschaft. In: Jahrbuch für Wirtschaftsgeschichte 62,1 (2021), pp. 213–259.
474 The district economic advisor in the Gau Bayerische Ostmark Rehlein to the mayor of the city of Coburg, Coburg district, May 16, 1938. StadtACo A 11291.
475 See RGBl. I, 1938, p. 627.
476 RGBl. I, 1938, p. 627.
477 Memo from the police department dated August 1, 1938. StadtACo A 11291.

considered it unlikely that the Jewish former owners would still be able to exert influence over their businesses given the social climate.

The "Decree for the Elimination of Jews from Economic Life"

In November 1938, Hermann Göring, as commissioner for the Four-Year Plan, issued the "Ordinance on the Elimination of Jews from Economic Life."[479] This ordinance ordered the closure of all Jewish retail and mail-order businesses as well as craft businesses as of January 1, 1939, and prohibited Jews from acting as business managers. If a business had not yet been transferred to "Aryan" hands because it was considered essential for securing the supply of the population, it was now to be liquidated. The goods released in the process were to be valued by experts and offered to professional groups rather than consumers. If proper liquidation did not appear possible, the option of appointing a liquidator was granted, whereby Jewish businesses could be deprived of control over their operations.The *Bavarian Ostmark* reported on November 19/20, 1938: "Now things are getting serious. The Coburg economy is also being de-Jewified" – and published a list of the 20 remaining Jewish businesses in the city that were soon to cease to exist. [481] With the "Ordinance on the Use of Jewish Property" of December 3, 1938, the possibility of "forced Aryanization" to all businesses.[482]Göring ensured that the financial benefits of the "Aryanizations" would accrue to the German Reich and not to private profiteers by issuing an instruction in December 1938 requiring the payment of a compensation levy, which obliged the purchasers of Jewish businesses and real estate to transfer any excess profits to the state.

The city administration now took on a dominant role in the systematic and controlled "Aryanization process," exerting control over the measures to be implemented and striving to make itself one of the winners in the process of disenfranchisement. With regard to the sale of Jewish real estate, City Planning Officer and District Economic Advisor Mayor Rehlein, in consultation with the building advisory boards, decided in September 1938 that when selling the property of a Jewish owner, the City Planning Officer must always be informed by the real estate agents, notaries, and the tax office, so that "the Jew does not make a higher profit than is permitted by law."[483]At the same time, the ordinance was intended to secure properties in which the city itself was interested, thus granting the city administration a right of first refusal. The trigger for this regulation was a request made by gardener Paul Jüttner to Rehlein, who wanted to purchase a garden plot from Alfred Bamberger to secure his livelihood and asked the district economic advisorto intervene on behalf of the city administration so that the Jewish seller could not make a profit and the property could be acquired on favorable terms for him. With the argument that "the existence of a German,

478 See *Coburger Tageblatt* newspaper dated July 21, 1938, police department memos dated July 25, 1938, and August 1, 1938. August 1938. StadtACo A 11291.
479 See RGBl. I, 1938, p. 1580.
480 See ibid., p. 1642.
481 *Bayerische Ostmark*, November 19/20, 1938.
482 See RGBl. I, 1938, pp. 1709–1712.
483 Minutes of the consultation with the building advisors on September 15, 1938. StadtACo A 10317.

still more valuable than the speculative profits of a Jewish moneybags"[484], Jüttner requested detailed information on how Bamberger could be forced to sell under certain conditions. Against the backdrop of Rehlein's order to take "uncompromising" action against Bamberger if he resisted the price set by the municipal price review office, Bamberger agreed to the sale.

Subsequently, real estate agents Heinrich Niermann and Ernst Hamel sent lists of all Jewish-owned properties transferred to them for sale to the mayor and inquired with the city administration's price monitoring office to what extent completed sales were within the intended price range.[486] At the same time, real estate agent Hans Niermann, for example, also pointed out properties that had not yet been "Aryanized" to the city administration or offered properties for sale, such as the property belonging to Jeanette Frank in Obere Salvatorgasse, which was acquired via Fritz Heimberger for the construction of a gymnasium for the Alexandrinum preparatory school.[487] Niermann undertook not to accept any commission from the Jewish owners or to make the commission available to the city administration for a good cause. [488] On the orders of the Gau leadership, the responsible notaries were also instructed to submit every sale of Jewish property to the district and Gau leadership. They thus also became intermediaries in the "Aryanization process."[489] In a circular dated February 23, 1939, the Gau leadership also instructed that every purchase agreement, as well as the sale of businesses, required the approval of the district president and the Gau economic advisor.[490] In 1940, responsibility for pure real estate sales was finally officially placed in the hands of the lower administrative authorities and, in the case of Coburg, the mayor. [491]

Through the price control office, the city administration was now able to secure a decisive influence on property and business arisations and prevent Jewish sellers from being paid a price that was too high from the point of view of the applicable "Arisierungsverordnungen" (Arisation Regulations). When the sale of the Alkan laundry business owned by Albert Sachs to the Wagner K. G. company was concluded, Wilhelm Rehlein objected that the price of RM 51,600 set by the contracting parties, which corresponded exactly to the planned unit price of the property at Spitalgasse 2, was too high and that Albert Sachs, who had already moved to Berlin, should be paid a maximum of RM 46,000. [492] The government then adopted Rehlein's recommendation and

484 Paul Jüttner to the district economic advisor of the NSDAP, August 25, 1938. StadtACo A 10316.

485 See minutes of the consultation with the building advisors on September 15, 1938. StadtACo A 10317 and Alfred Bamberger to the mayor of the city of Coburg, October 7, 1938. StadtACo A 10316.

486 See various letters to the city administration. StadtACo A 10316 and 10317.

487 See Heimberger to the municipal building authority, September 23, 1938. StadtACo A 10316. The property was purchased by the State of Bavaria for RM 7,500, although Mrs. Frank had planned to sell it for RM 9,200. See purchase agreement dated May 18, 1942. StadtACo A 10316.

488 See Hans Niermann to the mayor of Coburg, November 19, 1941. StadtACo A 10316.

489 See the Gauleiter to all district leaders of the NSDAP in the Gau Bayerische Ostmark, November 21, 1938, and the Coburg district leadership to notaries Ehrlicher and Dr. Friedrich, November 22, 1938. StadtACo A 10317.

490 See: The City Treasurer of Coburg, March 3, 1939. StadtACo A 10317.

491 See RGBl. I 1940, p. 188.

492 See Wilhelm Rehlein to the government of Upper and Middle Franconia, January 13, 1939. StadtACo A 10316.

approved the sale on condition that the price be reduced to the specified amount. [493]

In 1938, an important lever for liquidation was not only the threat posed by the pogroms against Jewish business owners, but also the "protective custody" that was now once again being used as a coercive measure to force sales. The horse dealer Martin Mannheimer had already been dragged off to the "beating room" in 1933 and severely abused there. As a result, Mannheimer was temporarily unable to work, suffered from severe depression, and had to be placed in isolation in a hospital in 1933 due to the risk of suicide.[494] After his recent arrest in the wake of the pogrom in November 1938, the Gestapo told his wife that Mannheimer would not be released from custody until he was prepared to sell his property at Heiligkreuzstraße 22 and had his emigration papers in hand. Heinrich Treuner presented himself as a potential buyer. The Mannheimers had been in contact with him since the events of 1933 regarding the sale of the property, and he had leased part of it after Mannheimer was prevented from trading horses due to official restrictions. Together with real estate agent Ernst Hamel, Treuner subsequently visited Zensi Mannheimer regularly to persuade her to sell. When she finally made a promise to do so, Martin Mannheimer was released from prison in Hof shortly before Christmas. The horse trading business, which consisted of a house with outbuildings and courtyard, a garden, a stable, a shed, and a field, was sold to Heinrich and Emmy Treuner on December 20, 1938, for 85,000 RM and converted into a car repair shop. RM 40,000 was deposited with the Bavarian State Bank, of which approximately RM 27,100 was transferred to a savings account belonging to the seller and frozen in favor of the Coburg tax office as security for the taxes owed by the seller. A further RM 40,000 was paid into a blocked account at the Bayerische Hypotheken und Wechselbank. The Mannheimers were accommodated by the fact that RM 5,000 was paid out directly to them at the conclusion of the purchase agreement for their free disposal and that they were contractually granted the right to live in part of their former property until their departure. On January 2, 1939, the Wilhelm Mannheimer horse trading business was deregistered. Shortly after the contract was signed, the Mannheimers emigrated to France and England and from there eventually to the USA.

The Coburg wood and unfinished furniture factory Bernstein & Saalfeld at Uferstraße 9, with managing directors Ivan Bernstein, Martin Saalfeld, and Wilhelm Lautermilch, had been in liquidation since 1918, after the parties involved had openly

493 See Government of Upper and Middle Franconia to Albert Sachs and Gretel Wagner, May 9, 1939. StadtACo A 10316.

494 See medical certificate dated July 21, 1933. StACo StAnw Co 906.

495 See memo from the police department dated December 20, 1938. StadtACo A 10396; purchase agreement dated January 21, 1939 between Martin Mannheimer and Mr. Heinrich Treuner with Emmy Treuner. StACo Coburg Tax Office Old Records 242; Affidavit by Zensi Mannheimer, March 11, 1951; Bavarian State Bank Munich to the Bayreuth Reparations Chamber, January 8, 1951. StANü Reparations Authority III a 5987. Coburg Residents' Register. StadtACo. The property was completely destroyed during the war. After the reparations proceedings were concluded, the property remained with the Treuner family, who paid Mannheimer's heirs DM 40,000 in compensation for the restitution claim. See judgment of the Bayreuth Regional Court of May 19, 1954. StANü Reparations Authority III a 5987.

They continued as a trading company and renamed it Grundstücksverwaltungsgesellschaft Bern-stein & Saalfeld in 1937.[496] On October 30, 1938, operations were discontinued after the property had been purchased on September 23, 1938, by Ernst Knoch, the owner of a glass and mirror factory, for RM 86,000, with an estimated property value of RM 107,700. As with all such sales, the purchase price had to be paid into a blocked account at a foreign exchange bank in accordance with the instructions of the district president dated June 2, 1939, which could only be accessed with the approval of the chief finance president in Nuremberg. Ernst Knoch initially retained an amount of RM 3,100 from the purchase price to remedy fire safety deficiencies and, pursuant to a settlement reached by the civil division of the Coburg Regional Court on August 23, 1940, had to pay RM 1,100 of this amount to the property management company Bernstein & Saalfeld into an account at a foreign exchange bank.

Wolf Baumwollspinner, who had already been denied a traveling trade license and thus permission to peddle goods by the city administration, was also unable to keep his shop. Although the Reich Minister of Economics had expressly decreed on December 1, 1938, that foreign Jews could not continue to operate their businesses beyond December 31, 1938, but that nothing should prevent them from reopening for the Christmas season, the police closed Baumwollspinner's reopened store. This was done on the basis of the Reich Minister of Economics' express letter of November 18, 1938, and in response to an order from the district leadership that the store should be closed because further riots against Jews were to be expected. On December 6, 1938, Baumwollspinner was forced to close his store again and sign a statement that he was doing so voluntarily and solely for his own safety. He was also officially informed that he could continue his business until December 31. [499] A radio message from Berlin in early 1939 also ordered that the closures of retail stores and craft businesses should be suspended as of December 31 if the owners were foreign nationals. In Coburg, this would have affected not only Wolf Baumwollspinner, but also the textile merchant Minna Schleien at Spitalgasse 7 and the haberdashery and cut goods merchant Benjamin Schmerler at Herrengasse 7. Nevertheless, all three businesses were deregistered at the end of 1938.[500]Baumwollspinner sold his house at Judengasse 8 to the basket-maker couple Emil and Rose Engelhardt for RM 20,100, whereby the buyers had to pay a compensation levy of RM 400 to the German Reich due to the low price, as stipulated in the ordinance on the use of Jewish property.[501] A tenant of Baumwollspinner had been exploiting the plight of his Jewish landlord since November 1938 and, due to an outstanding claim for apartment repairs, had

496 See excerpt from the commercial register. StANü Reparations Authority III a 3994.
497 See letter from the District President of Upper and Middle Franconia to Ernst Knoch, June 2, 1939. StadtACo A 10316.
498 See transcript of the settlement of the civil chamber of the Coburg Regional Court dated August 23, 1940. StadtACo A 10316.
499 See file notes from the police department dated December 5 and 6, 1938. StadtACo A 10395.
500 See list of Jewish businesses. StadtACo A 11291.
501 See letter from the district president to Wolf Baumwollspinner and Emil Engelhardt, June 23, 1939. StadtACo A 10316.

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and the assumption that Baumwollspinner would soon leave the country, he completely stopped paying his rent. [502]

After the first wave of boycotts, the policy of displacement was extended to Jewish lawyers and doctors. From April 1, on the instructions of Bavarian Minister of Justice Hans Frank, Jewish lawyers were prohibited from entering court buildings without a specially requested pass.[503] With the "Law on Admission to the Bar" of April 7, all Jewish lawyers who had obtained their license after August 1, 1914, were not front-line soldiers, or whose fathers or sons had been killed in World War I, lost their licenses.[504] The Coburg brothers Baer, who had made a name for themselves as legal representatives of those who had come into conflict with the NSDAP, and the notary Kuno Hirsch were subject to these exceptions, so that they were initially able to maintain their law practices. Ultimately, however, the Jewish lawyers were soon left with only their Jewish clients until they were finally excluded from the legal profession under the "Fifth Ordinance to the Reich Citizenship Law" of September 27, 1938, and had to give up their law practices.

Jewish doctors, seven of whom still had practices in Coburg in 1933, were among the victims of spontaneous acts of violence in the city center as well as in the "Beating room." Before he was taken into protective custody, Alfred Masur had turned to Dr. Klauser, the chairman of the district medical association, out of fear of arrest. After Dr. Masur had treated Abraham Friedmann following his abuse and the SA had confiscated the Jewish community's documents from him shortly thereafter, he asked Dr. Klauser to inform the city commissioner about his position within the Coburg medical community. However, Klauser and the Coburg district medical association distanced themselves from Dr. Masur and forwarded his call for help to the city commissioner, commenting that there was no reason for the Coburg district medical association to deal with the matter.[506]At the end of March, all Jewish doctors were finally expelled from the professional medical associations, and soon afterwards, Jewish doctors in private practice were banned from working under the same conditions that applied in the BBG. [507]Following his imprisonment in the *Alte Herberge* and his suicide attempt, Dr. Masur gave up his practice. Dr. Erich Braun and Dr. Ludwig Morgenthau followed suit, leaving Coburg in 1933. In October 1933, ophthalmologist Dr. Reinhold Alkan advertised his practice in the journal of the Association of German Physicians and moved to Mühlhausen in Thuringia in 1934. Dr. Franz Dahmann, a tenant with a right of first refusal, finally moved into Lossaustraße 5. In 1938, he informed Dr. Alkan that the NSDAP would no longer accept him living in a Jewish-owned building.[508]After a meeting in Leipzig, the two agreed on a purchase price of 75,000 to 80,000 RM, but

502 See Wolfgang Kraus to the Coburg Tax Office, January 18, 1939. StACo Coburg Tax Office Old Records 219.

503 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, April 4, 1933, and Fromm: Juden, p. 110 f.

504 See RGBl. I, 1933, p. 188.

505 See RGBl. I, 1938, p. 1403 and Fromm: Juden, pp. 203, 218.

506 See Dr. Masur to Dr. Klauser, March 12, 1933, and Dr. Klauser to the City Commissariat. StadtACo A 7870.

507 See RGBl. I 1933, p. 222.

508 See registration dated March 2, 1947. StANü Reparations Authority III a 5.

Shortly thereafter, Dr. Dahmann reported that the NSDAP allegedly only accepted a purchase price of 42,000 RM. He took advantage of the fact that Dr. Alkan was no longer on site and was about to leave for England. The price monitoring agency had estimated the fair market value of the property at 52,000 RM and thus classified the purchase price as low.[509] The residential building, the practice, and a large part of the equipment were transferred to Dr. Dahmann at well below their value. The purchase price was transferred to the Wilmersdorf tax office in favor of the "Jewish property tax" and the "Reich flight tax" and was not freely available to Dr. Alkan. [510]

"Aryanizations" after 1937

After 1937, only four "Aryanizations" took place in Coburg, as the companies in question were to be preserved. The wholesale business for wooden and upholstered furniture, Nathan Forchheimer & Co., had been run by Jakob and Nathan Forchheimer as a general partnership. Max Forchheimer took over Jakob Forchheimer's position after he left the company, and after Nathan Forchheimer's death, the general partnership continued under Max's mother Marie as a limited partner.[511] Thanks in part to brisk export activity, the company was able to achieve considerable profits with a working capital of RM 355,000 despite the high pressure of persecution and the prevailing economic situation. With sales of RM 663,000, RM 687,000, and RM 726,000 in the years 1936 to 1938, earnings of RM 72,000, RM 73,000, and RM 75,000 were generated in each case. [512]

With the purchase agreement dated August 20, 1938, all of the company's real estate at Bahnhofstraße 31 and Kanalstraße 5 and 10, along with the manufacturing plant and all accessories, became the property of Wilhelm Knoll, who had been a competitor of Forchheimer's in the furniture industry in Stuttgart. In July 1938, Max Forchheimer had confidentially informed the Knoll company that he was going to sell his company. He subsequently met with Wilhelm Knoll in Stuttgart several times, after August Greim had also become involved in the negotiations.[513]Before the sale was finalized, the Forchheimer company obtained information from the Coburg Employment Office, the Coburg Chamber of Industry and Commerce, the Reich Trustee of Labor Dr. Giebel in Bayreuth, the Gau Economic Advisor Dr. Linhardt, and Senior Government Official Franz Rabich in Ansbach. Both the Reich Labor Trustee and the senior government official assured Forchheimer that the company would be allowed to continue operating due to the size of its workforce and its extensive export activities. The Gau economic advisor, who coordinated his actions closely with the Coburg Chamber of Industry and Commerce, had a particular influence on the drafting of the purchase agreement. In addition to the demand that the workforce of just under 100 employees be taken over in its entirety during the "Aryanization" process, the termination of contractual relationships with "non-Aryan" employees, representatives, and companies was explicitly ordered.

509 See memo from the Price Supervision Office dated November 29, 1938. StadtACo A 10316.
510 See purchase agreement dated December 7, 1938. StANü Reparations Authority III a 5.
511 Initially, the limited partnership shares were divided between Friedel and Marie Forchheimer and then taken over by Marie Forchheimer. Friedel Forchheimer emigrated to Holland in 1936.
512 See partial decision of the Reparations Chamber of Upper and Middle Franconia dated July 31, 1952. StANü Reparations Authority III a 3731.
513 See Max Forchheimer to Wilhelm Knoll, July 13, 1938; purchase agreement dated August 20, 1938. StANü Reparations Authority III a 3174.

Ultimately, the company was sold for RM 115,668.35 to Wilhelm Knoll, who used it to create a branch of his Stuttgart-based company. A mortgage on the property in the form of a land charge of RM 1,900 had previously been deleted by the seller, meaning that the business was completely unencumbered. RM 5,000 of the purchase price was paid into a blocked account, to which the seller only had access after one year, or as soon as it had been proven that there were no tax arrears. A further RM 5,000 of the purchase price was retained and, in accordance with agreements with the DAF, used for welfare, support, and pension purposes for the staff, as well as for improving social facilities.[514] For the property, which alone had a unit value of RM 90,200 and, according to the city administration's calculations, had a market value of RM 118,000, RM 60,133 was paid, and even the city administration's price monitoring office considered the purchase price to be very low.[515] Overall, the Forchheimer company was sold for less than a third of its real value, not including *goodwill*, even though the Knoll company had taken over all non-Jewish workers, all tools, materials, trade books, correspondence, order backlogs, calculation documents, illustrations, fabric samples, etc.[516] The Forchheimer family eventually emigrated to the USA via Holland.

The hat and cap wholesale business Karl Ehrlich, founded in 1896 and run by sons Hermann and Sally Ehrlich at Zinkenwehr 39, was also absorbed into the Scheuer & Hochrein company. The two Ehrlich brothers were arrested during Kristallnacht and their identity cards were confiscated. After liquidating a large part of their business, they sold their wholesale business to Luise Scheuer, who had worked as an authorized signatory at the Ehrlich company since 1923 and had sought a partner, the Hochrein company from Neuses, to acquire the company. She took over the warehouse for
1,500 RM in cash.[517] The property in Zinkenwehr was sold to factory owner Alfred Wagner from Unter-siemau in May 1939 with the approval of the government of Upper Franconia.[518] While Hermann Ehrlich emigrated with his family to the USA via England, Sally Ehrlich remained in Coburg and was deported from there in April 1942.[519]

The Ignaz Stern manufacturing and fashion store, which opened in 1902 at Judengasse 20, was sold to Rudolf Zetzmann and Robert Jablonka on November 5, 1937, whereby the existing warehouse was sold and the business premises, including inventory, were leased. Zetzmann had been the owner of a textile goods agency at Mauer 26 since 1932.

514 See purchase agreement dated August 20, 1938. StANü Reparations Authority III a 3174 and partial decision of the Reparations Chamber of Upper and Middle Franconia dated July 31, 1952. StANü Reparations Authority III a 3731.

515 See list of Jewish real estate. StadtACo A 10316.

516 See ibid. In a partial decision and settlement by the Bayreuth Reparations Chamber, the property and the buildings on it were returned to the original owners and their heirs, as were the real estate assets, the cash assets of the trust fund, and compensation of DM 25,000. See partial decision of the Reparations Chamber of Upper and Middle Franconia dated July 31, 1952, and settlement of the Reparations Chamber of Upper and Middle Franconia dated August 5, 1953. StANü Reparations Authority III a 3731.

517 See Scheuer und Hochrein to Reparations Authority III, December 30, 1957. StANü Reparations Authority III JR 4472.

518 See Government of Upper and Middle Franconia, May 9, 1939. StadtACo A 10316.

519 See Chapter V3.2.

which he had expanded in 1933 into a retail store selling cloth and manufactured goods, and after Stern's store was deregistered, he moved into it and merged with it. Zetzmann and Jablonka paid RM 8,200 for the warehouse and, after Stern was forced to close his company, founded the general partnership Zetzmann und Jablonka. In August 1938, Jablonka left the company again and Olga Westhäuser joined the business, now renamed Zetzmann & Co.· until December 31, 1940· Ignaz Stern had refused to sell the property and had only agreed to grant a right of first refusal to Mrs. Westhäuser, who had become friends with the Stern family and rented an apartment in their house. Rudolf Zetzmann, however, did everything in his power to prevent a sale to Mrs. Westhäuser and turned to the district economic advisor Rehlein in order to secure the building for himself. In addition to making anti-Semitic remarks, he particularly emphasized his service as a soldier in both world wars against Ms. Westhäuser's status as a single woman. After a thorough examination of the economic and political reliability of the two parties involved in the conflict by the security police, the Chamber of Industry and Commerce, and the district leadership, the district economic advisor Rehlein, the district leadership, and the Gau economic advisor all supported Zetzmann's claims, even though these were contrary to the express wishes of the owner, Stern. Ultimately, following the deportation of the Sterns, who were unable to carry out their planned escape, the house was transferred to the German Reich in 1941 and administered by the state tax office. Despite several complaints on her part, Ms. Westhäuser's right of first refusal was declared null and [void.]

In the case of the Konrad Gagel basket factory, Lisa Gagel's status as half-Jewish was used by her co-partner Lucy Lütkemeyer in the course of inheritance disputes to force her out of the company on unfavorable terms. Lisa Gagel owned half of the shares in the company, her two daughters each owned one-eighth, and Lucy Lütkemeyer owned one-quarter. Since the family had connections to the Reich Minister for Armament and Munitions, Dr. Fritz Todt, and he intervened on Lütkemeyer's behalf-meyer, Gagel's efforts were in vain, despite the intercession of Mayor Greim, the Coburg Chamber of Industry and Commerce, the employment office, and the German Labor Front, who had met in December 1940 with Deputy Gau Economic Advisor Leonhard Eysser at the Gau headquarters in Bayreuth. Under pressure from the Gau leadership and Eysser

520 See legal counsel Hans Jacobi to the mayor of Coburg, September 24, 1940. StadtACo A 10316. Transcript of the settlement agreement between Rudolf Zetzmann and Olga Westhäuser dated February 25, 1941, and transcript of the settlement agreement between Rudolf Zetzmann and Robert Jablonka dated August 13, 1938. StANü Reparations Authority III JR 118.

521 See Rudolf Zetzmann to the Mayor of Coburg, May 3, July 15, November 23, and November 8, 1941. StadtACo A 10316.

522 A sale of the building to Zetzmann before the end of the war, which is no longer listed in the files, does not appear to have taken place, although according to Reich directives he would have been entitled to a right of first refusal as a front-line soldier and all the authorities spoke out in his favor. In the restitution process, the house was handed over by the former German Reich to the IRSO in a settlement, whereupon Zetzmann purchased it on December 7, 1951. See decision of the Reparations Chamber at the Nuremberg-Fürth Regional Court of July 26, 1955. StANü Reparations Authority III JR 118. To compensate for the takeover of the warehouse and the business, Zetzmann paid DM 3,500 to the IRSO through the settlement of the Reparations Chamber for Upper and Middle Franconia. See settlement of the Reparations Chamber for Upper and Middle Franconia dated April 25, 1956. StANü Reparations Authority III JR 118.

Lisa Gagel and her daughters had to leave the company, but were granted the right to establish their own wicker furniture factory under a new name. While Konrad Gagel's company was to be awarded all military contracts, the newly founded company was to be assigned exclusively civilian contracts. In addition, the urgently needed workers were divided between the companies to the detriment of Lisa Gagel.

3.2.2.3 Implementation of "de-Jewification" until 1940

In order to coordinate the final measures of "de-Jewification," a meeting was held on December 7, 1938, in the offices of the Coburg Chamber of Industry and Commerce, attended by representatives of the district leadership of the NSDAP, the German Labor Front, the Chamber of Industry and Commerce, the chairman of the retail trade group Hartung, city assessor Dr. Schulze-Döbold, and Albin Weschenfelder from the trade police.[524] In a joint effort by the business community, the party, and the administration, it was decided to dissolve the last Jewish retail businesses based in Coburg and the companies registered with the commercial court, thus initiating a final phase of rapid acceleration in the "de-Jewification" process. As a blanket measure, the option of appointing a liquidator was now used for all remaining "de-Jewification cases," as all remaining businesses were classified as unreliable.[525] Legal counsel Jakob Wachtel was appointed as liquidator and instructed by Greim to proceed in agreement with the Chamber of Industry and Commerce and the relevant specialist groups of the DAF and to report to him on each individual case.[526] The administrative implementation of the regulation for the elimination of Jews from economic life was entrusted to city assessor Dr. Schulze-Döbold.[527]

At the end of 1938 and beginning of 1939, the businesses of Nathan Ludwig, Benjamin Schmerler, Minna Schleien, Heinrich Zucker, Lina Töpfer, Wolf Baumwollspinner, the Gutmann brothers, Wilhelm Mannheimer, Eduard Plaut, Julius Plaut, and Siegfried Kohn officially deregistered under pressure from the ordinance, so that Wachtel became the liquidator. The fact that the "de-Jewification process," which had already begun in 1933, could now be almost completely completed within a few weeks indicates the high pressure of persecution after the November pogrom and the legal compulsion to "Aryanize." However, the city administration's desire for a quick and blanket settlement was initially countered by Wachtel's administrative correctness. Wachtel insisted on receiving separate authorization for each individual transaction after review, instead of a general authorization issued by the mayor for the settlement.[528] The Reich Ministry of Economics did not issue any binding guidelines on the procedure and, in particular, the remuneration of the liquidators, but granted the local level a certain degree of leeway.[529] However, Wachtel insisted on securing his approach by submitting a request to the district president in Upper and Middle Franconia, as he had encountered several difficulties in the

523 Dr. Sandmann to the Coburg Regional Court, June 20, 1946. StANü Reparations Authority III a 75. Due to the involvement of all companies in war production, this agreement could ultimately not be upheld.
524 See memo from the police department dated December 5, 1938. StadtACo A 10395.
525 See resolution of the meeting on December 7, 1938, at the Coburg Chamber of Industry and Commerce. StadtACo A 10395.
526 See Mayor Greim to Jakob Wachtel, January 3, 1939. StadtACo A 10395.
527 See memo from the police department dated December 19, 1938. StadtACo A 10395.
528 See memo from Dr. Schulze-Döbold dated February 9, 1939. StadtACo A 10395.
529 See the Reich Minister of Economics dated February 2, 1939. StadtACo A 10395.

At the same time, the city administration contacted the trade offices of the cities of Dresden, Leipzig, and Chemnitz, where there were a large number of Jewish businesses, to obtain information about their experiences with the liquidation process. Since the largely divergent approaches of the three Thuringian cities did not provide Wachtel and Schulze-Döbold with sufficient guidance for action and they continued to shy away from acting on their own authority, Wachtel turned to the Reich Ministry of Economics.[531] In close consultation with Alfred Rosenplänter, the legal advisor to the Coburg Chamber of Industry and Commerce, the city ultimately followed the approach taken by the Dresden Chamber of Industry and Commerce, which acted as liquidator there.

Of the eleven small retail companies to be liquidated, Wachtel ultimately only proceeded in the cases of the Gutmann brothers, Eduard Plaut, and Siegfried Kohn. The other companies, such as the haberdashery and cut goods dealer Benjamin Schmerler, the textile goods dealer Minna Schleien, and the clothing store Wolf Baumwollspinner, were either foreign-owned or had such small stocks of goods that liquidation was not necessary. At the Lina Töpfer hosiery store at Steintor 10, for example, only seven pairs of silk stockings, four pairs of women's knee-highs, and six pairs of cotton children's socks remained of the entire company's merchandise, which were used for personal needs. The situation was similar for the linen representative Nathan Ludwig, the shoe retailer Heinrich Zucker, and the horse dealer Wilhelm Mannheimer. Julius Plaut had already given up his manufactured goods business on October 29, 1938, and moved to Nuremberg.

Wachtel described the remaining stock of Eduard Plaut's manufactured goods and department store as old, dirty, and worthless. Elias Eduard Plaut himself had suggested that half of the profits from his warehouse be donated to the German Winter Relief Fund and the other half to the Jewish Winter Relief Fund. At first, Wachtel wanted to leave the liquidation to Plaut himself due to the low yield, but when Karl Hartung, the head of the local retail group, reported to him that Plaut was still making individual sales, Wachtel and Hartung made an effort to retrieve some usable items, appraised them, and sold them to the Louis Steingruber company for RM 66.81. After deductions for the liquidator's fee and the appraisal fees, the remaining amount was paid into Mr. Plaut's security account, where it was frozen as security for the taxes to be paid by all Jews. The amount was never available to the owner.[533] Plaut's property at Hans-Schemm-Straße 15 had previously been leased under pressure to master shoemaker Edwin Zapf, who had been granted a right of first refusal. Eduard Plaut strongly resisted selling his property before his planned emigration, but in April 1941, district economic advisor Wilhelm Rehlein informed him that a legal regulation governing the compulsory expropriation of Jewish property would soon be enacted, and in December 1941, he was pressured to sell for RM 41,300.[534] With the deportation of Eduard

530 See Mayor Greim to the District President of Upper and Middle Franconia, February 10, 1939. StadtACo A 10395.

531 See Jakob Wachtel to the Reich Minister of Economics, Berlin, July 21, 1939. StadtACo A 10395.

532 See Jakob Wachtel to the Coburg Trade Department, May 4, 1940, and Jakob Wachtel to the Coburg Trade Department, August 12, 1940. StadtACo A 10395.

533 See Chapter IV3.2.3.

534 See real estate agent Niermann to Wilhelm Rehlein, April 9, 1941; memo by Wilhelm Rehlein dated April 15, 1941, and purchase agreement dated November 25 and December 11, 1941. StadtACo A 10316.

Plauts was sent to Theresienstadt on September 10, 1942, his remaining assets ultimately fell to the German Reich.

Wachtel proceeded in the same manner in the other two cases. The inventory of the manufactured goods business of the murdered Siegfried Kohn was taken over by Karl Hartung and August Mechthold, the managing director of the Otto company, after negotiations by the Chamber of Industry and Commerce. They were valued at RM 6,405.37 and sold to Karl Hartung for this price. In addition, parts of the shop inventory were sold for RM 35 and the total amount was paid into a special account at the Coburg savings banks. After deducting the payments for transport, dismantling, and appraisal, the remaining balance was transferred, with the approval of the foreign exchange office, to the security account of the widow Hermine Kohn at the Bavarian State Bank and retained when she was deported to Izbica in 1942.

Wachtel was ultimately able to sell the inventory of the Gebrüder Gutmann manufactured goods store, owned by Simon Rothschild, located at Ketschengasse 6, at a profit. They were valued at a total of RM 1,069.84 and sold to Karl Hartung and the Heinrich R. Otto company for RM 589.18 each, and to the Louis Steingruber company for RM 121.65, bringing in a total of RM 1,300. Wachtel also sold a shop counter with a paper roll for RM 10. After deductions for fire insurance and the appraisal fees for the merchants Karl Hartung and Willy Schuhmann, the proceeds were paid into Rothschild's security deposit account at the Bayerische Hypotheken- und Wechselbank.[537] Simon Rothschild had also – probably in a grim premonition of his fate – attempted to sell his property at Ketschengasse 6 himself, drawing up a purchase agreement with master locksmith Hermann Weibrecht and paying the corresponding security mortgages to the tax office. At the same time, he sought to have a right of purchase for the Weibrechts on the building notarized.[538]However, the sale did not go through. Simon Rothschild and his wife Berta were deported to Riga in November 1941, where he was murdered in 1942. An order issued by the Nuremberg-Fürth Gestapo on November 27, 1941, confiscated Rothschild's entire estate, including the property, in favor of the Reich. The order to confiscate his assets was delivered to him in person on the same day at Camp II Allersbergerstraße in Nuremberg.[539]By decision of the

535 See Jakob Wachtel to the Reich Minister of Economics, Berlin, July 21, 1939; Jakob Wachtel to the Coburg Trade Department, May 4, 1940; Jakob Wachtel to the Trade Department in Coburg, August 12, 1940, and statement of accounts for the liquidation of the Eduard Plaut company, Hans-Schemmstraße 15. StadtACo A 10395.

536 See Jakob Wachtel to the Coburg Trade Department, May 4, 1940; Interim report by Jakob Wachtel to the Coburg Trade Department, December 7, 1940; Settlement of accounts for the liquidation of the Gutmann brothers; Settlement of accounts for the liquidation of the Siegfried Kohn company. StadtACo A 10395 and minutes of the Coburg City Denazification Tribunal dated April 5, 1948. StAMü Denazification Tribunal Box 986, Denazification Tribunal file Ernst Kuhn.

537 See Jakob Wachtel to the Coburg Trade Department dated May 4, 1940; interim report by Jakob Wachtel to the Coburg Trade Department dated December 7, 1940, and statement of accounts for the liquidation of the Gutmann brothers, Ketschengasse. StadtACo A 10395.

538 See transcript of the criminal investigation department's interrogation of Elisabeth Weibrecht, August 28, 1945. StadtACo A 8391 and Hermann Weibrecht to the Reparations Chamber of Upper and Middle Franconia, September 25, 1951. StANü Reparations Authority III a 948.

539 See order of the Nuremberg-Fürth Gestapo dated November 27, 1941, and delivery certificate dated November 27, 1941. StACo Coburg Tax Office Old Records 245.

On May 9, 1942, the mayor officially denied the Weibrechts' right to purchase the property at Ketschengasse 6, which was directly adjacent to Coburg City Hall, on grounds of public interest. The city itself wanted to claim the building for itself and create space for the expansion of the town hall. Greim had obtained the approval of the district president in Ansbach as the supervisory authority and of the Gauwirtschaftsberater (Gau economic advisor) for the Gauleitung Bayerische Ostmark (Bavarian East Mark Gau leadership) for his actions.[540] The city administration's pricing authority set the market value of the building at only RM 23,000, even though the standard value was RM 22,100, which was justified by the poor structural condition of the building. Assuming a revaluation mortgage of RM 6,480, the mayor acquired the property for RM 23,000. [541]At the same time, he received a number of Rothschild's furnishings for a purchase price of RM 2,282.10. [542]

In January 1939, the *Bavarian Ostmark* announced: "Now that (...) Jewish retail trade in Coburg has ceased to exist, one of the main goals of Coburg's retail trade, which has been successfully fighting against the Judaization of Coburg's economy for years, has been achieved."[543]On August 15, 1939, Wilhelm Rehlein reported to the district president, the Gau leadership, and the Coburg Chamber of Commerce and Industry that all Jewish businesses in Coburg had been liquidated. [544]Wachtel completed the liquidation in August 1940. [545]

Of the various actors involved in the "de-Jewification" process, the influence of the Gauwirtschaftsberater (Gau economic advisor) in Coburg was significantly less than in larger cities due to the geographical distance. His contribution consisted largely of giving final approval for "Aryanization" and property sales after the municipal price control office and the district leadership had given their consent. The local party leadership, the mayor, and the district economic advisor, who worked constructively with the Coburg Chamber of Industry and Commerce, were, on the other hand, the dominant figures in the systematic disenfranchisement of Coburg's Jewish population. The role of local authorities as "the place, vehicle, and driving force of the persecution of the Jews"[546] is particularly evident in the example of Coburg. However, the specific influence of the Coburg Chamber of Industry and Commerce is difficult to assess due to the lack of source material. Nevertheless, the Chamber of Commerce appears to have functioned as the central coordination and control center for "de-Jewification and Aryanization measures," to which both the Gau economic advisor and the city administration turned for "Aryanization issues" and which, with its economic expertise and focus, drove the "de-Jewification process" forward. In line with the role of other chambers of industry and commerce in the "Aryanization proceedings" can also be assumed in Coburg that the processes would not have taken place without the

540 See resolution of the mayor of Coburg dated May 9, 1942. StACo Coburg Tax Office Old Records 245.
541 See Ludwig Feuerlein to the Nuremberg Regional Finance Office, September 16, 1942. StACo Tax Office Old Records 245.
542 See registration dated October 2, 1948. StANü Reparations Authority III a 948. After the war, the property was returned to the heirs of Simon Rothschild.
543 *Bayerische Ostmark*, January 14, 1939.
544 See Wilhelm Rehlein to the District President in Ansbach, the Gauleitung Bayerische Ostmark and the Coburg Chamber of Industry and Commerce, August 15, 1939. StadtACo A 11291.
545 See Jakob Wachtel to the Coburg Trade Department, August 12, 1940. StadtACo A 10395.
546 See Gruner: NS-Judenverfolgung, p. 123.

The Chamber of Commerce's mediating role could hardly have been carried out without disruption. (547) It was therefore not strict separation or competitive action that characterized the actions of administrative bodies and the NSDAP in the process of "de-Jewification," but rather more or less smooth interaction and cooperation.

Of the total of 16 "Aryanizations," only four took place after 1937. The city administration demonstrably intervened in the particularly prestigious "Aryanizations" at Conitzer & Söhne and Großmann AG, specifically in the selection of the acquirers and the new board of directors, placing businesspeople loyal to the regime in these positions. However, the majority of Jewish businesses that disappeared from economic life in the course of the displacement of Jews were liquidated, which indicates that reducing competitive pressure was a central motive in the "de-Jewification process." The liquidations were an attempt to implement the economic policy goals and promises of the NSDAP, namely the elimination of department stores and the strengthening of small and medium-sized businesses, but this did not succeed in the long term.

The "Aryanization" and liquidation of Jewish businesses almost completely erased the visibility of Jewish life in downtown Coburg. Where Spitalgasse and Steinweg had once been lined with Jewish shops and centers of Jewish commerce had developed, these had been completely destroyed within six years. The liquidation of retail businesses here, combined with the sale of goods and inventory, can also be seen as a trial run for the complete expropriation and plundering of Coburg's Jews, in which the city administration under Mayor Greim once again played a decisive role alongside the state financial administration.

3.2.3 Plundering and expropriation

3.2.3.1 Fiscal persecution

The practice of liquidations and "Aryanization" was accompanied by a multi-layered fiscal persecution of Jews, ranging from tax discrimination and special levies to the confiscation of the assets of emigrants and the property of deportation victims, which was ostensibly the responsibility of the state financial administration.[549] This was divided into three levels, with the Reich Finance

547 On the role of the Chamber of Industry and Commerce, see, for example: Stremmel, Ralf: Kammern der gewerblichen Wirtschaft im „Dritten Reich" (Chambers of Commerce and Industry in the Third Reich). General developments and the case study of Westphalia-Lippe (= Studies in Economic, Social, and Technical History, Volume 25). Dortmund/Münster 2005, pp. 532–554 and Drecoll, Axel: The tax authorities as persecutors. Tax discrimination against Jews in Bavaria 1933–1941/42 (= Studies in Contemporary History, Volume 78). Munich 2009, pp. 318 f.

548 See Appendix 2: Overview of "Aryanizations" and liquidations of Jewish businesses. Since sufficient source material was not available for all "Aryanizations" and liquidations, the figures should be regarded as approximate values. A categorization of the acquirers according to Bajohr's behavioral typology, which distinguishes between *well-meaning and understanding businesspeople*, *silent partners*, and *active and unscrupulous businesspeople*, is hardly meaningful due to the limited availability of sources. See Bajohr: Aryanization, pp. 315–319.

549 See Kuller, Christiane: Finanzverwaltung und Judenverfolgung. Antisemitische Fiskalpolitik und Verwaltungspraxis im nationalsozialistischen Deutschland. In: zeitenblicke 3 (2204), No. 2. URL: http://www.zeitenblicke.historicum.net/2004/02/kuller/index.html (last accessed September 29, 2020).

ministry, the state tax offices, or the Oberfinanzpräsidien (regional finance offices), as they were renamed in 1937. The Oberfinanzpräsident in Nuremberg was responsible for Coburg. In the city, the tax offices represented the state financial administration at the lowest level, with Ludwig Feuerlein heading the Coburg office on Oberer Bürglaß. Of the approximately 60 civil servants at the tax office in Coburg who had to fill out a questionnaire on the BBG in 1933, 27 had joined the NSDAP by April 1933, eleven of whom, including Fritz von Baczko, had found their way to the NSDAP by 1931 and had co-founded several local groups in Coburg and its surrounding area.[551] Even before 1929, the Coburg tax office was considered a refuge for the NSDAP, particularly due to the influence exerted there by von Baczko.[552] In 1939, only 26 of about 70 civil servants were not active in the NSDAP or its branches and associations, 19 of 37 employees, and all five workers employed in the tax administration.

The "Reich Flight Tax"

It was now the responsibility of the financial administration to plunder the assets of the Coburg Jews, who were forced to emigrate and often criminalized in the process, primarily for the benefit of the state and its budgetary consolidation, for example by collecting the "Reich flight tax," the implementing provisions of which were tightened in 1934. The tax was payable upon giving up one's domestic residence, provided that the assets of the persons concerned exceeded 200,000 RM or their taxable income exceeded 20,000 RM. In this case, 25% of the assets were confiscated. The remaining amount could only be exchanged for the corresponding foreign currency at a significant loss. The circular issued by the Reich Ministry of Economics on June 23, 1934, limited the export of foreign currency to RM 2,000 and stipulated that larger amounts had to be deposited in a blocked account, from which only sums determined by deduction could be converted into foreign currency. While these deductions amounted to 20% in January 1934, they were gradually increased to 96% by September 1939. The tightening of foreign exchange law also gave the tax authorities access to their assets, and by assuming that German Jews had a blanket intention to leave the country, this was also possible outside of emigration.[554] The tax offices were thus able to issue a "security notice" for a Jewish taxpayer on any suspicion of imminent emigration and thus set an advance payment on the "Reich flight tax." In addition, emigration and the issuance of corresponding passports required a "clearance certificate" issued by the tax office, which certified the payment of all applicable taxes, a

550 The Nuremberg Regional Finance Office was merged with the Würzburg Regional Finance Office in 1942. See Kuller, Christiane: Confiscation – Administration – Utilization. Financial Administration and the Persecution of Jews. In: Hockerts, Günter; et al. (eds.): Die Finanzverwaltung und die Verfolgung der Juden in Bayern. Report on a research project by LMU Munich in cooperation with the General Directorate of the Bavarian State Archives. Munich 2004, pp. 21–38, here pp. 25 f.

551 See list of resolutions of the Nuremberg State Tax Office dated November 7, 1933. StACo Tax Office Contribution 2017 2738.

552 See Franz Klingler to Hans Seidel, October 9, 1929. Estate of Franz Klingler, private property of the Klingler family.

553 See overview of civil servants, employees, and workers who are active in the NSDAP, etc., June 10, 1939. StACo Tax Office Tax 2017 2738.

554 On the working practices of the Nuremberg Foreign Exchange Office, cf. Drecoll: Fiskus, pp. 143–146, 152–154.

This necessitated an investigation by the tax investigation service and, from the end of 1938, also required the approval of the Chief Finance Administrator.[555] In cases of suspected emigration intentions, the tax investigation service conducted searches of the private residences or business premises of Jewish Coburg residents, looking for assets that those affected had not reported to the tax office. At the same time, regular audits and inspections of business premises were also used in this context to obtain information about emigration intentions or other assets. This required private desks or sealed safes to be opened in the presence of tax officials, who then documented the contents in detail and compared them with previous asset declarations.[556] On questionnaires listing assets, the tax office finally documented in detail all declared emigration intentions, outlined family circumstances, and broke down all assets in the form of cash, bank balances, jewelry, and valuables, as well as the value of the removal goods. [557]

In particular, the Tax Adjustment Act of 1934 established corresponding ideological tax legislation in order, among other things, to "judge questions of fairness and expediency" according to "National Socialist ideology."[558] The rest of the tax legislation was also permeated by "national community" hierarchies, and strict standards were applied in the fiscal treatment of Jews. In the case of the Conitzer & Söhne company, for example, the Coburg tax office, during a tax audit, took issue with what it considered to be Adolf Friedländer's excessive expenses on his business trips to Coburg and insinuated that his trips to Coburg were motivated by personal reasons. Friedländer's lawsuit took the case to the tax court in Nuremberg, which accused the company owners of attempting to evade taxation on part of their commercial profits by claiming excessive expenses.[559] In addition, Jewish religious communities lost their status as public corporations and the associated tax advantages, even though they had already been significantly disadvantaged since the enactment of the "Tax Adjustment Act" in October 1934. [560]

The "Jewish Property Tax"

However, the persecution apparatus was particularly intensified by the tax authorities with the introduction of the "Jewish property tax" in 1938, which was enacted in response to the assassination of Legation Secretary Ernst von Rath in November 1938. Since only Jews were required to pay the levy, the introduction of the contribution was clarified by the "Ordinance on the Atonement of German Jews."

555 See Ludwig Feuerlein to all clerks and registry workers, November 30, 1938. StACo Coburg Tax Office Levy 2017 2647.

556 See transcripts of the Coburg tax investigation service from June 15 and 16, 1938, and transcript of the findings of safe deposit box no. 76 belonging to Erich Martin Saalfeld, a Jew from Coburg, June 9, 1938. StACo Coburg Tax Office Old Records 220.

557 See, for example, questionnaire with statement of assets of Wilhelm James Frank. StACo Coburg Tax Office Old Records 229.

558 See RGBl. I 1934, pp. 925–941, here p. 925.

559 See judgment of the Nuremberg Finance Court of April 28, 1938. StACo Coburg Tax Office Old Records 221.

560 See Kuller: Entziehung, p. 28 f.

The "Jewish Property Act" of November 12, 1938 marked the final break with central principles of tax law and the beginning of open fiscal persecution. According to this law, all Jews with assets exceeding RM 5,000 had to pay 20% of these assets in four installments to their assigned tax office by August 15, 1939. The decree expressly reserved the right to demand further payments if the total sum of one billion Reichsmarks was not reached, and in fact the value to be surrendered was increased again to 25%.

In addition, the "Third Order Based on the Ordinance on the Registration of Jewish Assets" of February 21, 1939, required Jews "to deliver items made of gold, platinum, or silver, as well as precious stones and pearls in their possession, to public purchasing offices established by the Reich within two weeks of the ordinance coming into force." [the] regulation to (...) public purchasing centers set up by the Reich."[561] As a result, the gold and valuables of the Coburg Jews were transferred to the pawnshops in Bamberg and Berlin.[562]

For the tax officials, the "Jewish property tax" was the first unjust measure that fell within their jurisdiction and made them Göring's direct executive body as the representative for the Four-Year Plan. Since the levy was to be a contribution and no individual tax rate was set, the officials did not have to use a precise basis for assessment. The tax authorities managed the plundering of the Jewish citizens of Coburg on the basis of existing fiscal policy norms and routines, thereby profiting from the exploitation process themselves. With a high degree of professionalism and routine procedures, the tax authorities, in cooperation with the municipal administration, carried out the disenfranchisement of Jewish Coburg residents with administrative normality and translated the ideological guidelines of the party into bureaucratic processes, while largely retaining their official authority among the population. A clear advantage in implementing the regulation was that the tax office officials were already in contact with the victims of persecution and had their documents at their disposal.

Based on the asset declarations submitted to the district government, it was the task of the tax officials to check the asset lists and determine the tax contributions.[565] To this end, the tax office issued security notices for the Jews still residing in Coburg in 1938, which listed the exact amount of taxes to be paid and the corresponding security measures. At the end of 1938, all Jews in Coburg received a list of the taxes to be paid. In order to pay the "Jewish property tax," which in most cases was paid in several installments, many Jews had to sell securities or real estate or part with works of art or valuable jewelry. The payment of the levy was used as a vehicle for "Aryanization" because it increased the pressure to sell real estate or businesses. The merchant Alfred Bamberger received a notice from the tax office that he owed the German Reich a property tax of 43,400 RM, a "Reich flight tax" of 43,960 RM, property taxes amounting to RM 800, and income and sales taxes amounting to RM 27,340, and that he was required to provide security for the total amount of

561 RGBl. I 1939, p. 282.
562 See transcript of the interrogation of Karl Tröger, August 20, 1945. StadtACo A 8391.
563 See ibid., p. 31.
564 See Drecoll: Fiskus, p. 320 f.
565 See Ludwig Feuerlein to all clerks and registry workers, November 30, 1938. StACo Coburg Tax Office, Tax 2017 2647.

He had to pay RM 11,470.[566] Only by selling his property at Bahnhofstrasse 38/40 and the proceeds from the sale of his company D. Bamberger in Lichtenfels was he able to raise the necessary security and transfer it to a special account at the disposal of the tax office. At the same time, he had to pledge securities to the Bavarian State Bank because he did not have the cash available to pay the installments due for the "Jewish property tax." In January 1939, Bamberger's now reduced assets were reevaluated by another security notice, and his taxable assets were reassessed at RM 185,000. In addition, an atonement payment of RM 37,000 was calculated, to be paid in four installments of RM 9,250 each. In total, the security notice was reduced from RM 114,700 to RM 90,000, taking into account the RM 26,572 in property tax that had already been paid.[568]However, as Bamberger was no longer able to pay the taxes and duties he owed to the German Reich in full, two compulsory mortgages had to be registered in favor of the Reich Finance Administration so that Bamberger could ultimately be issued with a certificate of good standing. In 1939, Alfred Bamberger finally emigrated with his wife and children via England to the USA, without the formerly wealthy merchant having sufficient start-up capital to build a new life.

The fate of the Altmann brothers' company also reveals the full extent and effectiveness of fiscal persecution for the purpose of "Aryanization." The pipe and basketware wholesale business founded in 1894 by brothers Jakob and Josef Altmann had weathered the First World War well economically by taking on orders from the army administration to manufacture shell baskets and was then able to further develop its business throughspecial travel activities of the owners, who participated in the Leipzig and Frankfurt trade fairs and had large department stores such as Woolworth as customers. [570]

In July 1939, the company had to be liquidated when business declined steadily as a result of Nazi legislation. In particular, the many home workers employed by the company were pressured by the party leadership to stop supplying the company.[571] Because the Altmanns' home, office, and warehouse had to be sold to pay the "Jewish property tax" and the Reich flight tax, among other things, their trading company could no longer be maintained.[572] The property at Kreuzwehrstraße 9, acquired in 1900, was transferred to the dentist's widow Helene Schneider for RM 29,000 on March 27, 1939, with the approval of the district president. With a standard value of RM 32,000, the value of the property was estimated at around RM 55,000.[573] Of the purchase price, only RM 3,944.70 went to Josef's account and RM 1,892.19 to Jakob Altmann's account.

566 See security notice dated December 12, 1938. StACo Coburg Tax Office Old Records 218.

567 See Alfred Bamberger to the Coburg Tax Office, December 8, 1938, and Alfred Bamberger to the Coburg Tax Office, December 16, 1938. StACo Coburg Tax Office Old Records 218.

568 See security notice dated January 11, 1939. StACo Coburg Tax Office Old Records 218.

569 See memo from the Coburg tax office, enforcement department, dated February 6, 1939; Alfred Bamberger to the Coburg tax office, February 27, 1939, and memo from the Coburg tax office, May 16, 1939. StACo Coburg tax office old records 218.

570 See application dated September 3, 1948. StANü Reparations Authority III a 851.

571 See Dr. Forkel to Reparations Authority III, June 12, 1951. StANü Reparations Authority III a 3599.

572 See application dated December 21, 1948. StANü Reparations Authority III a 3599.

573 See ibid.

The remaining amount was used to settle current account receivables of the Coburg Volksbank, to settle receivables of the Bavarian State Bank Coburg, for the "Jewish property tax," the Coburg court treasury, and appraisal and notary fees.[574] After handing over jewelry and other valuables, the last remnants of Josef Altmann's assets had to be used for the forced move to a "Jewish house" at Mohrenstraße 32 and Sally-Ehrlich-Straße 10. Altmann's remaining cash, about 600 RM, and valuables that had been exempted from the levy, such as wedding rings, were stolen from Altmann along with his packed suitcases during his deportation to Theresienstadt, where he arrived completely destitute and was murdered. [575]

3.2.3.2 "Aktion 3": Utilization of "Jewish furniture"

At the time of their deportation, however, the Coburg Jews often left behind not only the houses still in their possession, but also fully furnished and equipped apartments and full cupboards. The administration of these assets again fell within the remit of the state financial administration. "Action 3," as the utilization of "Jewish furniture" was called, represented the final stage of a process of disenfranchisement that robbed the Jews of Coburg of the remnants of their materialized identity, with all the emotions and memories it contained.

Following the enactment of the "11th Ordinance to the Reich Citizenship Law" on November 25, 1941, tax official Karl Tröger was tasked by the Chief Finance Administrator in Nuremberg with administering Jewish property confiscated by the Gestapo. The ordinance meant an enormous acceleration in the administrative practice of expropriating deported Jews, as it transferred their property to the German Reich the moment German Jews crossed the Reich border and took up "permanent residence" abroad.[577]Due to the increased administrative burden that the deportations entailed for the expropriation process, the initially centrally controlled measures were shifted to the regional level, with local financial authorities having considerable leeway. Any remaining accounts or shares were closed and paid out to the German Reich. In order to organize the disposal of the tangible assets left behind, the owners had to draw up a detailed inventory of their assets on a form before their deportation and submit it to the Gestapo, which later served as the basis for estimating the value of their furniture, paintings, and household items.[578]After the deportations, the Gestapo sealed the apartments and houses, and officials from the Coburg criminal investigation department, acting on instructions from the Gestapo, went through the buildings to check whether the stoves had been extinguished and the electricity

574 See purchase agreement dated March 17, 1939. StANü Reparations Authority III a 3599 and information from the Coburg Volksbank. StANü Reparations Authority III a 3598. The property had to be returned to the heirs of the Altmann brothers by order of the Reparations Chamber on September 5, 1951. See decision of the Bayreuth Reparations Chamber of September 5, 1951. StANü Reparations Authority III a 3598.

575 See registration dated December 21, 1948. StANü Reparations Authority III a 3598.

576 The files on "Action 3" were destroyed before the end of the war (cf. transcript of the interrogation protocol of the criminal investigation department by Ludwig Feuerlein, August 23, 1945. StadtACo A 8391.) The following statements are based on interviews conducted by the Coburg criminal investigation department in 1945.

577 RGBl I. 1941, pp. 722–724.

578 See transcript of the interrogation protocol of Karl Tröger, August 20, 1945. StadtACo A 8391.

Once the electricity had been turned off, the water pipes shut off, and the gas turned off, they sealed and locked the doors and handed over the keys to the tax office. Then began a process in which injustice was administered with *administrative normality* and precision. Tröger, the commissioner for the administration of Jewish property, was authorized to be the first to enter the apartments and houses and, together with another expert from the tax office, carried out a meticulous re-inventory. A commission consisting of an employee of the customs office, Oskar Pfannstiel, and, until the end of 1942, the auctioneer Maune, appointed at the suggestion of Mayor Greim, and later Hans Saling, set estimated prices for all items.

Responsibility for "Action 3" was legally the sole responsibility of the tax office. Initially, the entire expropriation of property was centrally controlled by the Berlin Regional Finance Office and the Berlin Moabit West Tax Office, but due to the enormous administrative effort involved, it was delegated to the regional finance offices. A small working group at the Nuremberg Regional Finance Office was responsible for the matter,[580] with the administration and disposal of the stolen properties having to be taken over by the relevant tax offices. Until 1941, senior government official Ludwig Feuerlein was responsible for the liquidation of "Jewish property." In particular,
"Action 3" for the "utilization of Jewish furniture" was handed over by the Chief Finance Administrator in Nuremberg to tax officer Karl Tröger.[581] In Coburg, the city administration under Mayor Greim also exerted far-reaching influence over who should have access to the expropriated furniture.[582]Even before the "11th Ordinance to the Reich Citizenship Law" was enacted, the welfare officer Ernst Bernhard had consulted with tax inspector Emil Fischer from the tax office on this matter, referring to information from the Security Service of the Reichsführer SS, SD Section Bayreuth. On November 27, 1941, he requested the tax office to provide him with detailed information about which furniture and furnishings had been confiscated in Coburg. The city administration subsequently acted in the disposal of the so-called "Jewish furniture" not merely as an agent of the state financial administration, but acted independently and disposed of the stolen items arbitrarily.

The role of the Coburg city administration

Since the now vacant houses, which had become the property of the state and were administered by the tax office,[584] were to be rented out as quickly as possible in view of the prevailing housing shortage and to avoid loss of rent, Jewish property was either sold on the spot or, at the behest of the welfare office, transferred to Wöhner's

579 See ibid.; transcript of the interrogation of Willy Bierbach, August 22, 1945. StadtACo A 8391; transcript of the interrogation of Willy Bierbach, June 22, 1946. StadtACo A 8391.

580 The following individuals served as Nuremberg's Chief Finance Presidents during the period in question: Erich Zerahn (April 1938-March 1943); Friedrich Sobe (April 1943-1944) and Prof. Dr. Hans Rauch (June 1944-April 1945). Cf. Bavarian Administrative Handbook. URL: https://verwaltungshandbuch.bavarikon.de/VWH/V._Beh%C3% B6rden_der_Finanz-,_Post-_und_Eisenbahnverwaltung (last accessed July 4, 2021).

581 See transcript of the interrogation of Ludwig Feuerlein, August 23, 1945. StadtACo A 8391.

582 The Nuremberg Finance Directorate proceeded in the same manner in Fürth and Zirndorf. See Nuremberg Regional Finance Directorate, Fürth branch, August 19, 1954. StANü Reparations Authority III JR 4015.

583 See Ernst Bernhard to the Coburg Tax Office, November 27, 1941. StadtACo A 10317.

584 The Nuremberg Regional Finance Office, which merged with the Würzburg Regional Finance Office in 1942, transferred responsibility for the administration of the properties to the tax offices. See Kuller: Entziehung, pp. 21–38.

Hall stored in Neuses. First, the group of officials directly involved in the expropriation process, from the finance, welfare, and customs offices, as well as the auctioneer himself, selected furniture and everyday items. Department head Bernhard instructed all members of his entourage to cover their needs from the inventory.[585] Other city officials were then allowed to select furniture for themselves, with the officials' wives often securing a number of items for their households or for their children's trousseaus. Karl Tröger himself took most of Bernstein's possessions, including "1 couch, 1 floor lamp, 1 table, 1 chest of drawers, 1 glassware set, 4 fabric armchairs, 2 fabric armchairs that had been in the tax office, 1 green fleece blanket, several items of clothing (2 suits and 1 jacket), various items of underwear, 4 carpets, 2 overseas suitcases, 1 smaller suitcase, 6 fish cutlery sets, various antique items, 4 nickel tableware sets, and various bed linen."[586] The purchase price of the items, which in most cases amounted to only a fraction of their actual value, had to be paid into an escrow account at the city treasury with the reference "Sale of household items from former Jewish property" or to the tax office. When selling the items, the city itself had added surcharges of around 20 to 30% as a contribution to administrative costs, with the consent of the tax office, based on the estimated prices provided by the tax office. On the other hand, Bernhard repeatedly demanded price reductions from the tax office for items he had taken himself, which Tröger usually granted him.[587] After the Wöhner inn in Neuses had to be put to another use, the remaining furniture was temporarily stored in the lodge on Theatergasse, and women were assigned to sort the laundry that had been handed in.

The welfare office itself kept almost all clothing, shoes, and other textiles for distribution to Coburg families who may have been affected by bombing raids in the event of a disaster. In addition, furniture was made available to the slaughterhouse management to furnish a room for evacuees. [590] A large part of the furniture was also allocated to "returnees" from Bessarabia. [591] Carpets, beds, and linen were sent to the Regional Finance Office in Nuremberg to furnish finance schools.[592] The regional hospital was also furnished with furniture and household items. Food and other perishable goods, as well as beds and furniture, were given to the NSV. Silver was sent directly to Berlin.[593] However, Mayor Greim had also decreed that part of the property, and in particular high-quality furniture intended for the NSV's inventory, should be given to the

585 See transcript of the interrogation of Fritz Kern, August 22, 1945. StadtACo A 8391.
586 Transcript of the interrogation of Karl Tröger, August 20, 1945. StadtACo A 8391.
587 See transcript of the interrogation of Karl Tröger on July 28, 1948. StACo Denazification Court Coburg City B 153.
588 See transcript of the interrogation of Franz Muth, June 22, 1946, and Mathilde Jakob, September 12, 1945. StadtACo A 8391.
589 See transcript of the interrogation of Franz Muth, August 22, 1945. StadtACo A 8391. To this end, camps were set up in the lodge building, in the Zapf residence on Steinweg, in the Wöhner and Brückner restaurants in Neuses, at Hohenfels Castle, and at the Schorkendorf restaurant. See Coburg Legal Office to the Bayreuth Reparations Chamber, February 3, 1955. StANü Reparations Authority III a 6022.
590 See Karl Puff on the utilization of Jewish furniture, June 11, 1945. StANü Reparations Authority III a 851.
591 See transcript of the interrogation of Franz Muth, June 22, 1946. StadtACo A 8391.
592 See report of the police department dated June 27, 1946.
593 See transcript of the interrogation of Willy Bierbach, June 22, 1946. StadtACo A 8391.

city administration. The city administration buildings were furnished with paintings and furniture, with city councilor Dr. Schulze-Döbold replacing his entire office with the study from Saalfeld's apartment. Alfred Sauerteig also acquired over 50 works of art for the city administration, mostly oil paintings that had belonged to Moritz Cramer, in order to display them in a new local history museum. [594] This museum was to present the entire history of the NSDAP in Coburg and also display all the furnishings of the Jewish synagogue.[595] In addition, Sauerteig kept several paintings by Jewish artists and portraits of Jewish personalities in the confiscated hall of the lodge building in Theatergasse. They were to be destroyed on the orders of Mayor Greim so that the frames and canvases could be reused. [596]

Moritz Cramer's private library, comprising around 1,200 volumes, was initially stored at the customs office, where it was assessed by the director of the State Library, Dr. Heins, the employee of the Gauarbeitsgemeinschaft für Heimatpflege (Gau Working Group for Local History) and school inspector Hermann Knorr, and the district training and library director Arnold, with a view to its transfer to their respective collections. The collection included medical reference books, works by Sigmund Freud, a linguistics library containing, among other things, large folios bound in pigskin, and a fiction section.[597] The Coburg State Library took over 93 works, including about 30 works from the
16th to 18th centuries, and school inspector Knorr, who himself compiled a Franconian-Coburg local history library, received at least seventeen works and 20 smaller writings, brochures, and catalogs for 10 RM.[598] DC pastor Dr. Adolf Siegel from Unterlauter acquired 185 works for 30 RM, including several Bibles. SS-Hauptsturmführer Dr. Friedrich Seekel from the Security Service of the Reich Security Main Office also visited the library in November 1942 to select scientific literature for the Security Police Leadership School and chose 42 volumes for 10 RM.[599]However, most of the books were destroyed because it was a special library on Jewish and Oriental philosophy. Some of them were taken over by the Rosenberg publishing house in Bayreuth. [600]

The population's involvement in the deprivation of rights

In December 1941, the remaining valuable furniture was finally offered for auction to the Coburg population under the responsibility of Franz Muth and Mrs. Kühn from the welfare office, with individual sales always requiring the prior approval of the

594 See transcript of the interrogation of Alfred Sauerteig, August 24, 1945; transcript of Alfred Sauerteig's letter to the Coburg Criminal Investigation Department, August 30, 1945. StadtACo A 8391. The file also contains transcripts of the inventory of "museum pieces from Jewish ownership" from the city administration's files.

595 See *Bayerische Ostmark*, January 7, 1939.

596 A detailed list of the paintings can be found in file StadtACo A 8391. However, since such destruction never took place, these paintings were also preserved.

597 See School Inspector Knorr to Tax Office Official Tröger, October 7, 1942. Yad Vashem M.1.DN/278.

598 See School Inspector Knorr to Tax Officer Tröger, May 18, 1942. Yad Vashem M.1.DN/267; School Inspector Knorr to the Coburg Tax Office, July 10, 1942; Coburg State Foundation to the Coburg Tax Office, March 3, 1944. Yad Vashem M.1.DN/278.

599 See Chief of the Security Police and SD to the Coburg Tax Office, November 12, 1942, and Chief of the Security Police and SD to the Coburg Tax Office, November 25, 1942. Yad Vashem M.1.DN/278.

600 See Coburg Regional Foundation to the Bayreuth Reparations Chamber, August 30, 1955, and information from the Coburg Customs Office, October 17, 1955. StANü Reparations Authority III a 6022.

Mayor Greim was needed.[601] Buyers came from all walks of life. Restaurant owners, business owners, factory owners, police officers, and quite a few women supplemented their household goods and businesses with "Jewish furniture." In some cases, complete room furnishings with valuable antique pieces were also found here. The fact that these buyers were also aware of the origin of their acquisitions in detail is evident not least from the purchase receipts, on which the previous owners of the goods were always listed in accordance with administrative correctness.[602] Anyone who acquired items here must have been unmistakably aware that the actual owners would have no chance of reclaiming their property. The plundering of the Jews did not take place in secret, but in the midst of society and thus visible to all involved. Under Tröger's successor Ley, who took over the sale of "Jewish furniture" in February 1943, there were only a few goods left, which were handed over to severely war-disabled persons and sold to Hamburg bomb victims in 1943 through their caregivers.[603] According to auctioneer Maune, goods worth a total of approximately RM 33,000 were estimated during the proceedings. [604] The tax office's total claim against the city treasury amounted to RM 29,261.35 by March 1944. [605]

Still enjoying considerable leeway, the administration carried out a redistribution of the estates of Coburg's Jewish residents with quiet precision and bureaucratic zeal. The tax office kept precise records on account cards of the profits made from the sales, as well as the appraisers or freight forwarders who had to be paid, and calculated the profits for each deported Jewish citizen of Coburg. To this end, correspondence was conducted with banks, information about savings accounts was obtained, rent, tax claims, and electricity bills were paid, and outstanding debts of the disenfranchised Jews were collected, the equivalent value of which now belonged to the German Reich under Nazi legislation. In the case of Lotte Bernstein, the German Reich's income of RM 8,632.55 from savings, furnishings, linen, shoes, and jewelry was offset by the tax office's expenses of RM 547 for appraisal and transport costs as well as property tax payments. On the day of the confiscation of assets, November 27, 1941, the deportation of the 35-year-old Coburg woman ultimately yielded a profit of RM 8,085.55. An excess of RM 11,226.62 was obtained from the liquidation of her parents' assets. [606]

601 See Councilman Bernhard to the Coburg Chamber of Commerce and Industry, December 19, 1941. StadtACo A 8521 and minutes of the interrogation of Karl Tröger on July 28, 1948. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg City B 153. Unlike in other cities, however, no advertisements were published in the daily newspaper for this purpose.

602 See, for example, the transcripts of various purchase receipts for "confiscated items" in StadtACo A 8391.

603 See transcript of the interrogation of Rudolf Wichmann, August 22, 1945; of Hans Ley, August 22, 1945, and Hans Ley, June 22, 1946. StadtACo A 8391.

604 See transcript of the interrogation report of Albin Maune, August 21, 1945. StadtACo A 8391.

605 See report by city administrator Puff, February 3, 1944. StANü Reparations Authority III a 851. Franz Muth stated the value as 27,000 RM, while the later city legal advisor Scheringer estimated it at around 22–
23,000 RM. Cf. Transcript of the interrogation protocol of Franz Muth, August 22, 1945. StadtACo A 8391 and Legal Office of the City of Coburg to the Bavarian Administrative Court, October 22, 1956. StadtACo Legal Office files, pension matter August Greim.

606 See account cards for Lotte Bernstein and Ivan and Ella Bernstein. StACo Coburg Tax Office Old Records 248.

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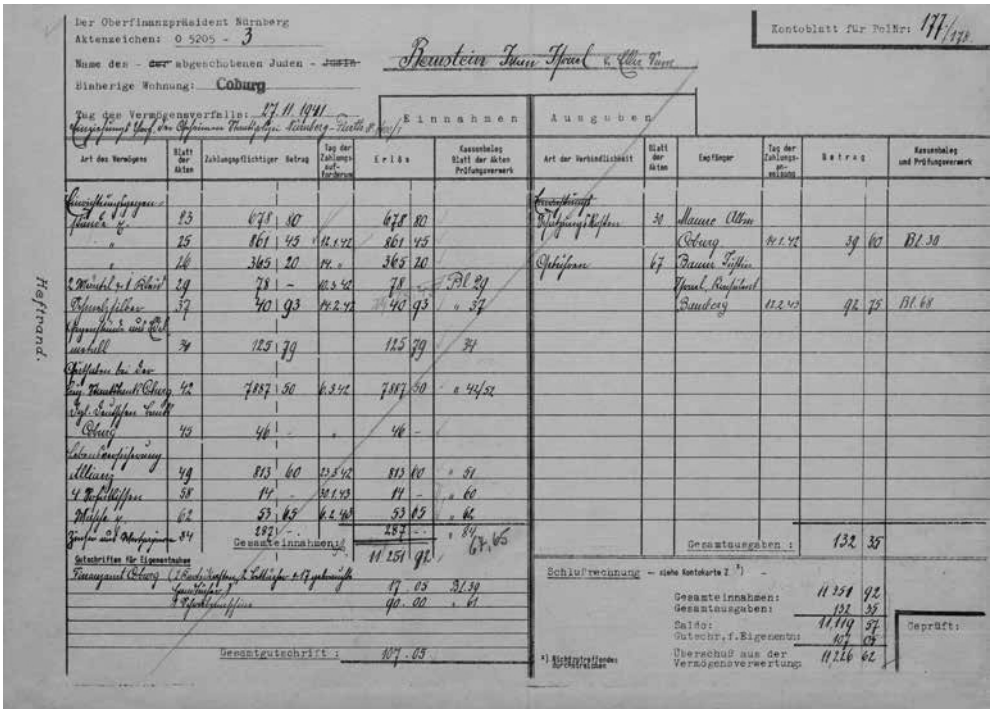


Fig. 43: Account card of Ivan Bernstein

In contrast to the state financial administration, the city administration, which had become involved in the administrative process of disenfranchisement on Greim's instructions with the aim of participating in and profiting from the expropriation of Coburg's Jews, was in some cases overwhelmed by the amount of furniture available and the associated administrative burden, which did not fall within its area of responsibility. Franz Muth was increasingly unable to work due to overload. In July 1943, Bernhard had to review Franz Muth's management and have Karl Puff take over. At the beginning of April 1943, Mayor Greim, who seemed to be fully aware of the illegality of his instructions, finally ordered Bernhard and Muth to destroy all the city administration's files on the utilization of "Jewish furniture." They burned the files in the oven in Bernhard's apartment.

The involvement of the administration in the persecution apparatus and its routine participation in the disenfranchisement of Jewish fellow citizens is rarely more evident than in this area. The expropriation process itself created a divide between those who were robbed, those who profited, and those who watched and knew. Parts of the population had also actively profited from the disenfranchisement and participated in this final phase of "Aryanization." Material motives played a decisive role here. The guilt that the people involved incurred also became a decisive factor in their perseverance toward the end of the war. The awareness that they themselves had participated in the disenfranchisement

607 See Franz Muth on the exploitation of Jewish furniture in 1945. StANü Reparations Authority III a 851.

former fellow citizens and neighbors, and of having robbed them not only of their possessions but also of part of their identity, strengthened their will to persevere in a hopeless war in order to escape punishment by the Allies.

The experience of loss suffered by those affected must be considered particularly serious in view of the value of professional status and property in bourgeois society. In addition to the purely material damage, reputation, status, and social relationships were irretrievably stolen, thus permanently shattering the self-esteem of Jewish Coburg residents. The ensemble of personal possessions, selected furniture, everyday objects, and clothing can be seen as a "biographical arrangement that establishes and supports self-image and identity in a very concrete sense,"[609] the loss of which meant irreversible damage.

The process of "de-Jewification" and "Aryanization" is unprecedented in terms of the functional and dynamic interplay between measures taken by the party, the administration, and the participation of the population in the persecution process. From the first boycott actions to the expropriation through "Aktion 3," the "de-Jewification" took place largely in full view of the entire urban society and, despite all contradictions, with a clearly defined goal, especially in the phase up to the end of 1937. Against the backdrop of Nazi ideology, a network of interactions had established itself in the city, which promoted the economic exclusion and plundering of Coburg's Jews through various types of legitimized persecution measures. The network around Ernst Kuhn and Karl Hartung exerted particular influence in this regard. Interlocking offices, such as Rehlein's position as mayor, city planning officer, district economic advisor, acting president of the Chamber of Crafts from 1934 to 1937, and acting head of the Coburg branch of the Gau Chamber of Economics from 1944 to 1945, stabilized the unjust system.[610] This clearly reveals the considerable scope for action and the wide range of social behavior, as well as its effectiveness even within a coercive apparatus. In some areas, the population accelerated the displacement of Jewish citizens from economic life, especially when the persecution measures coincided with their material interests. However, when the party's instructions ran counter to this, as was the case at the beginning of the boycott measures, the majority of the population was able to exert a restraining influence on the implementation of exclusion through its actions, for example by refusing to shop in stores owned by Jews. Material interests can therefore be seen as a decisive driving force in the process of disenfranchisement taking place here, alongside deep-rooted anti-Semitism. At the same time, in the specific case of Coburg, the enormous power of Mayor Greim, who was keen to ensure that the city and the city administration shared in the "Aryanization profits," is evident not least in the handling of "Aktion 3."

608 See Bajohr: Persecution, p. 651.

609 Welzer, Harald: Vorhanden/Nicht-Vorhanden. Über die Latenz der Dinge. In: Wojak, Irmtraut; Hayes, Peter (eds.): "Arisierung" im Nationalsozialismus. Volksgemeinschaft, Raub und Gedächtnis. Frankfurt a. M., New York 2000, pp. 287–308, here p. 294.

610 For a comparison with other regions and the networks around the Gauleiters, see: Drecoll: Fiskus, p. 316 f.

V Coburg and the War Society

1 Adaptation and Restructuring in the Service of the "Home Front"

With the German invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939, the "Third Reich" entered a new phase of its existence, which its violent dynamic had been aimed at. This had far-reaching consequences for the urban sphere of action and the process of communitization, and triggered a fundamental process of transformation. During the war, the everyday life of each individual was inevitably intertwined with the crisis of the state, all the more so when, after the defeat at Stalingrad in 1943, "total war" was declared, rigorously subordinating all areas of life to the war effort. German society now operated in two spaces, the front and the "home front," which, despite their physical distance, were always related to and influenced each other. By conjuring up external enemies, emerging rivalries, and increasingly scarce resources, the war acted as a catalyst for processes of inclusion and exclusion. Within the "militarized national community," an external threat, underscored by propaganda, fueled the willingness to defend what had been achieved so far in the spirit of the ideal of the "national community." At the same time, in the second half of the war, the population was confronted for the first time with defeats and a significant deterioration in its own situation.

Everyday life and the realities of war required enormous adaptation within the urban sphere of influence, as the organizations and actors operating within it were subjected to new negotiation processes due to the war-related restructuring and realignment of power structures. The party and city administration had to face changed tasks and fields of activity, adapt to new conditions, and transform new objectives into political and administrative action. The top priority was to maintain the order and normality that had been established by 1939. In addition, due to conscription practices, numerous party members, civil servants, employees, and workers who would have been necessary to manage the transformation were no longer available. In view of the rationalization measures, the importance of the war became an integral argument in political, administrative, and social processes, whereby the municipalities also had to be aligned with the Nazi state's campaign of conquest and destruction. In the course of *polycratic consolidation*, the municipalities found themselves increasingly deprived of their powers and authority. The reality of war therefore posed decisive challenges both for administrative practice and for the city's self-image, as the city's political decline became more apparent and its ability to act independently and proactively was severely restricted. War-induced centralization, rationalization, and prioritization inevitably changed the influence and sphere of power of "Germany's first National Socialist city" and gave rise to a new form of staging.

1 See Gotto: Local Politics, pp. 275–384.

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1.1 The party between slogans of perseverance and terror

After years of focusing on securing and stabilizing power, by 1939 at the latest, the mobilization of the population for war and the management of the burdens of war had become the focus of National Socialist policy in the municipalities. The ability to mobilize the population was closely linked to the question of enthusiasm for war and the success of Nazi war propaganda. While Hitler's status had already been strengthened by the measures to revise the Treaty of Versailles, the "liberation of the Rhineland," the "Anschluss" Austria, and the cession of the Sudetenland in 1938, the Blitzkrieg successes in the first two years of the war underscored the image of a "Führer" sent by fate who seemed capable of performing miracles. By 1941, the Wehrmacht had achieved considerable territorial gains seemingly effortlessly and in a very short time in the Polish campaign, the invasion of Norway and Denmark, the Western campaign, and the Balkans. Nevertheless, there was no enthusiasm for war in World War II comparable to the "August experience" of 1914, which was particularly prevalent among the middle classes.[2] The experience of the last war was still too fresh. Fear and concern spread, even if they were repeatedly assuaged by hope and confidence that the war would end quickly, optimism, and arrogance. Keeping the German "home front" stable during mobilization therefore became one of the party's main tasks after 1939. This was all the more so after the de facto turning point in the war at the end of 1941, when the population's reactions to the soon-to-be-felt restrictions, especially in terms of supplies, and the growing concern for relatives on the Eastern Front became a political issue. The perception that hospital trains carrying wounded soldiers arrived in a pitiful condition and that the number of dead and wounded was rapidly increasing did the rest. The war put the population's loyalty to the regime to a severe test. As it intensified, it dashed hopes for a better life, an elixir that had been an essential part of the ideology of the "people's community" and had helped to mobilize the population.

"Leadership" on the "home front"

The responsibility for maintaining morale and attitude on the "home front" lay primarily with the political leaders. In the course of aligning the party's personnel structure with the war effort, the office of district leader was given expanded executive powers, which focused in particular on "leadership"[3] and "strengthening the mental fortitude of all compatriots for the defense of the Reich"[4]. On this basis, district leaders were able to make suggestions to state authorities regarding administrative projects and procedures, thereby also exerting a direct influence on the administration. In addition to the affiliated associations and the National Socialist Women's League, the district leaders were also responsible for the party organizations with the exception of the

2 The original image of general German enthusiasm for war in 1914 has been revised in historical scholarship, which has pointed out its social and regional limitations. See, for example, Verhey, Jeffrey: Der "Geist von 1914" und die Erfindung der Volksgemeinschaft (The "Spirit of 1914" and the Invention of the People's Community). Hamburg 2000.

3 On the concept of leadership, see Rebentisch, Dieter; Teppe, Karl (eds.): Verwaltung contra Menschenführung im Staat Hitlers (Administration versus Leadership in Hitler's State). Göttingen 1986, pp. 23–32.

4 RGBl. I 1940, p. 45.

SS in order to carry out war measures more effectively.[5] Greim's office as district leader and mayor was thus once again upgraded in terms of power politics, which justified, for example, his arbitrary decisions on the disposal of "Jewish furniture."[6] At the same time, however, his workload increased as a result of his work.

The demands on "leadership" increased once again due to the change in war propaganda after the defeat at Stalingrad and the intensification of the air war. Especially after the declaration of "total war," which culminated in Propaganda Minister Goebbels' speech on February 18, 1943, at the Berlin Sportpalast, the local party had to try to deal with everyday problems in a way that would appeal to the public and rally the population to accept additional burdens in order to prevent the emergence of war fatigue. The aim was to balance the population's desire for normality with the war-related dynamism and states of emergency, as well as permanent mobilization, and to compensate for the resulting friction. The aim of the "total mobilization" measures was to give the population the impression that a defeat like that of Stalingrad had been possible because not all the reserves of the "home front" had been used effectively. Now, the entire society was to be entrusted with the tasks of defending the Reich and fighting the enemy, for example through the introduction of compulsory labor service.[7] The orders ultimately culminated in 1944 in Goebbels' appointment as "General Plenipotentiary for Total War Effort" and Hitler's decree on "total war effort" of
July 25, 1944. Once again, one million people were to be freed up for the front and armaments production, which meant that virtually all cultural life was shut down, a 60-hour week with a general ban on vacations was introduced to intensify labor, and women were increasingly deployed to primarily male jobs. [8]

Changes in party work

Since the crises caused by the war worked against National Socialist centralism as a whole, the scope for action at the local level grew after 1939.[9] The party was often able to style itself as a prominent crisis helper, while the administration frequently served as a lightning rod for the population's frustration. Large-scale campaigns such as the Kinderland and Mütterverschickungen (children's and mothers' evacuation programs) or the accommodation of evacuees and "bomb refugees" in the city significantly expanded the NSV's remit and scope of action. Overall, this led to an increase in the party's powers over state authority at all hierarchical levels during the war, especially in the second half. With the appointment of party stalwart Josef Feichtmayr

5 See Order to consolidate all forces of the party in the war of September 15, 1939. In: Party Chancellery of the NSDAP (ed.): VAB Volume I, Munich 1942, p. 32 f. and RGBl. I 1940, p. 45.

6 See Chapter IV3.2.3.2.

7 See RGBl. I 1943, p. 67 f.; RGBl. I 1944, p. 133 f., 168. See Chapter V2.2.2.

8 See RGBl. I 1944, p. 161 f., 168, 191 f.

9 This finding has already been highlighted by Hans Mommsen and Dieter Rebentisch for the Gau level. See Mommsen, Hans: Reich Reform and Regional Authorities – The Phantom of the Middle Instance 1933–1945. In: Janz, Oliver; Schiera, Pierangelo; Siegrist, Hannes (eds.): Centralism and Federalism in the 19th and 20th Centuries. A Comparison of Germany and Italy. Berlin 2000, pp. 227–237, here p. 237 and Rebentisch: Führerstaat, p. 535.

In July 1944, the district leader of Coburg had now also differentiated between party and administrative leadership in the Vestestadt, which ran parallel to an institutional upgrading of the office. In addition, the new district leader had brought a particularly high degree of radicalism and fanaticism to the party leadership in Coburg.

The NSDAP continued to maintain a strict organization of local groups, held regular local group meetings, and swore in political leaders to their duties in the war through regular work conferences.[10] In contrast to state officials, party members in local leadership positions were more frequently declared indispensable by order of the head of the party office, so that they were not drafted into the Wehrmacht in order to maintain the functioning of the party work as much as possible.[11]All party meetings, cell evenings, or women's evenings were now dominated by presentations on the war, the struggle of the German nation, and the inevitability of unconditional perseverance on the part of all. Local group leaders in particular were to set an example of combat readiness and firmness and fulfill their war duty by utilizing all their strength. All party members were to become omnipresent guarantors of the strength of the
"home front" and lead the "people's community" in dealing with management, rumors, or voluntary services.[12] Block leaders were also repeatedly reminded of the importance of their actions and their attitude toward the "home front," so that even the lowest levels of the party could now contribute to victory. In 1943, on the instructions of Bormann, who had risen to become the second most powerful man in the NSDAP, general member rallies and propaganda marches were held to demonstrate the party's dominance. Here, as with the Nazi family evenings ordered in 1944, the party's overload was already evident, mainly due to a lack of personnel.

At official party events, the Hitler Youth now took center stage, organizing rallies on Schlossplatz, where they reaffirmed their commitment to "the Führer, the people, and the fatherland," and, thanks to the enthusiasm that prevailed among young people in particular, became an important tool for rallying support for the
"Home front."[14] The everyday lives of children and young people were now even more dominated by service to the party, collection campaigns, harvest work, and finally also by service as anti-aircraft, air force, or navy assistants, so that they were removed from the influence of their parents' homes and schools for long periods of time and became independent at an early age. At the same time, the new central role of the Hitler Youth, which now often took over the tasks

10 See, for example, *Coburger Nationalzeitung* of March 30, 1942.

11 See Rebentisch: Führerstaat, p. 528.

12 See Circular on the War Duty of Party Members of September 16, 1943. In: Party Chancellery of the NSDAP (ed.): VAB Volume IV, Munich 1943, pp. 5–8.

13 See Order on general appeals to members for increased leadership commitment of the entire party organization dated September 29, 1943. In: Party Chancellery of the NSDAP (ed.): VAB Volume IV, Munich 1943, pp. 8–12; Order on the activation of party members – implementation of propaganda marches dated September 30, 1943. In: Party Chancellery of the NSDAP (ed.): VAB Volume IV, Munich 1943, p. 12 and Nolzen, Armin: The NSDAP, the War, and German Society. In: Echternkamp, Jörg (ed.): Die deutsche Kriegsgesellschaft 1939 bis 1945 (= Das Deutsche Reich und der Zweite Weltkrieg, Volume 9, First Half-Volume: Politisierung, Vernichtung, Überleben). Munich 2004, pp. 99–193, here p. 163.

14 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, July 7, 1941.

and positions of their fathers, and the associated increase in prestige and responsibility, to their loyalty to the party and their willingness to persevere. In order to be able to optimally instrumentalize children and young people for this very function, ideological training by political leaders was introduced for them in January 1942, after membership in the Hitler Youth had also become mandatory in 1939.[15]Until the final weeks of the war, the military readiness of young people continued to be trained through physical education and field warfare games, and the leadership of the Hitler Youth coordinated their wartime tasks in training camps and pledged themselves to selfless and sacrificial readiness for action. [16]

In order to strengthen the "home front," maintain its defensive readiness, and, above all, provide military training to the men who had remained at home, military shooting and combat training became the focus of the SA's work. The propagandistic purpose of the shooting exercises was to register all men, to prove the homeland's willingness to defend itself, and to emulate the soldiery at the front by professing allegiance to the defense community. While all men who were members of the party's branches and organizations could be directly recruited to participate, all local groups were also instructed to use their files to approach those who were not part of the party network in order to enforce unity on the "home front."[17] Proof of the indispensable willingness to defend the country was provided by the military shooting competition in May 1944, in which 1,148 locations in the area of the SA group Bayernwald took part.
131,467 marksmen took part, and the Coburg SA standard came third behind Hof and Bayreuth with 10,583 participants.[18]

An important task of the party's work was also to maintain the connection between the front and home. In his role as district leader, Greim regularly sent greetings from home to the front.[19] It was not only correspondence with fellow citizens serving in the military and verbal or written reports of war experiences that were intended to extend the urban space mentally to the front. In the concrete education and disciplining of the population at home, too, the sacrifice of the soldiers at the front was made the central benchmark and guideline for the behavior of their compatriots who had remained at home.[20] The ideologically motivated demand that every German had to serve the "people's community" even more emphatically during the war was implemented accordingly through various campaigns that imposed obligations on men in military service on the "home front." In particular, a large number of collections were organized to ensure that everyone made their contribution through material sacrifice and instructed generosity. Everyday life was marked by regular collections of textiles for the Red Cross War Relief Fund and the Winter Relief Fund, or the donation of everyday items such as skis, boots, furs, and winter clothing, but also instruments, records, and gramophones for

15 See Chronicle of the Coburg-Mitte Local Group of the NSDAP during the War. StACo NSDAP 8. In March 1939, membership in the Hitler Youth became compulsory for all 14- to 18-year-olds, and a year later for all 10- to 14-year-olds as well. However, even this did not result in complete coverage of the youth population.

16 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, March 14, 1945.

17 See SA of the NSDAP Standarte 95 Coburg to the mayor, April 24, 1944. StadtACo A 6297.

18 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, May 26, 1944.

19 See Deine Heimat grüßt dich zur Kriegsweihnacht 1943. StACo NSDAP 8.

20 See, for example, *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, February 24/25, 1945.

the Wehrmacht. Even members of the Landestheater did sewing work for the Wehrmacht during their breaks.

The party work of women

Due to the large number of conscriptions and the feminization of the "home front," women's groups led by district women's leader Erika Brüschwiler and the BDM also gained in importance within the party and the urban sphere of action.[22]With Erika Brüschwiler, who had replaced Bechmann as district women's leader in January 1941, a networker had risen to the top of the organized party women's work during the war. As a recipient of the "Golden Party Badge," she had belonged to the inner circle of the early NSDAP in Munich, together with her husband Dr. August Brüschwiler, who had been appointed director of the art collections of the Veste Coburg from December 1936 to 1942.[23] With the motto "Personal suffering is insignificant in the face of today's great events; what matters is that we win and that our Germany lives on,"[24] she had a lasting impact on women's party work in Coburg. In May 1944, Erika Brüschwiler moved back to Munich and her deputy, Martha Flessing, took over her position.[25]

Although the party's leadership and positions of power remained in male hands, women's party work became more visible through a range of everyday support services, most of which were a direct response to war-related emergencies. Regular reports on the work of the NS-Frauenschaft (National Socialist Women's League) and the Deutsches Frauenwerk (German Women's Association) in the *Coburg Nationalzeitung newspaper* bore witness to this fact. During the war, the BDM was responsible for station service, nursing, vocational care, community evenings, and singing in military hospitals.On top of that, women were involved in harvesting, sewing, and mending for the front, as well as playing a key role in collecting textiles and other items on the "home front." Self-help and neighborly assistance were declared the "duty of the housewife."At the same time,women's groups became more active in public at propaganda events or war circle meetings and played a greater role in official events. Through regular compulsory and community evenings or training courses, women's organizations also played an important role in mobilizing the female "home front." The stability of wartime society was thus maintained through the efforts of a large number of women who, through their party service, practical assistance, and domestic activities, helped to cope with and compensate for the initial supply shortages.

21 See Chronicle of the Coburg-Mitte Local Group of the NSDAP during the War. StACo NSDAP 8.

22 See ibid.

23 In Munich, August Brüschwiler had run an art and antiques business together with his brother Eugen Brüschwiler. Both brothers were proven to have been involved in brokering art objects to Martin Bormann. Eugen Brüschwiler in particular traveled throughout Europe during the war as an art buyer for various party officials and was involved in the confiscation of art objects in France. He was also an important buyer for the "Sonderauftrag Linz" (Special Assignment Linz). See Löhr, Hanns Christian: Das Braune Haus der Kunst: Hitler und der "Sonderauftrag Linz" (The Brown House of Art: Hitler and the "Special Assignment Linz"). Kunstbeschaffung im Nationalsozialismus (Art Procurement under National Socialism). Berlin 2016, p. 117.

24 *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, May 15, 1944.

25 See ibid.

26 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, July 13, 1941.

27 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, February 17/18, 1945.

difficulties made an important contribution to "human leadership" on the "home front."[28]

The NSDAP as an instrument of control and discipline

At the same time, pressure to conform and enforce collective optimism regarding the course of the war and the future of the German people was significantly intensified during the war in order to prevent a "second 1918." In the course of *the totalization of the Volksgemeinschaft* [29], exclusion processes intensified, while inclusion was increasingly replaced by coercion, with the NSDAP serving as an instrument of control and discipline. This became clear, among other things, in the rising number of cases before the special courts, which were highly ideologized jurisdictions. These were also intended to counteract alternative information gathering mechanisms via enemy leaflets, foreign radio stations, or the spread of rumors, which increased as the war progressed. Of the cases before the Bamberg Special Court that concerned Coburg residents, two-thirds were reported after 1939.[30]The court ruled without preliminary investigation in expedited proceedings and, since the beginning of the war, had increasingly dealt with a number of specific criminal offenses such as war economy and broadcasting crimes or "undermining military morale," the radical interpretation of which increased as the war situation worsened. In particular, the dissemination of critical comments on the course of the war, jokes hostile to the regime, or rumors were now punishable by law. Draconian penalties were often used to set an example. Proceedings were usually triggered by denunciations, which were now also on the increase. In December 1939, for example, the Bamberg Special Court sentenced Frieda S. to three months in prison because, after the war had begun, she had said in the presence of others what many were probably thinking: "They'll be staring soon enough, they've made life miserable enough for the Jews, they've even locked them up in the gym downstairs. The English were starving us, so that we would soon have nothing left to eat."[31] Albert M., an employee at the Waldrich company in Coburg, was also prosecuted for making "morale-undermining" statements after he told his colleagues during a break that he knew from connections to foreign diplomats and the state theater that the war would soon be over. After his comrades reported the incident, Albert M. was charged not only with "malice," but also with "undermining military morale." The Bamberg Special Court referred his case to the Chief Public Prosecutor at the People's Court, and from there it went to the Munich Higher Regional Court. Albert M., who was now imprisoned in Munich Stadelheim and defended by Dr. Max Fey, was sentenced to two years' imprisonment on May 2, 1944. [32] The differences

28 On the role of women on the "home front," see: Kramer, Nicole: Volksgenossinnen an der Heimatfront. Mobilisierung, Verhalten, Erinnerung (= Schriftreihe der Historischen Kommission der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Band 82). Göttingen 2011.

29 Keller, Sven: Volksgemeinschaft am Ende. Gesellschaft und Gewalt 1944/45 (= Sources and Representations of Contemporary History, Volume 97). Munich 2013, p. 66.

30 Cf. Coburg cases at the Bamberg Special Court. StABa Public Prosecutor's Office at the Bamberg Regional Court Rep K 105, Bamberg Special Court.

31 Case Frieda S. StABa Public Prosecutor's Office at the Bamberg Regional Court Rep K 105, Bamberg Special Court 1093.

32 See transcript of the indictment by the Attorney General in Munich dated January 20, 1944, and the judgment of the Munich Higher Regional Court dated May 2, 1944. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg City B 256.

The severity of the sentences in these two exemplary cases also highlights the radicalization that took place in the special courts during the course of the war.

Defending the homeland

Defending the homeland as Allied troops advanced into the German Reich ultimately became the last major task for the local party leadership. The appointment of the Gauleiters as Reich Defense Commissioners in 1942 was an important instrument in this regard, making the regional level a starting point for stabilizing the "home front." They were now responsible for all non-military defense measures. [33]Through the conscription and organization of the Volkssturm in October 1944, which was subordinate not to the Wehrmacht but to the party, as well as the deployment of troops to build fortifications in the homeland, the party was effectively given military powers.[34] At the height of the measures for total war effort, the long-cherished plans for the conscription of a final reserve were realized and the formation of a "German Volkssturm" from all men between the ages of 16 and 60 who were fit for military service was ordered.[35]Since the organization of the "Volkssturm" was analogous to the structure of the NSDAP, recruitment took place at the local group level, and at the district and county levels, an assistant was appointed to manage the affairs of the "Volkssturm." In addition, the Gau and district leaders were responsible for selecting suitable battalion, company, platoon, and group leaders to command the poorly armed and barely trained men and boys. Under the guiding principle of defending the Reich, military, state, and party competences became blurred in the final phase of the war.

1.2 Administration between staff shortages and expanded tasks

The great challenge for local government during the war was to cope with a multitude of new war-related tasks, orders, and requirements with significantly reduced personnel and resources. Civil air defense, the supply of consumer goods, and food rationing were added as major new tasks in order to make the effects of the war on the "home front" manageable. The regime's leadership was also prepared to give local authorities more leeway. Local government served even more than before as a corrective force, having to adapt the provisions of the Reich to local conditions in the form of administrative tasks.

33 See Ordinance on Reich Defense Commissioners and the Standardization of Economic Administration of November 16, 1942. RGBl. I 1942, pp. 649–653.

34 The Volkssturm was organized into four groups according to fitness, age, or availability. See RGBl. I 1944, pp. 253 f.; Order of the district staff leader of October 12, 1944. In: Party Chancellery of the NSDAP (ed.): VAB Volume VII, Munich 1944, p. 366 and order on leadership tasks of sovereigns dated October 12, 1944. In: Party Chancellery of the NSDAP (ed.): VAB Volume VII, Munich 1944, p. 367 f.

35 See RGBl. I 1944, p. 253 f.

36 See Keller: Volksgemeinschaft, pp. 75–100.

37 See Brinkhus, Jörn: Auftragsverwaltung der Gemeinden im Krieg. Das Beispiel westfälischer Kommunen. In: Mecking, Sabine; Wirsching, Andreas (eds.): Stadtverwaltung im Nationalsozialismus. Systemstabilisierende Dimensionen kommunaler Herrschaft. Paderborn et al. 2005, pp. 215–242, here pp. 217 f., 242.

As a guarantor of a certain degree of continuity and stability in local government, Mayor Greim was placed under special protection, particularly in his dual role as district leader and Mayor Rehlein, due to his position as head of the Coburg branch of the Gauwirtschaftskammer (District Economic Chamber) and as district economic advisor. Even after Greim was replaced as district leader by Josef Feichtmayr in July 1944, his position was retained because his deputy, Rehlein, was already suffering from health problems due to his excessive workload and was also tied up with economic matters.[38] The demands of the war also had an inevitable impact on the entire administrative structure and the distribution of tasks among the department heads, who had acted as central control authorities.[39] The reshuffles within the departments following the appointment and dismissal of various city administration employees for military service and higher-level instructions were always based on the principle that administrative power within the administration should remain in the hands of proven "old fighters" or indispensable administrative experts, and thus in the hands of a small circle of an established ruling clique. Unlike in many large cities and at the Reich level, this did not lead to the establishment of institutionalized coordination bodies to improve the organization of the war effort in Coburg. In addition, the accumulation of offices, which was now becoming more common in many places, was already a familiar phenomenon in Coburg. Nevertheless, constant change within the departments of the city administration, a corresponding flexibility, adaptability in the daily work of individual civil servants, and a willingness to devote themselves entirely to the cause were now part of the administrative reality of war.

The transformation of local government during the war

The police department, whose responsibilities had been expanded to include air raid protection, price monitoring, guarding foreign workers, and conducting large-scale searches for escaped foreign workers or enemy saboteurs,[41] was now divided into a uniformed law enforcement police force, which, according to government instructions, was called the "Schutzpolizeidienstabteilung" (Protective Police Service Department) and was headed by Police Inspector Gerber, and an administrative police force under the leadership of City Inspector Franz Fahlbusch. The head of department and permanent representative of the mayor for administrative police matters was city assessor

38 See City Treasurer Vollmuth to the District President in Ansbach, September 20, 1944. BA R 9361-II/316822.

39 Because no administrative reports from the city of Coburg are available for the period after 1939, and thus no overview of the administrative restructuring, the following account does not claim to be complete.

40 For the establishment of such committees in various cities, see Gotto: Kommunalpolitik, p. 276 f. and Erdmann, Philipp: Kommunales Krisenhandeln im Zweiten Weltkrieg und in der Nachkriegszeit. Die Stadtverwaltung Münster zwischen Nationalsozialismus und Demokratisierung (= Villa ten Hompel, Schriften 14). Berlin 2019, pp. 97–106, 128. On the failed attempts to establish coordination bodies at the Reich level, the Ministerial Council for Reich Defense and the "Tripartite Committee," see Rebentisch, Dieter: Führerstaat und Verwaltung im Zweiten Weltkrieg. Constitutional Development and Administrative Policy 1939–1945 (= Frankfurter Historische Abhandlungen, vol. 29). Stuttgart 1989, pp. 535, pp. 117–132, 463–498.

41 See inspections based on the command order of July 10, 1944. StACo War Files 5 and file note from the Schutzpolizei (police force) dated January 15, 1944. StACo NSDAP 9.

Dr. Schulze-Döbold was appointed.[42] In the area of cultural administration, which was initially charged with war propaganda and then had to be restricted due to the war, the structure and staffing levels changed significantly. When Franz Heimberger was drafted into the Wehrmacht in 1939, he was replaced by proven "old fighters." August Gerspacher served as deputy in Department III and, even after Heimberger's brief return from military service, continued to head the theater division, which now operated separately from the school, sports, and gymnastics division. Responsibility for Hitler Youth matters was taken over by City Inspector Schunck. In Heimberger's absence, the files of both departments were managed by Department IV and handled by City Clerk Puff. In 1943, the established three-person leadership was finally dissolved due to the excessive workload of Director Dietrich. Since District Cultural Officer Otto Schilling now also took over the duties of municipal music commissioner, which Dietrich had requested as early as 1940, cultural policy power became clearly concentrated in the hands of the party.[43]A similar division of the responsibilities of a department among several proven administrators and party officials took place when he sought to appoint city treasurer Vollmuth, who was represented by Wilhelm Rehlein and city administrator Edmund Volk. However, since Dr. Schulze-Döbold was younger than Hermann Vollmuth and able to perform active military service, whereas Vollmuth was no longer eligible for frontline duty, the city administration initiated the exchange of the two fully qualified lawyers in Coburg.[44]Vollmuth thus returned to his position in Coburg and was also assigned the position of Nazi district legal advisor by the Gau leadership, while Rehlein and Volk retained their expanded areas of responsibility.[45] The deputy mayor and first deputy mayor positions were also filled by members of the inner circle, with August Gerspacher being selected for air raid protection matters and Ernst Bernhard for general representation. Mayor Greim gave his assurance that both were capable of handling a crisis, such as a major air raid. [46]

The consequences of labor shortages

The labor shortage in the city administration, which became glaringly apparent as a result of conscription practices, made the deployment of proven experts a key constant in the city administration's personnel policy. The case of Alfred Sauerteig, who despite his advanced age was entrusted with personnel matters even during the war and was awarded the 1st class Loyalty Service Medal in 1942, illustrates this point.[47] When, in August 1944, following the assassination attempt on Hitler on July 20, a purge was to be carried out within the city administration and incriminating material was to be gathered on those city employees who

42 See circular to the city administration dated August 10, 1939. StadtACo A 8462.

43 See service instructions for the school department dated September 13, 1941, and service instructions for the theater department dated September 13, 1941, and City Councilor Gerspacher, Theater Department to the Lord Mayor,
June 3, 1943. StadtACo A 6441.

44 See transcript from the City of Coburg to the Bamberg Replacement Battalion, June 8, 1943. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg City V46.

45 See decree by Mayor Greim dated June 29, 1943. StadtACo A 6441.

46 See report to the district president in Ansbach, May 30, 1942. StadtACo A 6441.

47 See personnel questionnaire for Alfred Sauerteig. StadtACo personnel file for Alfred Sauerteig, submitted by the main office.

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known as old democrats, Sauerteig once again became the focus of the party. In particular, the clique of "old fighters" around Ernst Kuhn now wanted to clean up and realign the city administration once again. In this context, a decree by Sauerteig to the city building authority was brought to the attention of the district leadership, in which he complained about the inappropriate storage of material for conducting elections and referendums in the municipal building yard, after he had arranged for the documents to be stored in a secure corner of an air-raid shelter. In his statement of reasons, Sauerteig had indicated that in the event of a suddenly scheduled referendum or referendum, for example on the termination or continuation of the war, this material would be of importance and could hardly be reproduced due to the prevailing shortage of materials. While a statement like this would have brought others directly before a special court,[48] the Gau leadership demanded at least Sauerteig's immediate replacement as personnel officer. The district president also informed August Greim that Sauerteig was now considered unacceptable. However, the mayor, who had not prevented the order from being circulated and had allegedly only expressed his displeasure verbally, stood up for his employee, as his predecessors had done. Against the backdrop of staff shortages and the competence of the long-serving municipal official, Sauerteig was indispensable to Greim and the maintenance of the proper functioning of the local government. [49]However, the labor shortage soon made itself felt below the departmental level as well. By 1940, the number of personnel in the city administration had already shrunk considerably due to the numerous call-ups to the Wehrmacht, secondments to the occupied territories, and other additional war services on the "home front." In order to utilize all workers for the "total war effort," the minimum working week was set at 60 hours in 1943, and working hours were steadily extended, especially on Saturdays.[50] The workload shifted more and more onto the shoulders of the older "followers" who were no longer liable for military service, but who were hardly able to bear it. This was also because the lack of a diet rich in fat and vitamins on the "home front" had a considerable impact on health and well-being. Added to this were the increasing disturbances to nighttime rest caused by air raids and air raid sirens, so that personnel officer Sauerteig predicted as early as 1940 that some of the administrative staff would be unable to work due to overload and the rest would

This would place an even greater burden on "followers." Despite the increasing workload and vacation bans, older employees had to be granted days off in order to maintain their productivity and prevent a total collapse. [51]

48 For more on the special courts, see Chapter IV3.1.3.

49 See Gauleitung Bayreuth Härtl to Kreisleiter Feichtmayr, November 10, 1944; Mayor Greim to Kreisleiter Feichtmayr, November 23, 1944; memo from Mayor Greim, December 13, 1944. StadtACo pension file Sauerteig, submission to the main office and affidavit Walter Rauscher February 28, 1947. StAMü Denazification Tribunal Box 986, Denazification Tribunal file Ernst Kuhn.

50 See instructions from Mayor Greim dated August 2, 1943, and August 31, 1944; service April 3, August 31, and October 30, 1944. StACo War Files 2.

51 See, for example, the personnel situation in the municipal investigation office: Fritz Birkner to Mayor Greim, February 29, 1940, Schmitz to Mayor Greim dated November 21, 1940, January 14, 1941, and Schmitz to Department Head III, March 18, 1941. StadtACo A 15252 and memo from Alfred Sauerteig dated November 21, 1940. StadtACo A 6283.

"Administrative simplification"

The central, top-down strategic response to the war-related constraints within local government was a Reich-wide decree on "administrative simplification." The decree of the Führer and Reich Chancellor on the simplification of administration of August 28, 1939, stipulated the absolute prioritization of "Reich defense tasks" and subjected local authorities to the authority of higher-level agencies as elements of state contract administration.[52]However, since the intermediate authorities also suffered from an enormous shortage of manpower, they were able to make little use of their expanded authority. [53]In addition, local government supervision was already relaxed again in 1940. Several ordinances and regulations further simplified administration and required local authorities to transfer all dispensable personnel to the Wehrmacht, which was carried out in late summer 1944 through a "combing operation," and to postpone less important tasks.[54] At the local level, this resulted in the elimination of tasks such as the preparation of staffing plans and budget controls. The decree also restricted the advisory matters for which the mayor consulted the advisory councils to matters of fundamental importance. [55]The city was hardly able to meet the personnel requirements of the municipalities; only the closure of the state theater made it possible to suddenly release a number of workers.[56] In order to maintain administrative efficiency despite the constant meetings and staff shortages, municipal employees were also encouraged to submit their own suggestions for simplifying and speeding up official business, improving work results, and concentrating the remaining staff at the main administration office. Particularly useful ideas were rewarded with special benefits.

In actual administrative practice, however, there was no question of simplification. In November 1940, Alfred Sauerteig, head of the personnel office, described the increasing number of amendments to existing laws, ordinances, and other legal and administrative regulations as a threat to the administration and thus to the state, as these were becoming an ever-greater burden, as a few examples show. Apart from the many supplementary decrees and regulations issued in 1940, the Reich Remuneration Regulations had reached their 35th amendment. Seven implementing regulations had also been issued for the emergency service ordinance, so that the Reich government felt compelled to officially send the city districts several copies of a complete edition compiled at the instigation of the Reich Minister of the Interior in order to counter the noticeable uncertainty in this important area of administration.

52 See RGBl. 1939 I, pp. 1535–1538.

53 See Brinkhus: Auftragsverwaltung, p. 218, and Gotto: Kommunalpolitik, p. 300.

54 On the organizational framework of the regulations for administrative simplification at the Reich level and the associated disputes over jurisdiction, as well as considerations for a district and administrative reform by Wilhelm Fricks as General Representative for the Reich Administration and the Simplification of Administration, see Rebentisch: Führerstaat, pp. 148–152, 463–470, 516–520.

55 See the minutes of the councilors' meeting on March 27, 1942, and the service instruction of March 26, 1942. StadtACo A 8074.

56 See chapter V1.3.2.

57 See instructions from Mayor Greim dated August 2, 1943, and August 15, 1944. StACo war files 2.

In addition, so many cover sheets had been delivered for the wage regulations for employees and workers that gluing them in cost more than the purchase price of a new wage regulation. The fact that an annotated civil service law or municipal code of around 1,500 pages cost around RM 50 at that time was a clear sign of the excessive regulatory apparatus and rampant bureaucratization. The fact that it was not uncommon for different regulations to be in circulation, leading to ambiguities and friction within the administration, was inevitable. This circumstance became particularly acute in everyday practice against the backdrop of the increasing burden on older employees who were no longer subject to compulsory military service and who were barely able to cope with the workload now assigned to them. With a view to the "final victory," Sauerteig summed up: "If further members of the entourage are to be sent to the colonies, etc., the entourage will hardly be in the condition necessary to build on the tremendous victory when peace comes, if the flood of legislative changes cannot even be stopped."[58] Instead of simplifying administration, the adapted war administration effectively meant a considerable amount of extra work, accompanied by staff shortages and a reduction in manpower and performance. A real simplification of the excessive paperwork and legislation was therefore the central demand of the local authorities.

Financial burdens of war

In addition, the municipalities were heavily burdened financially by war contributions. A circular issued by the Reich Minister of the Interior and Finance in November 1943 increased the war contribution once again by reducing trade tax transfers, resulting in a shortfall of RM 260,000 for the city of Coburg compared to its budget target. In addition, there were unforeseen additional burdens on the budget due to special expenditures for various air raid protection measures. Mayor Greim therefore instructed all departments to do their part to ensure that the city could meet its obligations to the Reich by postponing all unnecessary expenditures or keeping budget monitoring lists.

Civil servants, employees, workers, pensioners, and survivors in municipal service were also required to donate 10% of their income tax and at least RM 0.25 per month from their salaries and pensions to the Winter Relief Fund. Mayor Greim commented: "In view of the willingness to make sacrifices that has been consistently demonstrated in recent years

58 Memo by Alfred Sauerteig dated November 21, 1940. StadtACo A 6283.

59 See ibid. The issue of office supplies illustrates how minor details could cause conflicts between administrative practice and wartime requirements. In early February 1940, Alfred Sauerteig complained that, due to iron conservation measures, the city administration was not allocating any codes for office supplies, which could now only be purchased individually from small retailers. However, the lack of paper clips, staples for staplers, folders, and file covers prevented the administration from carrying out its duties quickly and properly, which, from the city official's point of view, was disproportionate to the small amounts of metal that were saved. See memo from Alfred Sauerteig dated February 1, 1940. StadtACo A 6283.

60 See instruction from Mayor Greim dated December 18, 1943. StACo War Files 2.

It can be assumed that this year, too, municipal employees and recipients of pensions will readily agree to the same arrangement as last year and that, especially in view of the current struggle for survival of our people, no one will oppose the social efforts of the WHW."[61] Under the guise of voluntariness, municipal employees were asked to submit a written explanation if they did not agree to the donation. In addition, all "followers" who were subject to income tax were required to transfer an additional 0.7% of their income tax assessment for the previous year to the Winter Relief Fund on a monthly basis.

In the other collections, which now dominated everyday life on the "home front" and were intended to demonstrate the willingness of individuals to make sacrifices for the "people's community," municipal employees were also particularly encouraged to make their contribution. In May 1940, Mayor Rehlein sent a circular to the individual departments, calling on employees throughout their entire area of responsibility to donate generously to the German Red Cross in view of the successes in France, as an "expression of solidarity with our brave soldiers and gratitude for their daring efforts and our brilliant leader."

New areas of responsibility for the city administration

The city administration's responsibilities were restructured on the grounds of wartime necessity, with new areas of activity being added and others postponed until after the end of the war. Despite staff shortages, departments had to be expanded and new staff hired to carry out the new tasks. By October 1939 alone, around 55 temporary wartime employees had been hired by the city.[64]After Coburg was designated a residential area in November 1939, Mayor Rehlein had already determined the future development of the city by lifting the absolute freedom to build in just under a dozen development plans, which were intended to create 1,500 new apartments and, on a large scale, provided for systematic regional planning in accordance with National Socialist principles. Special consideration was given to preserving Coburg's garden city character and creating a uniform streetscape with inviting squares and parks. To this end, the city administration drew up an economic plan that aimed to keep the further development and expansion of the city on track and provided for the orderly use of land with a view to the requirements of agriculture and forestry, industry, transport, but also the protection of the cityscape.[65] In particular, large-scale construction projects to restructure the urban area had to give way to war-related rationalization. This included the second phase of construction of the new savings bank building as well as housing construction in general, so that Rehlein's ambitious plans remained just wishful thinking.

61 Instruction from Mayor Greim dated August 2, 1943, and August 19, 1944. StACo War Files 2.
62 See ibid.
63 Circular from Mayor Rehlein dated May 18, 1940. StadtACo A 8462.
64 See staffing plan from 1939. StadtACo A 8008.
65 See *Bayerische Ostmark* dated February 1, 1940.

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Welfare policy now focused particularly on the families of men who were themselves serving in the military. In a kind of continuation of the high level of care provided to war invalids and war survivors, the relatives of soldiers were now to be generously and adequately provided for, partly as a lesson learned from the First World War. The regime's intention was to ensure that the population felt as little impact from the war as possible through measures such as these. The Reich bore a large part of the costs. The corresponding support payments became a vehicle for the inclusion of the "home front" and served the war effort at home. The city inspector Bernhard Müller and the city secretary Max Müller, represented by the city administrator Karl Puff, were responsible for family support matters, which in Coburg were not handled by a specially established office as in large cities, but within the district welfare association.[66] The war also brought about a significant worsening of the situation in other welfare issues, which the administration was able to use in part to enforce its social policy goals more strictly. With regard to the small pensioners' home, for example, applications for admission increased significantly from 1943 onwards, after the need for such places had risen sharply due to the effects of the war, food rationing, and the lack of caring relatives. Stricter criteria could now be applied in the selection of applicants, as from October 1943 onwards, a statement was obtained from welfare nurse Erna Puff for each application, who was asked to assess the health, character, and general compatibility of the applicants and to give her opinion on the extent to which admission should be recommended.[67]

When conscription into the Wehrmacht and various other military services brought about a significant change in the composition of the "home front," the "leadership" of young people became a particular issue, on which the city administration cooperated closely with the NSV. The youth welfare office of the NSV district administration concluded an agreement with the mayor to

"promoting youth welfare and thus [the] education and training of endangered, genetically healthy, and racially valuable young people in accordance with the National Socialist worldview."[68] The now even closer cooperation between the NSV youth welfare service, the municipal youth welfare office, and the municipal police consisted of the police reporting cases of endangerment or neglect of young people or child abuse directly to the NSV, even before further criminal or educational measures were taken, so that the NSV could take educational action and advise on possible courses of action. Against the backdrop of the shortage of manpower on the "home front," the common goal was also to prevent young Germans from being lost to the

the "people's community."

Air raid protection requirements

As a further new administrative task, the city administration had to implement air raid protection requirements and free up human resources for this purpose.

66 See memo from Mayor Greim dated February 2, 1940. StadtACo A 8462.

67 See various inquiries in StadtACo A 8462.

68 NSV district office management Coburg to Chief Inspector Gerber, October 4, 1939. StadtACo A 8462.

69 See NSV District Office Coburg to Chief Inspector Gerber, October 4, 1939, and Chief Inspector Gerber to NSV District Office Coburg, October 6, 1939. StadtACo A 8462.

The bombing of the Ruhr region by the British *Bomber Command* on May 16-17, 1940, marked the beginning of the air war against the German Reich, which entered its most intense phase at the beginning of 1943 with the combined attacks of the American and British air forces. While the British continued their intensified nighttime area attacks from early 1942, they were now supported during the day by precision strikes from the US Air Force. Not least, the *round-the-clock bombings* that were now initiated had a massive impact on the actual and perceived threat situation within urban areas.

Even though less industrialized areas were not initially expected to be directly involved in the bombing campaign, civil air defense had initially been neglected here, as it had in Coburg. It was not until 1943, with the expansion of the air war, that measures to protect the city and its inhabitants were initiated. As a third-order air raid shelter, Coburg did not set up its own command staff to implement air raid protection, but instead relied on local police structures and made use of other existing municipal facilities without state subsidies. [70] The air raid protection units were therefore based, among other things, on the local volunteer fire department and technical emergency services. The local police administrator, i.e., the mayor in his role as chief police administrator, was appointed as the civil air raid protection officer, who headed the official air raid protection organization. In addition, an air raid police force with two units and about 40 men was established in Zinkenwehr 37, various rescue, pilot, and observation stations were set up, and a chemical warfare investigation station and decontamination facility were maintained. The air raid protection service thus consisted of the volunteer fire department, the air raid police, the technical emergency service, an E-train, a medical service, various construction and repair crews, an air raid veterinary service, and several animal transport crews. In addition, messengers and stewards were on duty for the air-raid shelters. This meant that around 350 people were available for air defense, with members of the police force being trained as bomb disposal experts.

In addition, air raid shelters had to be built and maintained for use in the event of an air raid. At the beginning of 1944, Coburg had nine public air-raid shelters that could accommodate around 2,000 people, five dugouts for around 1,000 people, 1,024 splinter- and debris-proof cellars that had been provisionally converted for air-raid protection, and two public bomb-proof cellars that could hold around 500 people. The hospital and the individual schools each had their own air-raid shelters. Although the air-raid shelters offered sufficient space for the secondary schools, the elementary schools were inadequately protected by dugouts, so shift teaching was introduced here. There were two splinter- and debris-proof underpasses at the train station, but travelers also had to use the neighboring air-raid shelter at Greif & Schlick in Ludwig-

70 Cities and municipalities were classified as air raid shelters of the first, second, and third order in the air raid protection organization, depending on their degree of air raid risk based on their military, political, war economy, and transport policy significance. See Hampe, Erich: Civil Air Defense in World War II. Documentation and experience reports on structure and deployment. Frankfurt am Main 1963, p. 52 and RGBl. I 1937, pp. 559–565.

71 See inspections based on the command order of July 10, 1944. StACo War Files 5.

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Siebert-Straße 5, today's Raststraße, as well as a bombproof rock cellar in Rummental. In 1944, however, around 40.5% of the city's population was still unprotected in the event of an attack, so the air raid shelters were continuously expanded and were still under construction when the Americans marched in.[72] Another defining feature of everyday life was the proper blackout of the urban area at night to make it more difficult for enemy aircraft to identify their targets. Public buildings, all private households, and all vehicles were subject to the blackout requirement, which was checked daily. The city guard was also deployed in some cases during blackout operations. In the vicinity of the city, reception centers and supply depots were also set up for the eleven local groups of Coburg in case of large-scale destruction. Reserve hospitals were also newly established in the city in 1939, first in the Hofbräu restaurants, later in the Hotel Reichsgraf or in the county hospital.

The war offices and supplying the population during the war

Supplying the population during the war brought with it a whole new set of problems, which led to major structural changes. In order to adequately cope with this new administrative task, special war offices were set up to control the distribution of food and consumer goods. On August 27, 1939, food management was placed under complete control and supervision, among other things through the introduction of ration cards and the establishment of a State Food Office, which was based in Bavaria at the Ministry of Economic Affairs.[74] The food offices introduced at the local level and located in the district farmers' associations were divided into two departments, with Department A controlling and recording production and Department B carrying out the distribution of the managed products within the city administration by means of ration cards and authorization cards. Moritz Rauscher, district farmers' leader, was appointed head of Food Office A in the districts of Staffelstein, Coburg, and Lichtenfels, as well as the city of Coburg. The supply of rationed consumer goods to the population was the responsibility of the economic offices, which were part of the lower administrative authorities under the mayor. To relieve them, economic self-administration institutions were also called upon, such as the Bayreuth district group and the Coburg district group of the retail trade economic group. In Coburg, the combined economic and food office set up at Rosengasse 1 was headed by Ernst Kuhn, who had previously been in charge of the labor propaganda office that preceded the municipal economic office and who was now finally rehabilitated despite his dispute with Gauleiter Wächtler due to the labor shortage. He initially used the air raid protection organization to quickly set up the Economic and Food Office and distribute six distribution points throughout the city. Speed was particularly important because of panic buying by the population.

72 See inspections based on the command order of January 8; April 18, August 6, and September 13, 1944. StACo War Files 5.

73 See inspections based on the command order of January 8, 1944. StACo War Files 5.

74 See Reich Minister for Public Enlightenment to the Supreme Reich Authorities, August 28, 1939. StadtACo A 8462.

75 See Ludwig Siebert to Moritz Rauscher, September 11, 1939. StadtACo 8462.

should be prevented. [76]It was not until November 1, 1941, that the Economic and Food Office was finally divided into two separate offices when City Inspector Kuhn was called up for military service in the eastern territories. Under the overall supervision of City Legal Counsel Dr. Schulze-Döbold, the management of the Economic Office was transferred to City Inspector Otto Müller and the management of the Food Office B to employee Max Langbein. After Kuhn's return from the Eastern Front, he was once again entrusted with the overall management of the Economic Office from June 8, 1942, with the various areas of responsibility being divided between him and Otto Müller.

The forced rationing of food and consumer goods entailed an enormous administrative burden and a great need for human resources. The burden of increasing shortages as the war dragged on and the corresponding reduction in what could be distributed to the population was borne primarily by the two war offices. The offices and their employees, as direct intermediaries between the administration and the population, also had to bear the brunt of the discontent over shrinking rations and distributed goods, the quality of which was steadily declining. The work within the war offices was made even more difficult by the various higher authorities, which were involved in controlling the already administratively overloaded process of rationing and distributing food and consumer goods and wanted to control the bureaucratization of shortages. The Reich Ministry of Food and Agriculture or the Reich Ministry of Economics passed on their instructions to the city administration, in some cases via intermediate authorities such as the state food or district economic offices. A multitude of regulations, special provisions, and their constant adaptation to the ever-dwindling supply situation thus characterized everyday work in the office. The scope of food rationing regulations, which increased as the war dragged on, exceeded much of what the administration had had to cope with to date. The division of the population into different consumer groups and the allocation practice, which was regulated down to the last detail and even included possible exceptions, presented the offices with an excessive set of rules on the one hand, but on the other hand repeatedly required crisis management when it came to compensating for misguided decisions in the planned economy. Only through bureaucratic routines, official diligence, and the assistance of additional workers was it possible to manage the necessary effort. By communicating the politics behind the controlled food and consumer economy and calming the population and the prevailing discontent, the Economic and Food Office contributed to the stability of the "home front." The composition of the two offices clearly shows how much the city administration was supported by women during the war.

Max Langbein, a municipal employee born in 1896, belonged to the ranks of the "old fighters" in Coburg, which is why Kuhn had spoken out in February 1935 in favor of a review of his salary conditions and higher remuneration.[79] The enormous

76 See announcement by the municipal information service on local defense policy work. Stadt-ACo A 7880.
77 See order by Mayor Greim dated June 6, 1942. StadtACo A 6441.
78 See the schedule of responsibilities for the Food Office dated September 15, 1944, and the schedule of responsibilities for the Economic Office dated September 15, 1944. StadtACo A 6335.
79 See resolution of the Administrative and Police Senate of February 11, 1935. StadtACo A 6332.

The tasks that the war offices had to cope with were evident not least in their areas of responsibility. As head of the Food Office, he was responsible for taking note of all decrees issued by the State Food Office, the main associations, and trade associations, distributing the relevant information to the clerks, and instructing and supervising them in order to implement the provisions and regulations within his area of responsibility. He supervised the distribution of food ration cards and stamps, looked after around 200 retail businesses with regard to UK positions, the procurement of labor and goods, and checked the ordered stock reports with regard to punitive measures. In addition, most of the communication, correspondence, and telephone contact with higher authorities, in particular the State Ministry of Economics and the State Food Office A and B, fell within his remit. Locally, he was responsible for extensive contact with the district farmers' association and the Food Office A, as well as for scheduling and holding meetings of the individual economic groups. In the field, he inspected and monitored factory kitchens and communal warehouses and directed the distribution of goods in the fruit and vegetable wholesale trade and for potatoes. In addition to Langbein, the Food Office consisted of 22 employees, 16 women and six men. Only one of the women worked part-time. [80]

The Economic Office, responsible for the distribution of consumer goods, consisted of a total of 19 people, 14 of whom were women, ten of whom worked full-time.[81]Its area of responsibility included the management of various fuels, coal, bicycles and tires, various household and kitchen appliances, shoes and textiles, tobacco products and soap, and the associated issuance of corresponding ration cards and clothing or tobacco cards. The management of coal posed major challenges for the office, so that in the spring of 1940, for example, it instructed the police to strictly control car owners in order to prevent private or leisure trips, after Kuhn had already had problems supplying vital businesses with sufficient fuel at that time.

The extent to which the bureaucratic power of the war offices could be used to enforce National Socialist exclusion was demonstrated by the fact that Lina Töpfer, a Jewish woman living in a "privileged mixed marriage," was initially not allocated clothing and fish ration cards by the Economic and Food Office. Since she herself had two sons at the front, this circumstance caused unease among the population, as two ideological premises of inclusion and exclusion now collided. The dangerous intermediate position of tolerated Jews, who had escaped deportation but were by no means to be integrated into the "people's community," became particularly clear in this example.[83]

80 See the distribution of responsibilities plan for the Food Office dated September 15, 1944. StadtACo A 6335.

81 See the distribution of responsibilities plan for the Economic Office dated September 15, 1944. StadtACo A 6335. Pensioners were also employed on a voluntary basis in the district distribution centers.

82 See Ernst Kuhn to the Enforcement Police Office, March 11, 1940. StadtACo A 8462.

83 See statement by Lina Töpfer dated July 14, 1948. StAMü Denazification Tribunal Box 986, Denazification Tribunal File Ernst Kuhn. In the denazification proceedings against Ernst Kuhn, Lina Töpfer reports that she was only able to obtain the relevant ration cards thanks to the intervention of August Gerspacher.

Overall, the various problems that arose during the war led to a significant deterioration in the atmosphere and cooperation within the city administration. Administrative uncertainties and disputes over jurisdiction between departments now took up more space in the day-to-day business of the city administration and exacerbated the conflicts between the ruling cliques. The circle around Ernst Kuhn, for example, intrigued on behalf of the economic office against interference in their area of competence by the legal office headed by Schulze-Döbold. Mayor Rehlein and city treasurer Vollmuth engaged in protracted disputes over the demarcation of competences in the city administration's purchase of real estate. Mayor Greim was therefore forced to issue official instructions against selfish behavior in the workplace to ensure that the interests of other departments were not neglected in favor of getting one's own work done quickly. At the same time, the paralyzing effects of polycracy became much more apparent after 1939 due to the work of the armaments command, which was deployed for mobilization purposes.[87]

Nevertheless, the city administration succeeded in mobilizing enormous resources during the war. Through official zeal, the diverse involvement of women and pensioners, and self-sacrificing work management, the municipal authorities were able to make a decisive contribution to maintaining stability.

Despite all the restrictions, problems, and bottlenecks, the administration functioned until the end, with civil servants continuing to work loyally and investing their time and energy in maintaining the system.[88] As a link between the Reich government and the population, the city administration was able to contribute to maintaining morale on the "home front" by actively alleviating various emergencies, for example in the area of supply.[89] Despite formal subjugation to the supervisory authorities and internal tensions, the municipalities became a decisive and independent stabilizing force for the Nazi regime during the war by unleashing their self-mobilization powers. Through the tasks of the war offices, they carried out grassroots work, transforming the overregulation at the Reich level into practical and useful measures for everyday life and, despite misplanning at the higher levels, kept the war economy system, a decisive factor for the mood of the population, running reasonably well. The administrative tools of the well-coordinated local administrations were able to compensate for the war-related disintegration of the polycratic Nazi administrative system.

84 See the disputes over complaints procedures. StadtACo A 6441 or the dispute over economic aid and welfare for women whose husbands were in the field. StadtACo A 6276.

85 See the minutes of the consultation with the building advisors on October 22, 1940; statements by Mayor Rehlein on October 18, 1940, and City Treasurer Vollmuth on November 20, 1940. StadtACo A 6441.

86 See service instruction dated August 3, 1940. StadtACo A 8462.

87 See Chapter V2.

88 See Kershaw, Ian: The End. Fighting to the bitter end. Nazi Germany 1944/45. Stuttgart 2011.

89 Because Coburg itself was only marginally involved in the air war, municipal crisis management took on a different dimension than in some of the larger cities that were affected. See, for example, the case of Münster: Erdmann: Krisenhandeln.

90 See also Gotto: Kommunalpolitik, pp. 325, 432–434.

1.3 Staging between mourning and distraction

1.3.1 Organizing festivals and celebrations

The message and function of the city's presentation to the outside world and internally inevitably had to undergo a change against the backdrop of warfare. The focus on "final victory" and the rallying of the "home front" to serve the "people's community" and the Germans as a "community of destiny" were now central components. Part of the effort to maintain normality and order during the war was also to preserve parts of an already established culture of festivals and celebrations. [91] Inevitably, however, the changed composition of the "home front" and the changing war situation, especially after 1943, led to a redesign and reduction of the staging. The question of the appropriateness of exuberant celebrations in light of the fighting at the front, given that reports of deaths at home had been arriving at regular intervals since September 1939, was discussed behind closed doors and, in some cases, openly in relation to the National Socialist staging. The significance of the culture of festivals and celebrations as one of the most important integrative elements of "people's community" inclusion therefore changed permanently after 1939.

The Municipal Information Service under Emil Herold

An organizational restructuring of administrative cultural work prior to the outbreak of war had a significant impact on its implementation after September 1939. Following a government resolution on October 8, 1938, the municipal employment and press office was to be dissolved, with the press and news office henceforth bearing the name *Municipal Information Service*. In November 1938, the mayor finally decided to transfer some of the tasks of the employment and press office to the economic office, with the transport office taking over some of the press office's paperwork.

This reorganization gave the Municipal Information Service a clearer profile. Erich Probst had moved to the press department of the SA in Bayreuth on January 1, 1939. His position in the Municipal Information Service was initially taken over on an interim basis and then permanently by Emil Herold. Born in Neustadt, he had given up his job as editor at the *Münchner Zeitung* in 1924 and returned to his hometown to devote himself to freelance writing. Herold had been recruited by the city itself because of his reputation as a writer, having already published articles about the Veste Coburg. The city had explicitly sought someone who could publish articles about Coburg in German newspapers and thus promote the city. His part-time position as head of the municipal information office was primarily intended to serve the work of the local image archive and local history. From around the summer of 1943, he often had to take sick leave and also frequently took unpaid leave to pursue his writing, eventually becoming completely unable to work.

91 See Chapter IV1.1.2.
92 See minutes of the administrative advisory board meeting of November 21, 1938. StadtACo A 12864.
93 See Sauerteig's notes dated May 5 and 15, 1939, and the minutes of the meeting with the administrative advisors on April 3, 1939. StadtACo A 12864.

One of Herold's tasks was also to establish contact between the front and home, after he had been responsible for staged communication with members of the Coburg city administration in military service. He penned a Christmas greeting from Coburg City Hall with packages for fellow soldiers, which contained Coburg delicacies collected through bread stamps in the individual departments. The elaborately designed booklet contained various historical sketches about Coburg's past, which were intended to serve the soldiers' interest in local history and patriotic sentiment. The essays ranged from the coats of arms of the Coburg town hall, August Heinrich Hoffmann von Fallersleben in Coburg, and the Gutenberg finds in the city to the Coburg ancestors of the successful lieutenant commander Wilhelm Rollmann. In addition, poems and humorous essays in dialect were printed in it, reporting on the Coburg administration and the achievements and sacrifices on the "home front." At the same time, Herold sought to prepare the Coburgers in military service for their service and sacrifice by appealing to the great significance of their hometown through a reminiscence of "German Day." He wrote: "And in future years, one day will stand out from the rest of the days of the year: Coburg Day, the memory of that eternally memorable day when the Führer and his small band of loyal followers broke through the first Stalin line that Bolshevism had erected in the heart of Germany: The road to Minsk and Bialystok, to Kiev, to the gates of Leningrad and Moscow led through Coburg. (...) How shall we celebrate this day when peace comes, when we can say: the road to the final liberation of Germany, to the final liberation of Europe from the clutches of Judaism and Bolshevism, led through our Coburg."[94]

The militarization of society

With regard to the celebrations on the "home front," the militarization of society was already well advanced when war broke out, as the uniformed and militarized "people's community" had already made its presence felt before 1939 through marches by the SA, the Hitler Youth, and, not least, Coburg's role as a garrison town. The annexation of Austria and the occupation of the Sudetenland were also celebrated in Coburg with the return of parts of the battalions stationed there, which meant that the foreign policy successes of the Nazi state were also supported by the city's own soldiers.[95] A military habitus had already become part of everyday life, but now, during the war, the militarized part of the celebrations became much more prominent. Heroes' memorial days and tributes to the dead now took center stage in the celebrations. [96]This type of celebration was suitable for combining the pledge to wage a new war with a commemoration of the victims, emphasizing the strength of the Wehrmacht and deriving from this the necessity of standing together. However, the location of the corresponding commemoration shifted from ceremonies in

94 Christmas greeting from Coburg City Hall by Emil Herold. StACo Landestheater 425.

95 See *Bayerische Ostmark* from March 26 and October 13, 1938.

96 See also Freitag: Führermythos, pp. 62–65. By decree of Hitler in February 1939, Heroes' Memorial Day, which had traditionally fallen on the second Sunday of Lent, was moved to March 16 or the Sunday before it in order to commemorate the reintroduction of compulsory military service in 1935. See RGBl. 1939 I., p. 322.

State theater and wreath-laying ceremonies at the memorial in the arcades clearly moved from the public space to the General von Selle Barracks. Within the actual urban space, Schlossplatz with the memorial in the arcades now took center stage as a place of remembrance for heroes and a military parade ground, compared to the market square. Duke Carl Eduard, his wife Viktoria Adelheid, and Ferdinand of Bulgaria usually played central roles in the military celebrations.[97] In contrast to a church funeral service, however, the main focus of the Heroes' Memorial Days was not on mourning and accompanying the grief of those affected, but on the belief in victory, pride, and the significance of death for the entire "people's community" and the work of the "Führer."[98] In accordance with Propaganda Minister Goebbels' concept for the day, the flags in the city were not flown at half-mast, but at full mast.[99] However, most relatives of fallen soldiers found real comfort in the churches, whose work was often more gratefully accepted in the face of mass death than the NSDAP's pitiless staging of mourning.

In contrast to the Heroes' Memorial Days, a lavish "Day of the Wehrmacht" was also celebrated in March, which once again focused on German soldiers, but now featured a distinctive celebration format and was intended to be a cause for cheerfulness and good spirits. With concerts in front of the Ehrenburg and a colorful evening in the Hofbräu restaurants, where members of the Coburg State Theater and, above all, soldiers from the Coburg garrison provided the entertainment and ensured a cheerful atmosphere, the bond between the population and the Wehrmacht was staged. A seemingly collective willingness to make sacrifices and a sense of community were ritually demonstrated by a communal stew meal on the market square, which was offered as a communal experience without any branding. Compared to a sumptuous Sunday meal, the stew meal was intended to save money so that the difference could be donated to the Winter Relief Fund. The main organizational work was carried out by the NS-Frauen-schaft, helpers from the DRK and the BDM. The self-assurance of the Wehrmacht, the rallying of the "home front" and the collection of donations for the Winter Relief Fund formed the core of these events.

Although public places continued to be used on Wehrmacht Days, during the celebrations on January 30, and at events on May 1, closed celebrations and festivals increasingly disappeared from urban spaces. Large parades and marches became less frequent, so that the spatial effect of urban staging was also lost. The integrative factor of "people's community" staging and the emotional impact of community-building offerings now noticeably diminished.

Since Coburg had neither been given an official honorary title nor become the seat of an important Reich institution, the city insisted on its status as a pioneer even during the war, even though there was hardly any real scope left for effective, proactive political action. Symbolic acts now had to suffice to maintain Coburg's role.

97 See *Bayerische Ostmark* of March 11, 1940, *Coburger Nationalzeitung* of March 17, 1941, March 16. 1942, March 22, 1943, and March 13, 1943.

98 See Franz Heimberger on Heroes' Memorial Day 1941: *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, March 17, 1941.

99 See, for example, *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, March 22, 1943.

100 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung* from March 18, 1940, March 21, 1941, March 16, 1942, March 13 and 22, 1943.



Fig. 44: Sporting event on Wehrmacht Day, postcard

to the outside world. The city thus boasted once again that it was the first German city to have welcomed the surrender of Badoglio's Italy and the assassination attempt on Hitler on July 20, 1944, with spontaneous protest rallies. [101] In addition, the city attempted to further raise its profile as a convention and conference center even during the war. August Greim's connections to the Gau leadership proved to be particularly instrumental in this regard. With the "Adolf Hitler House," the city had created a conference venue for this purpose. In order to coordinate the cultural activities and holiday celebrations of the NSDAP, a Gau cultural conference was held in Coburg for the first time in January 1941. Theater evenings and various guided tours were intended to demonstrate the city of Coburg's reputation as a "traditional and cultivated cultural center." The works of Houston Stewart Chamberlain, Richard Wagner, and Felix Draeseke were highlighted as cultural giants of the Bavarian Ostmark district, and the implementation of National Socialist values such as race, folklore, honor, achievement, selection, and respect for all work in cultural activities was brought to the forefront.

101 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung* of October 16, 1944.

102 Speakers included Gau propaganda leader Kolbe, the head of the Reich Propaganda Office's Cultural Department Hannes Kremer, the deputy editor-in-chief of the Munich edition of the *Völkischer Beobachter* Dr. Ernst Meunier, and Gau cultural department head Metzger.

103 *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, February 15/16 and 18, 1941.



Fig. 45: Stew meal on Wehrmacht Day at the Coburg market in 1940, postcard

The anniversary tradition of "German Day" during the war

While the celebrations for the anniversary of "German Day" in 1939 were canceled due to the war, Gauleiter Wächtler announced in February 1940 that a Gau conference would be held in Coburg on October 15 to commemorate the "March to Coburg." The close relationship between Wächtler and Greim was probably a decisive factor in this decision. The *myth of Coburg* reached its absolute peak during the war. The high-profile staging of the city as a pioneer of the movement helped to compensate for the city's actual loss of political significance and to satisfy the Coburgers' need for prestige through symbolic politics. At the same time, the *myth of Coburg* was now seamlessly integrated into war propaganda, and the city's role in the history of the NSDAP was elevated with a view to the desired "final victory."[104] At the ceremony in Coburg on October 13, 1940, Gauleiter Wächtler summed up: "At the end of this struggle stands the freedom of the peoples, just as Coburg paved the way for the freedom of all Germans. And just as Adolf Hitler led the train to Coburg back then, so today he stands at the head of the mighty Wehrmacht, which is fighting for Germany and for the freedom of the peoples. Thus, in this commemoration of the Führer's train journey to Coburg, we stand in the midst of the world-historical struggle of our time. We know that the Führer, just as he not only proclaimed his goals at that time but also achieved them, will also be the victor in this struggle."[105]

104 See program of the Coburg district war council of the NSDAP from October 17–19, 1941. Chronicle of the Coburg-Mitte local NSDAP group during the war. StACo NSDAP 8.

105 Ibid.

With a wide-ranging program from October 17 to 19, 1941, the commemoration of "German Day" was combined with a war and remembrance day, which included a Gau office and district leaders' conference at the Veste Coburg, a district working conference in the "Adolf Hitler House," a general leaders' conference in the Hofbräu restaurants, and a large rally in the market square, at which various Nazi formations were sworn in for their service in the war and which culminated in several anti-Semitic speeches by Gauleiter Wächtler. The speeches at the large rally on the market square were also broadcast by wire radio to 700 parallel gatherings in the northern Gau area. The conferences were accompanied by competitions between political leaders, concerts, marches, rallies, wreath-laying at the memorial, film screenings[106] and state theater performances, which once again involved the entire urban area and a large number of the city's actors in the celebrations. Compared to the pre-war years, the event was now expanded to include a communal stew dinner. Coburg became the center of a wide-ranging network for a week, with party members from all over the Ostmark staying in the Vestestadt. In addition to representatives of the municipal authorities and the site commander, the entire leadership corps of the party, political leaders, Warte, Walter, branch leaders, the mayors from the Coburg district, mayors and district administrators from the Gau Ostmark, the district president of Upper and Middle Franconia Hans Dippold, the vice president of Upper Palatinate-Lower Bavaria Hermann Edler von Gäßler, Werner Wächter from the Reich Propaganda Ministry, as well as leading figures from the Reich Labor Service, the NSKK, and works council chairmen from large companies. Carl Eduard also took part in several events. Greeting telegrams were sent to Adolf Hitler and Franz Schwede from the event, which were printed publicly in the *Coburg National Newspaper*.

Once again, Coburg was rhetorically assigned a place in the great struggle for "final victory." Mayor August Greim announced in the daily newspaper:
"There is not only an intrinsic connection between his march to Coburg 19 years ago and the gigantic struggle he has been waging against Bolshevism since June 22, but it is also the logical culmination of his struggle, which he began as an unknown private. He himself called that 'German Day' in Coburg an epoch-making event for the movement."[108]At the same time, Greim attempted to use the march to Coburg, the pride associated with it, and the emotional impact of this event to rally support for the war and perseverance, writing:

> "We National Socialists are not given to sentimental reminiscences, but when we turn our eyes and thoughts backward and remember the past, we always draw from it a renewed determination to build on what has been achieved. (...) The march of the Führer and his men to and through Coburg was an expression of their conviction. (...) The marching footsteps echoed ever louder through the streets of German cities until the entire population had joined in. Now the gray columns continue to march and fight for Germany, inspired by the same belief that Germany will live if we are prepared to fight for its life.

106 This is where the propaganda drama about the "Anschluss" of Austria, *Wetterleuchten um Barbara*, premiered.
107 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung* from October 17–20, 1941.
108 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, October 17, 1941.

> fight, go on. (...) Thus, everyone who marches to the district council rallies becomes a professed believer in Adolf Hitler and Germany's eternal future."[109]

However, the reaction of the population during the district council meeting in Coburg shows that, given the reality of war, the impact of such propaganda, large-scale party marches, and staged events had already lost its appeal. In the run-up to the event, criticism had been voiced from various quarters as to the appropriateness of a large party event in wartime. Greim's publication in the *Coburg National Newspaper* was therefore to be seen as an attempt by the mayor to justify the event, to get the people of Coburg in the mood for it, and to remind them again and again of their role as Germany's first Nazi city and the task that this entailed. Nevertheless, against the backdrop of persistent allegations of party favoritism among the top leadership, accusations were made that guests at the events were given the best seats in the theater and that banquets were held in appropriate hotels in the city, while the population was called upon to make sacrifices and economize. Due to the increasing hardships of the war and the deaths at the front, the *myth of Coburg* had already lost its appeal, even if the external staging of the event concealed this fact. Even then, "community" activities no longer consisted solely of community-building actions and the dreamy work, experienced again and again on a large and small scale, to create a better and greater future. Advocating for the "people's community" now meant much more than in the prosperous and buoyant pre-war years: it meant restrictions, shortages, and very concrete sacrifices, not least in the lives of German soldiers.

Nevertheless, the staging of *the Coburg myth* had not yet reached its climax. In 1942, on the 20th anniversary of "German Day," in the midst of the war, the train journey to Coburg was once again conceived as the "beginning of the turning point in the fate of the German nation"[111] and the city once again became the focus of attention, even beyond the region, thanks to extensive newspaper coverage. The program of celebrations, including a Gauamt conference, a Führer conference, and a large rally in the market square, was similar to that of the previous year. Guests of honor included Reich Leader Alfred Rosenberg, who had been among the participants of the "German Day" in 1922, Reich Organization Leader and Reich Leader of the DAF Dr. Robert Ley, and SA Chief of Staff Viktor Lutze. Once again, the program of events included elements adapted to the realities of war, such as wreath-laying ceremonies at the memorial, stew dinners, and visits and gift-giving to wounded soldiers in reserve hospitals. The head of the party chancellery, Martin Bormann, had expressly agreed to hold a dignified celebration in Coburg in honor of the "historic event of lasting and universal significance." However, the reality of war dictated significant restrictions, which, according to Bormann, meant that the celebration should not be held on a large scale, for example by inviting all "Coburg honorary medal holders" living in the Reich, out of consideration for the burden on the Reichsbahn.

109 See ibid.
110 See NSDAP local group Coburg Mitte, October 22, 1941. StACo NSDAP 8.
111 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, October 16, 1942.
112 See Martin Bormann to Gauleiter Fritz Wächtler, April 16, 1942. BA NS 18/1240.

For the people of Coburg themselves, it was virtually impossible to avoid the events during the celebrations. The special meeting of the Gau offices and affiliated associations and organizations became a major organizational task for the city administration and restaurants, as various party sub-organizations met individually in all restaurants, halls, and schools. In addition, the
"followings" of all businesses in the city and the surrounding area were once again required to march together to the large rally in the market square, where Dr. Robert Ley spoke. To ensure completeness, the company representatives were obliged to report the exact number of participants from their companies to the march leader after gathering at the Schlossplatz.[113]

The symbolic marking of the city and the inscription of *the myth of Coburg* in the urban space were now completed with the installation of a commemorative plaque at the Hofbräu restaurants with the inscription: "Adolf Hitler forced his way through this gate on
October 14, 1922, the march through Coburg." Gauleiter Wächtler ceremoniously unveiled the plaque, which would henceforth serve as a declaration and memorial for all passers-by. The ceremony was accompanied by a reading of relevant passages from *Mein Kampf* by Obersturmbannführer and "marcher of 1922" Max Link. As a symbol of the "turning point in destiny" that was considered to be "German Day" and the fact that
"the hearts of the people of Coburg will continue to beat loyally for the Führer and that the population will continue to prove itself worthy of the Führer's trust in the future" [114], the city also presented the Gauleiter with a plaque commemorating the 20th anniversary, created by SA-Oberführer August Gerspacher.A very large red banner with an image of the "Coburg Medal of Honor" on the podium, which took up the entire width of the town hall, and an SA storm flag from Coburg's "combat period" framed the ceremony on the market square. To the recurring sounds of Richard Wagner, the audience at the numerous events was conjured up as a community of destiny that had to prove itself in the current struggle.

The propaganda of the day also reached its peak with the glorification of the events surrounding October 1922 and the embellishment of a straightforward narrative, with Coburg now being interpreted as a city that was "in the hands of the unscrupulous political masterminds of Jewish-Marxist and democratic-liberal parties and their incited followers," who had to "admit complete defeat after October 15, 1922, following the Führer's tough and decisive action."[116] The apparent inevitability of Coburg's development from 1922 to 1929 was used to repeatedly swear the people of Coburg to the "people's community" and the city's role as a pioneer, as stated in the *Coburger Nationalzeitung*: "Since the day Adolf Hitler marched in here at the head of his hundreds and, through his personal commitment, conquered the first piece of ground for a new Germany, this city has never given up the struggle for final victory; indeed, it has become a model in this fanatical struggle." [117]The connection between the "Kampfzeit" (time of struggle) and the
"struggle of the German people" in the current war was made by means of the reminiscence of

113 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung* of October 16, 1942.
114 *Coburg National Newspaper*, October 17/18, 1942.
115 See ibid.
116 Ibid.
117 Ibid.

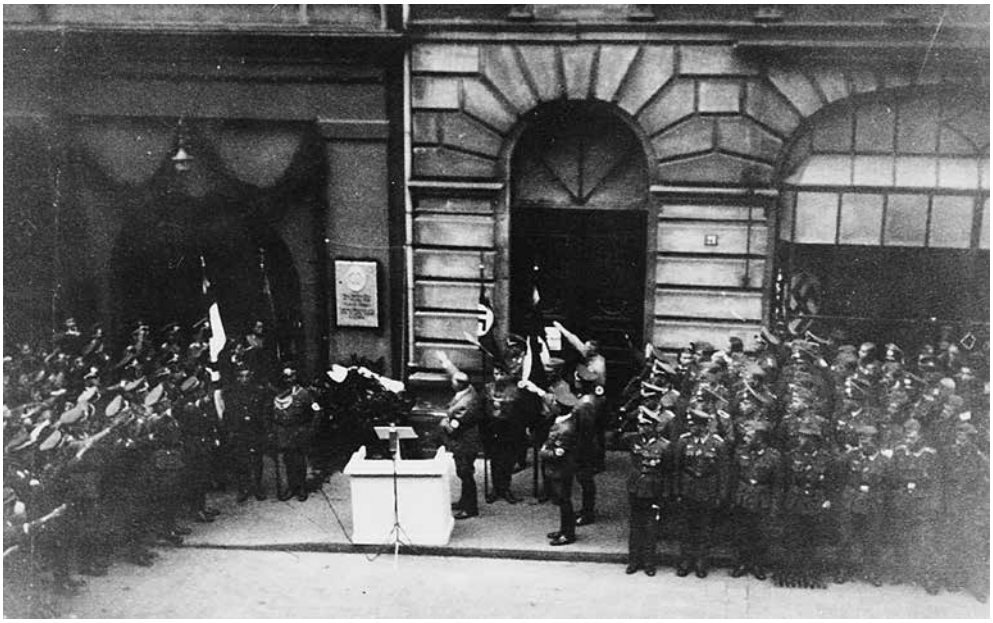


Fig. 46: Unveiling of a plaque commemorating German Day with Adolf Hitler in Coburg in 1922 at the Hofbräu Hall in Mohrenstraße in the presence of Gauleiter Wächtler and Colonel Pottiez in 1942

Hitler's "March to Coburg" was invoked once again when Gauleiter Wächtler proclaimed: "We have now become even more familiar with the shameless, nation-destroying agitators and warmongers, for whom no means is too despicable and no path too dark when it comes to enslaving us. To destroy them so that we can all live, we are fighting the same battle as on October 14, 1922, in Coburg. (...) The battle against Alljuda and his allies, which reached one of its first successful climaxes in Coburg, will lead to their complete destruction."[118]Reich Leader Alfred Rosenberg commented: "The march to Coburg later became the march through the Brandenburg Gate, the march to Vienna and Prague, and finally (...) the march to Warsaw, Paris, and finally to the Don and the Volga."[119] The advertising poster for the celebrations showed an SA man and a Wehrmacht soldier with steel helmets, both with determined expressions and clenched fists, reaching for a weapon together and signaling absolute readiness for battle. [120]

In his speeches, the Gauleiter also referred to the fierce fighting around Stalingrad at that time, which, according to Wächtler, revealed the same determination on the part of the Wehrmacht that Adolf Hitler had preached and exemplified in Coburg, among other places. In fact, however, the reality of war had already overtaken the elaborate staging in Coburg. The fact that Hitler himself had not traveled to Coburg again, that Viktor Lutze and Robert Ley, two politicians who had already been largely stripped of their power, represented the NSDAP leadership, and that the old marchers from

118 Ibid.
119 *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, October 19, 1942.
120 See Figure 47.



Fig. 47: Poster for the 20th anniversary of "German Day" in 1942

In 1922, the fact that the majority were unable to attend the celebrations proved that this type of staging had already passed its zenith. [121] The fact that reports of the celebrations in the daily newspaper were always followed by obituaries of soldiers who had fallen at the front made this circumstance impossible to overlook.

In the following years, the anniversary program in October was gradually scaled back. Although a war district conference, combined with a meeting of the leadership corps of the Bavarian Forest SA group, was still held in Coburg in 1943, its scope had already been reduced. In addition to Gauleiter Wächtler, SA-Ober-Gruppenführer Wilhelm Schepmann was in Coburg for the first time as chief of staff of the SA. Wächtler, Schepmann, and Greim sent a telegram of greeting to Hitler in this context, in which they gave their assurance that they would always make the "March on Coburg" the benchmark for their actions. At the large rally in the market square, places of honor were reserved in front of the large podium in front of the town hall for the surviving relatives of those who had fallen in the two world wars and for the wounded, who now occupied a much more central place in the celebrations, not only in terms of space. Loyalty to the Führer, perseverance, the will to win, and the harshness of the homeland were, after the psychological turning point of the war in Stalingrad, which in the perception of many made the defeat of the German Reich a real possibility, the

121 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung* from October 14, 15, 16, 17/18, and 19, 1942.

Option allowed the central values proclaimed at the event to be expressed.In 1944, the last commemoration of "German Day" consisted merely of a large rally in the market square, at which district leader Feichtmayr made a declaration of loyalty to the "Führer." Gauleiter Wächtler no longer took part in the event.

1.3.2 The State Theater

The role of the Landestheater in relation to "national community" productions also changed inevitably during the war. Together with radio and cinema, theater played a decisive role in the cultural sphere as a medium of escapism and war propaganda, with the program schedule reflecting the struggle between these two functions.

The theater's heyday during the war

As the war progressed, culture gained new significance throughout the Reich as a medium of distraction and pastime. This was evident in the rise in visitor and subscriber numbers, with the lowest point being reached in 1939 with 1,003 subscribers, and from then on the numbers rose to 1,689 subscribers in 1941 and 2,214 subscribers in 1942.[125] The sometimes escapist nature of theater-going was also encouraged by the theater management through the programming of lighter plays, musical comedies, and operettas. Within the drama repertoire, light-hearted, functional drama also came to the fore. Although *right-wing theater* remained more important in Coburg than in other provincial theaters, the proportion of such plays declined overall.[126] As early as October 1939, artistic director Dietrich stated that he did not want to present plays related to the war and soldiers to the audience for the time being and had adjusted the program accordingly, as the grief in many families was already too great.[127] At the same time, the choice of plays was also restricted in that from 1939 onwards, no English authors were to be performed, and even works by Shakespeare, who had been one of the most popular authors of plays until 1939, were no longer to be found on the Coburg stage. The situation was similar with French and, from 1943, Italian operas, which were now to disappear from the program. Only Verdi's *Un ballo in maschera* was still performed in Coburg, with 12 performances. The theater thus made an essential psychological contribution to the war effort by helping to shape an image of the enemy, providing distraction and entertainment, and suppressing critical questioning. At the same time, the reality of war ultimately deprived the educated middle classes of their power to define culture through mass entertainment.

122 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung* from October 16/17 and 18, 1943.
123 See *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, October 16, 1944.
124 For information on the Landestheater, see Chapter IV1.2
125 *Bayerische Ostmark*, January 2, 1940. See also Mayor Greim, December 24, 1943. StACo Theater 689.
126 See Dussel: Theater, pp. 277 f. and 328 f.
127 See Director Dietrich to Franz Heimberger, October 14, 1939. StACo Theater 3431.
128 Radio, cinema, and the popular culture presented here also had a decisive influence on this.

In addition, the NSDAP now incorporated the theater into its concrete party work and used the stage to convey ideological content and war propaganda. At the end of December 1939, "brown performances" were introduced at the Landestheater in this spirit, integrating the theater into the party's educational work. They were intended to serve political education and portray the "destructive tendencies of Bolshevism" and the "Jewish problem."[129] On days when there were no performances, selected plays were staged for the NSDAP that did not appear in the theater's regular program. The series kicked off with the play *Reiter für Deutsch-Südwest* (Rider for German Southwest), which contrasts the "German soldierly attitude" with "English perfidy." Coburg claimed to have been the first city in the Reich to systematically integrate the theater into the party's educational work, true to its role as the first Nazi city. Citing the great importance that the "Führer" attached to German theater, Mayor Greim wanted to use the "brown performances" to show that the "open-mindedness of the people of Coburg toward all questions of ethnic coexistence was not least due to Coburg's old theater culture."[130]According to reports from the district administrator of the KdF, the first four "brown performances" were attended by an average of about 700 people, so that the concept was expanded to include the surrounding area of Coburg and the towns of Oeslau, Neustadt, Rodach, and Weidhausen.[131] In addition, from 1939 onwards, closed Wehrmacht performances were also organized through the KdF, for which special plays were also selected. Special KdF performances were also organized for armaments workers, and 100 free tickets were issued to the city's military hospitals every month. [132] In this way, the KdF was able to expand its sphere of influence in the cultural life of the city during the war. It also took advantage of Coburg's admiration for Wagner and held Richard Wagner Days in July 1940 with a series of events at the "Adolf Hitler House," at which Günther Weißenborn, a native of Coburg and conductor in Halle, gave a lecture.

Mayor Greim was also determined to exert even more pressure on the Coburgers in order to retain the theater's permanent tenants. At the same time, the party contributed to an increase in theater attendance with its "brown performances" and Wehrmacht performances. In the course of the Wehrmacht's support, audiences unfamiliar with the theater were also drawn to the cultural venue. During the war, therefore, what had been intended under the slogan of "people's theater" was achieved more than ever before, and the theater was able to record increased revenues similar to those of movie theaters after 1939. Shortly after the war began, director Dietrich already stated in this regard: "If we continue to have the good fortune, thanks to our Führer and our truly great army, to teach the gentlemen in the West a lesson and improve the mood in

129 The standards for the plays in the "brown performances" set by district cultural officer Schilling were extremely high, so he had the performances suspended until he found plays that he considered suitable. See district cultural officer Schilling to artistic director Dietrich, January 16, 1942. StadtACo A 6908.

130 See Mayor Greim to Reich Office Director Cnyriem, Führer's Chancellery, November 17, 1939. StACo Theater 73.

131 See *Bayerische Ostmark*, January 27/28, 1940.

132 See minutes of a meeting on headquarters rents dated June 3, 1943. StadtACo A 6908. However, this caused discontent because the soldiers often gave their specially marked tickets to women. See memo dated July 14, 1943. StadtACo A 6908.

133 See Mayor Greim to Reich Office Director Cnyriem, Führer's Chancellery, November 17, 1939. StACo Theater 73.

Karl - Coburg ahead #8.indd 662 Nov. 4, 2024, 6:14 p.m.

If this sense is preserved, the still fearfully calculated loss of income should appear bearable."[134]

The high number of subscribers and audience members, combined with the increasing hardships of everyday life during the war, the compulsory war donations from municipal employees, and the large number of applications for exemption from the culture tax, ultimately led to the culture tax being converted into a culture contribution in January 1942 at the suggestion of City Treasurer Hermann Vollmuth. which was only levied on amounts of RM 0.50 or more. From then on, the audit office was responsible for calculating and determining the cultural contribution of municipal suppliers and businesspeople. In December 1942, at a meeting of the administrative committee of the state theater, Mayor Greim finally decided to completely abolish the withholding of a cultural tax from the salaries of civil servants, employees, and workers of the municipal administration as well as from the invoices of municipal suppliers as of April 1, 1943. The vouchers that had already been issued therefore had to be redeemed by October 31, 1943, and lost their value as of November 1943.

War-related problems and closure

However, with the increase in visitor numbers and, in particular, the large number of soldiers attending theater performances, the conflicts that had already existed before 1939 intensified once again.Complaints and grievances from the classical theater audience also reached a peak after they saw the institution's standards decline and felt disturbed by the performances. The theater management received numerous complaints, particularly about soldiers in the theater who had no understanding of the plays, coughed loudly, stamped their feet, creaked their seats, and clapped while the music was still playing.[137] Artistic director Dietrich then contacted the senior officer in Coburg and the senior doctors at the reserve hospital several times and asked them to remedy the situation. Artistic director Carl Möller[138] , who had taken over the theater's management in March 1944 from acting director Dr. Wilhelm Schönherr, even had to resort to stepping in front of the curtain at the beginning of performances during the last year of the war to remind the audience of the rules of conduct in the theater. [139] In order not to scare off out-of-town visitors to the theater and to maintain the reputation

134 Director Dietrich to Franz Heimberger, October 14, 1939. StACo Theater 3431.

135 See minutes of the meetings with the administrative advisory boards on January 15, 1942, and December 10, 1942. StACo Theater 3512 and minutes of the councilors' meeting on March 29, 1942, StadtACo 8074.

136 See Chapter IV1.2.2.

137 See, for example, Heinz von der Au to Director Dietrich on September 20, 1942. StACo Theater 425.

138 Carl Möller was born in Hamburg on December 10, 1891. After graduating from high school, he worked as an actor and opera singer at various theaters. Following his military service and a stint with the Freikorps Graf Stillfried, as well as a brief period working in commerce, he was hired by the Stadttheater Saarbrücken, where he became director in 1927 and senior director in 1930. In 1937, he moved to the Volksoper Berlin as senior director. He joined the NSDAP in 1935. See Carl Möller's curriculum vitae. StadtACo A 6943.

139 Artistic director Dietrich had to give up his post in August 1943 after conflicts with the rest of the theater staff, caused by his character and differing interpretations of the "Führer principle," had led to untenable conditions despite repeated attempts by the superior authorities to intervene. Dietrich was accused of putting himself too much in the foreground as a director and staging productions without considering the overall operation and the well-being of the theater community

of the Coburg theater audience, the theater refrained from hanging posters with rules of conduct in the theater building or distributing a catalog of rules with the admission tickets, as had been requested several times by the audience. [140] Finally, even individuals who arrived late for a performance were warned by letter and threatened with police intervention.[141]

Theatergoers were also displeased by the fact that the quality of the performances suffered as a result of conscription practices, which did not spare theater staff, and other war-related restrictions. As early as March 1942, the Wehrmacht had made significant cuts to the theater's staff, with the result that the three remaining conductors could barely cope with their workload despite working eight to twelve hours a day. The teachers' singing club had to step in to provide musical performances. At the same time, the loss of six to eight technicians increased the technical difficulties on stage. The dedicated members now had to do a lot of work outside their contracts and were burdened with considerable extra work due to their duties at the military hospitals. Other theaters also asked several times if actors from Coburg could be seconded, but this had to be refused every time. During the war, the loyal theater audience therefore made a large number of requests for plays to the theater management, but these could not be realized due to personnel shortages. After Tristan and Isolde had been performed in the fall of 1941, the Coburg audience had to do without Wagner's works. In addition, there was a lack of suitable operettas that could be performed in terms of both technology and personnel. In 1943, the program could no longer be maintained in large parts due to the considerable loss of personnel, so that Dietrich had to admit that the season no longer reached the level of previous years.

In addition, blackout regulations and savings measures also had to be implemented within the theater, which, according to artistic director Dietrich, posed a challenge for older people in particular when attending performances. Renovations were carried out inside the theater to save electricity, and choir rehearsals had to be moved to the morning hours due to frequent air raid alerts in the evening and limited food options in the afternoon. The unfavorable heating conditions in the theater meant that actors had to speak more quietly, which always triggered a cascade of complaints. For rural residents, fuel rationing also made it considerably more difficult, and in some cases almost impossible, to visit the theater, as trains no longer ran after the performances.

to take action. The theater's long-standing staff rebelled against Dietrich during this process, knowing that Mayor Greim and theater representative Gerspacher were behind them. Greim ultimately arranged for Dietrich's immediate dismissal. Dietrich unsuccessfully appealed to the Reich Theater Chamber and his colleagues in Nuremberg, Würzburg, Regensburg, Erfurt, Plauen, and Gera, and filed a lawsuit against the city of Coburg. See meeting of the administrative committee of the State Theater on August 26, 1943, and response to Dehler's statement of claim dated December 24, 1943. StACo Theater 689. For the proceedings against Dietrich, see also StadtACo A 6937.

140 See Director Möller to Julius Denninger, May 23, 1944, and Director Möller to Ms. Lütkemeyer, May 19, 1944. StACo Theater 68.

141 See memo from Inspector Grambs, July 21, 1944. StACo Theater 68.

142 See Director Dietrich to Frieda Goldmann, March 19, 1942. StACo Theater 68.

143 See Director Dietrich to Otto Stangenberger, March 22, 1943. StACo Theater 68.

144 See Director Dietrich to Franz Heimberger, October 14, 1939. StACo Theater 3431.

145 See meeting of the works council, October 30, 1940. StACo Theater 68.

Special permission for the use of a motor vehicle and fuel for a theater visit could not be granted. The same applied to the theater's guest performances away from home. [146]

These emergencies already pointed to a development that would become a wartime necessity after the defeat at Stalingrad and the declaration of total war. As part of the measures taken in the total war effort, theaters, variety shows, academies, art colleges, art exhibitions, music schools, and drama schools were closed. On September 1, 1944, the Coburg State Theater, like cultural institutions throughout the Reich, ceased operations. The personnel thus freed up were immediately assigned to war efforts. Male members of conscription age had to report to the Wehrmacht, while the rest were assigned to the air raid police and police reserve or to the armaments industry. The women were employed in a branch of the Behringer company, which was housed directly in the premises of the Landestheater.District leader Josef Feichtmayr addressed the theater staff in this context, stating: "As painful as it may be to give up the theater, let us all, givers and takers, who are equally devoted to our cultural life with all our hearts, bid farewell to it in the knowledge that all cultural values would be of no use to us if we did not emerge victorious from this struggle (...)." [148]

2 Mobilizing and exploiting for the "final victory"

The ability of the Nazi regime to maintain its war effort despite a de facto turning point in the war in 1941 to 1945 manifested itself at the local level.Here, a number of actors ensured through their cooperation and willingness to make sacrifices that higher-level directives could be implemented and problems could be responded to flexibly. Even polycratic disruptions, which intensified from the Reich level downwards during the war, were able to be absorbed. At the center of this was the resource of human labor, which became increasingly valuable as the war progressed. For the

146 See Frieda Goebel, Oeslau Porcelain Factory to Director Dietrich, September 6, 1941, and Theater Department to Director Dietrich, September 11, 1941. StACo Theater 68.

147 See Mayor Greim to Ministerialrat Metzger, September 4, 1944. StadtACo A 6925.

148 *Coburger Nationalzeitung* newspaper, September 2, 1944.

149 For a long time, research in the field of armaments production and mobilization assumed that there was a polycratic breakdown of administrative structures and resulting inefficiency. See, for example, Kroener, Bernhard R.: Die personellen Ressourcen des Dritten Reiches im Spannungsfeld zwischen Wehrmacht, Bürokratie und Kriegswirtschaft 1939–1942. In: Ibid.; Müller, Rolf-Dieter; Umbreit, Hans (eds.): Das Deutsche Reich und der Zweite Weltkrieg, Volume 5, First Half-Volume: Kriegsverwaltung, Wirtschaft und personelle Ressourcen 1939–1941. Stuttgart 1988, pp. 693–1001 and Kroener: "Human Resource Management," pp. 777–1001. However, this finding has been refuted by recent regional studies. See Schuhmann: Cooperation and Fleischhauer, Markus: The Nazi Gau of Thuringia 1939–1945. Eine Struktur- und Funktionsgeschichte (= Veröffentlichungen der Historischen Kommission für Thüringen, Kleine Reihe Band 28). Cologne et al. 2010. For the German war economy, see the fundamental work by Milward, Alan: Die deutsche Kriegswirtschaft 1939–1945 (= Schriftenreihe der Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte, Volume 12). Stuttgart 1966; Heusler, Andreas; Spoerer, Mark; Trischler, Helmuth (eds.): Armaments, War Economy, and Forced Labor in the "Third Reich." Munich 2010; Tooze: The Economy of Destruction. The History of the Economy under National Socialism Siedler. Munich 2007.

The Nazi regime's wars of conquest and plunder required not only soldiers for the Wehrmacht but also workers for the arms industry. Mobilizing the population for the war and the war economy was therefore one of the main tasks and challenges on the "home front." The redeployment and retraining of workers, the increased use of women, and factory closures were mobilization strategies that had a significant impact on the local economy and the everyday life of the population during the war. Ultimately, however, the economic and social order organized during the war and the orderly functioning of everyday life on the "home front" could only be maintained through the use and exploitation of forced laborers and prisoners of war. In dealing with these "outsiders," inclusive and exclusive behaviors had to be readjusted, and breaks in prescribed behaviors had to be allowed in order to maintain economic strength.

2.1 Economic organization during the war

During the Second World War, two key governing bodies were responsible for the organization of the local economy and, in particular, for the management of the workforce, which was at the center of economic considerations, among a large number of party and state agencies responsible for the conversion of production to war materials. They operated in a complex field of tension between the party, state agencies, the Wehrmacht, and the economy, and had to reconcile a number of war-related requirements. While the Chamber of Industry and Commerce already had decades of experience and established structures in terms of its existence and organization, the Coburg Armaments Command was a new creation of the Nazi regime that was necessary for the armament effort and first had to be integrated into the power structure of the Vestestadt. With regard to the mobilization of the Coburg population and economy for the war, it was therefore necessary to renegotiate issues of cooperation between the various local authorities, but also power-political negotiation processes at the local political level. The polycratic decision-making struggle at the Reich level repeatedly had an impact on the local level in various institutional restructuring processes. However, the primacy of armament and the armaments industry in the war ultimately gave the Armaments Command a decisive advantage.

2.1.1 The Coburg Chamber of Industry and Commerce

In 1939, only 48% of the working population in the city of Coburg was employed in industry and crafts, which underscores the continuing absence of large-scale industry in the Vestestadt, especially in view of the war-related rearmament.

150 Of the institutions significantly involved in the mobilization process, the following remarks focus primarily on the work of the Coburg Armaments Command due to the available sources. The disappearance of the entire inventory of the Chamber of Industry and Commerce also prevents deeper insights into its work during World War II. The records of the Coburg Employment Office also do not allow any conclusions to be drawn about the work of this authority in the course of labor management during the war. A more differentiated analysis, such as that by Silke Schuhmann or Markus Fleischhauer, is therefore not possible to the same extent for Coburg.

The Coburg district had a significantly higher share of 54%.[151] The economic structure of the Coburg Chamber of Industry and Commerce district was therefore characterized by a total population of 29,923 in the city and
52,393 people, with 600–650 companies registered in the commercial register and 1,200–1,300 small businesses belonging to the chamber. The main industries here were companies manufacturing basketware, wicker furniture, toys, and porcelain, as well as the metal industry. In June 1938, out of a total workforce of 24,867, 20,695 were employed in trade, industry, and crafts, 1,828 in agriculture and forestry, 1,234 in domestic services, and
1,110 people were employed in public services. Of these, 3,755 were employed in the wood and carving industry, 3,600 in the metal industry, 3,002 in construction and related trades, 2,567 in the stone and earth sector, 1,487 in the toy industry, 929 in the food and beverage sector, 878 in the clothing industry, 788 in the transport industry, 270 in restaurants and bars, and 3,419 in other sectors. Before the war, there were about a dozen companies in the chamber district that employed more than 500 workers, while the remaining companies had between 50 and 100 or fewer than 50 workers.[152] This situation was to change significantly as a result of the war economy and the associated expansion of a number of companies.

The Coburg Chamber of Industry and Commerce was chaired by Max Brose, co-owner of Metallwerk Max Brose & Co., who was represented by Fritz Linke, director of C. Großmann AG, and Wilhelm Kühnhold, owner of the company of the same name. After Kühnhold was demoted from SS-Oberscharführer to SS-Mann in August 1939 for defamation and permanently expelled from the SS, he was dismissed by Brose and, with the consent of Mayor Greim, replaced by Wilhelm Albrecht, owner of the company of the same name in Weitramsdorf. Until May 1942, day-to-day business was managed by Chief Executive Officer Rosenplänter, a retired assistant judge, and his deputy, auditor Dr. Weise, who dealt with military economic issues. In May 1942, Rosenplänter was succeeded by the legal advisor to the Sonneberg Chamber of Industry and Commerce, Assistant Judge Dr. jur. Hans Heinrich Keydel.

During the war, in addition to its ongoing involvement in vocational training, the chamber's responsibilities primarily included coal management and, with regard to labor management, personnel recruitment, compulsory labor service, and job vacancies. Dr. Weise was responsible for advising 145 companies on their labor requirements in relation to the available workforce. In addition, it performed assessment activities, provided judicial contract assistance, granted support, and dealt with pricing issues. The chamber played a less significant role in the closure of businesses and the allocation of materials. One of the IHK's central areas of work, on the other hand, was the registration of motor vehicles that were still permitted to be used during the war. As a specific feature of a "mini chamber," the individual representatives of the chamber usually had to cover a larger area of expertise in their contact with a wide variety of businesses, so that they were less specialized. Unlike in larger

151 See Bavarian State Office for Statistics (ed.): Bavarian Municipal and District Statistics, Issue 5: Upper Franconia. Munich 1943.

152 See Dr. Fritz Meyer: The circumstances of the Coburg Chamber of Industry and Commerce as an example of a small chamber, October 4, 1940. BA R 3101 9455 IHK Coburg.

153 See IHK Coburg, Max Brose to the Reich Minister of Economics, July 29, 1940. BA R 3101 9455 9456.

However, there was a much closer relationship between the Chamber of Industry and Commerce and its member companies, as distances within the urban area were short and the individual companies were often looked after on a friendly basis. The situation was similar with regard to the chamber's relations with various state and party bodies, as the Chamber of Industry and Commerce was firmly integrated into the local sphere of influence in terms of both institutions and personnel due to its small-scale structure. However, a case of embezzlement involving office director Max Probst in 1940 profoundly shook the chamber's reputation, exposed the organizational weaknesses of the "miniature chamber," and called its existence into question.

Merger into the Bayreuth District Chamber of Commerce

Although higher authorities were aware that the loss of their own chamber would deal a severe blow to Coburg's prestige, the chamber, which was viewed by higher authorities as a "remnant of dynastic possessions from the era of German disunity and powerlessness," had to give way to higher centralization tendencies during the war.[155] The merger of the Coburg Chamber of Industry and Commerce into the Bayreuth Regional Chamber of Commerce in 1943 contributed to the city's progressive loss of political significance, especially against the backdrop of the war-induced consolidation of power, which caused old certainties to crumble. The implementation in 1943 of the Gauwirtschaftskammerverordnung (Gau Chamber of Commerce Ordinance), which had come into force on April 20, 1942, sealed the actual end of the Coburg Chamber of Industry and Commerce's self-governing powers, which had already been called into question. Together with the chambers of Bayreuth, Passau, and Regensburg, as well as the chambers of crafts and district trade groups, into the Gau Economic Chamber of Bayreuth. This, in turn, was one of five Gau Economic Chambers in Bavaria, alongside the chambers of Franconia, Main-Franconia, Munich-Upper Bavaria, and Swabia, which were intended to contribute to organizational simplification and the pooling of resources within the commercial economy in view of the war situation.[156] The commercial economy and party organization were thus aligned at the district level, giving the district leaders greater influence over economic management and organization. Precisely because a large part of the central administrative authorities for the Gau Bayreuth, as the Gau Bayerische Ostmark, expanded in 1939, was called from 1942 onwards, were located outside the Gau itself, state dirigisme was able to function through this new economic organizational structure. The Bayreuth Gau Economic Chamber comprised 115,389 of a total of 361,454 commercial enterprises in Bavaria, as well as 8,800 enterprises registered with the commercial court, 40,000 small businesses, and 66,700 craft businesses. It set up departments for industry, crafts, trade, and tourism within its organization.

While the Coburg Chamber of Crafts, led since 1939 by the "honorary bearer" and "old fighter," master baker Max Link, was absorbed into the Gau Chamber of Commerce, the Coburg Chamber of Industry and Commerce became a branch of the Bayreuth Gau Chamber of Commerce.

154 See Dr. Fritz Meyer: The circumstances of the Coburg Chamber of Industry and Commerce as an example of a dwarf chamber, October 4, 1940. BA R 3101 9455 IHK Coburg.

155 Dr. Fritz Meyer: The circumstances of the Coburg Chamber of Industry and Commerce as an example of a dwarf chamber, October 4, 1940. BA R 3101 9455 IHK Coburg.

156 See RGBl. I 1942, p. 189.

157 See Significance, structure, and organization of the Bayreuth District Chamber of Commerce, February 2, 1943. BWA K8/48.

This was no longer headed by Max Brose, but by Mayor Rehlein, who had been appointed by the president of the Gau Chamber of Commerce. [158] A managing director continued to be responsible for the day-to-day running of the branch offices. From then on, he was accountable to the chief executive of the Gau Chamber of Commerce and had to report to him regularly. He was also subject to the binding instructions of the individual departments of the chamber. In the branch office, a district advisory board, whose members were appointed by the branch manager in agreement with the president of the Gau Economic Chamber, acted to advise and support the manager.

2.1.2 The Coburg Armaments Command

2.1.2.1 Structure and organization

After the German Reich began to focus more intensively on armament and mobilization, coordinating bodies between the economy and the military became necessary. The reorganization of the military economy in April 1935 led to the introduction of military economic inspectorates at the military district level and military economic offices as regional executive bodies to promote economic preparations for war at the regional level. With the establishment of the military economic office, a new organization entered the urban sphere of influence, which was to gain power and influence in the course of war preparations. Its responsibilities included preparing for the mobilization of armaments factories, which involved allocating labor, production and operating resources according to the priority of armaments orders, supervising ongoing production, and implementing air raid protection and safety measures. It thus functioned as a coordinating and supervisory agency for all companies that carried out orders for the armed forces of the Wehrmacht. Coburg had its own military economic office, which was the lowest authority within the armaments organization of the Military Economic and Armaments Office in the High Command of the Wehrmacht and was subordinate to the military economic inspection of Military District XIII Nuremberg.

In November 1939, the military economic offices were renamed armaments commands, and in 1942 and 1943, the regional organization of the armaments inspections was adapted to the district division of the NSDAP. A reorganization of the armaments industry in May 1942 established new armaments inspections, which were subordinate to the Reich Ministry of Armaments and Munitions, later renamed the Reich Ministry of Armaments and War Production. In addition, military economic inspections were created, which were subordinate to the Military Economic Office of the High Command of the Wehrmacht.

158 The reasons for this personnel change cannot be ascertained from the available files.

159 See Rules of Procedure of the Bayreuth District Economic Chamber dated April 1, 1944. BWA K6/240.

160 The Coburg Military Economic Office was responsible for the districts of Sonneberg, Coburg, Lichtenfels, Kronach, Ebern, Staffelstein, Bamberg, Hassfurt, Hofheim, Königshofen, Ebermannstadt, Pegnitz, Bayreuth, Kulmbach, Stadtsteinach, Naila, Hof, Rehau, Münchberg, and Wunsiedel, as well as the urban districts of Coburg, Bamberg, Hof, and Bayreuth. Consequently, the Coburg office was responsible for the employment offices in Sonneberg, Coburg, Bamberg, Bayreuth, Hof, and Marktredwitz, as well as the military district commands in Bamberg, Coburg, Bayreuth, and Marktredwitz. It was subordinate only to the senior officer in charge of the location for matters relating to the location, to the army location administration for matters relating to accommodation, to the location payroll office for salary and wage payments, and to the paymaster's office of the military district command for the verification and determination of allocated funds. See work plan of the Coburg Armaments Command from January 1 to March 31, 1942. BA MA RW 21/12–4.

were subordinate to it. The individual armaments commands remained in place and were subordinated to the armaments inspectorates as the smallest executive agencies of the Reich Ministry of Armaments and Munitions. The military economy inspector was able to call on the services of the armaments commands for military economy and purely military matters. From February 1943 onwards, military economy officers from the High Command of the Wehrmacht also took on the tasks of the military economy inspectorates at the armaments inspectorates and at the military district commands. The armaments commands operated under the technical supervision of the military economy officers of the respective armaments inspectorates.[161] In the course of aligning the territorial boundaries of the armaments commands with the Gau boundaries, the district of Sonneberg was also transferred to the Eisenach Armaments Command and the districts of Königshofen, Hofheim, Hassfurt, and Ebern to the Würzburg Armaments Command on October 1, 1942. In addition, the districts of Forchheim and Höchstadt an der Aisch were transferred from the Nuremberg Armaments Command. A planned relocation of the Armaments Command from Coburg to Bayreuth failed in the fall of 1942 due to a lack of space in the Gau capital, so that the Vestestadt retained this central organizational and coordinating authority.

The Armaments Command now served as the central coordinating and supervisory agency for all companies that processed Wehrmacht orders. The Co-burger office, located at Viktoriastraße 9, was headed by Lieutenant Colonel Karl Elsässer at the beginning of the war. Elsässer had been entrusted with the post on August 1, 1938, and was already seconded to the Wehrwirtschaftsstelle Krakau (Krakow Military Economy Office) in mid-September 1939 and later appointed commander of the Radom armaments area. The central group, which was in turn divided into several departments and a group with respective clerks, advisors, and assistants, was headed by Captain Wilhelm Obermüller, who took over as deputy head of the office after Elsässer and was supported by two assistant officers and four assistants. The central group was responsible for the most important negotiations on labor deployment issues, which meant basic communication with civilian and military authorities and, ultimately, the management of labor deployment. Its responsibilities also included the management of motor vehicles and operating materials, personnel management, uk positions, plant security, the deployment of foreign workers and prisoners of war in cooperation with the employment offices, and technical management tasks. Captain Eberhardt Schultze headed the Army Group, which also consisted of an assistant officer, two technical clerks, and four assistants. This subgroup was responsible for supervising armaments production for the army and supporting the relevant companies. This included the preparation, start-up, supervision, and handling of production for all companies with direct or indirect army contracts and their subcontractors. The Air Force group was headed by Captain Heinrich Michels, who was supported by a technical clerk and an assistant and who was responsible for the technical and personnel support of the

161 See finding aid for the war diaries of the armaments command BA MA RW and work plan of the Coburg armaments command from April 1 to June 30, 1942. BA MA RW 21/12–4.

162 See work plan of the Coburg Armaments Command from October 1 to December 31, 1942. BA MA RW 21/12–4.

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Luftwaffe operations and air bases. In addition, there was a registry, which initially had eight employees.

While the higher-level Armaments Inspection employed slightly more than 100 people, the Coburg Armaments Command had about half that number. In 1942 the Coburg office consisted of nine to ten officers, one civil servant, ten to eleven engineers, 23 employees, and one to two skilled workers. By 1944, despite increasing tasks and the number of companies to be supervised, the number of engineers employed had fallen to six and the number of employees to 18.

In the city itself, the members of the Armaments Command were well connected within party circles and took part in SA events such as the SA shooting competition at the Rottenbach shooting range in Coburg in May 1944, as well as various lectures and public rallies held by the district leader of Coburg. This gave the party and administrative offices in Coburg new access to supraregional networks and the opportunity to influence crucial economic decisions locally through personal contacts. According to senior government official Max Bergmann from the Coburg employment office, there was close and fruitful cooperation between the armaments command, the Gauwirtschaftskammer (Gau Chamber ofCommerce)and the employment office, so that individual companies were unable to play the positions off against each other.

As the war progressed, the organizational structure of the armaments command had to be adapted to the current requirements. On October 5, 1941, Lieutenant Colonel Alfred Gartzen was appointed head of the Coburg Armaments Command by order of Armaments Inspection XIII. Major Heinrich Michels, who had previously been in charge of the office, then took on the role of deputy. From 1943 onwards, the office was headed by Lieutenant Colonel Huch, who was succeeded by Colonel Dr. Rauthe in March 1944. As the shortage of operating and production materials became increasingly urgent, a sub-department was removed from the central group in the spring of 1943 and established as a new group for general and technical operational readiness under government building officer Maaß. The General Group, which reported directly to the Armaments Commander, was called upon in particular to provide technical advice to the department on electricity savings, gas and coal consumption, and the registration of available machinery, rooms, and operational relocations. In addition, a separate department for transport and traffic was established within the central group. [168] At the end of 1943, the General Group was reorganized under Major Dr. Weber and the Navy Group was established under Captain Pauschmann, which was responsible to the Armaments Command for naval production from the

163 See staffing of the Coburg Military Economy Office, August 26, 1939–December 21, 1939. BA MA RW 21–12/1 and work plan of the Coburg Armaments Command from January 1–March 31, 1942. BA MA RW 21/12–4.

164 See actual strength of the Coburg Armament Command from January 1 to March 31, 1942, and from September 1 to December 31, 1942. BA MA RW 21/12–4.

165 See actual strength of the Coburg Armaments Command from January 1 to March 31, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–6.

166 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command from May 9 and 12. BA MA RW 21/12–7 and war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command from July 6 and August 18, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–8.

167 See the officer ranking list of the Coburg Armaments Command from October 1 to December 31, 1941. BA MA RW 21/12–3.

168 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command from April 1 to June 30, 1943. BA MA RW 21/12–5.

Arms inspection was transferred. In August 1944, the entire office of the Arms Command was restructured, whereby the division into the Wehrmacht branches of the Army, Air Force, and Navy was eliminated in the interests of centralization and instead differentiated only according to the criteria of final production and supply. At that time, the Coburg Armaments Command oversaw 183 recognized armaments companies, 124 of which were involved in final production and 59 in supply.

A further differentiation in the organization of the armaments industry resulted from the Führer decree of March 17, 1940, and the establishment of the Reich Ministry of Armaments and Munitions, headed by Fritz Todt. At the same time, a military district representative was appointed in each district as a branch office, who was informed by the armaments inspectorate about all matters relating to the Reich Minister's area of responsibility and consulted on relevant decisions. In the responsible military district XIII, Gauamtsleiter Diplom-Ingenieur Frank from Bayreuth was appointed for this purpose.

Fritz Todt's plans focused primarily on centralization and preparing for the transition to a "total war economy." To this end, working groups were set up to increase efficiency in munitions production as independent units of the industry that were not directly subordinate to the Armaments Inspection Authority but were supported by it. Under a single chairman, all companies involved in similar munitions production joined forces and assumed responsibility for all areas of the economic process of munitions production. The Working Group P, which included companies manufacturing ammunition containers and blunt ammunition parts and was particularly relevant for the Coburg area, was headed by Ernst Albrecht of the Wilhelm Albrecht company in Weitramsdorf.

2.1.2.2 Entry into the war economy

In the course of implementing the measures of the so-called Four-Year Plan of 1936, rearmament in the German Reich and the associated restructuring of society as a whole according to standards of performance and dynamism took place more or less openly. The Nazi state's military-oriented economy increasingly moved toward a politically directed and controlled system. Economic elites benefited from the Nazi state's war-oriented policies and, at the same time, worked together with the state and the party to mobilize the economy and society.

The reintroduction of conscription and the enormous volume of investment intended to revive German industry led to a significant increase in Wehrmacht expenditure. Before the outbreak of war, 587 companies were already manufacturing for the Wehrmacht, especially for the army, in the armaments inspection area of Wehrkreis XIII, which included the armaments commands in Nuremberg, Coburg, Würzburg, and Karlsberg, and a large number of other companies had already been designated by the armaments commands for

169 See War Diary of the Coburg Armaments Command, August 1, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–8.

170 See History of the Armaments Inspection of Military District XIII from September 1, 1939, to September 30, 1940. BA MA RW 20/13–8.

171 See, for example: Erker, Paul: Industrieeliten in der NS-Zeit. Anpassungsbereitschaft und Eigeninteresse von Unternehmern in der Rüstung und Kriegswirtschaft 1939–1945. Passau 1993; Gall, Lothar; Pohl, Manfred (eds.): Unternehmen im Nationalsozialismus. Munich 1998.

production of certain equipment. [172] As early as the spring of 1938, special investigations were carried out by the Armaments Command in the skilled trades sector in order to identify all motor vehicle and military equipment repair shops, which were later used for the expansion of munitions production and the corresponding supply of materials.[173] While the Schweinfurt ball bearing industry and the highly developed metal industry in Nuremberg were of particular interest for Wehrmacht production in the Würzburg Armaments Command area, the Coburg Armaments Command focused primarily on the many basketry businesses for the production of packing containers.

For individual companies, the prospect of being part of the rearmament efforts and benefiting from corresponding special legal and financial positions was a thoroughly lucrative option. This resulted in self-mobilization. Before the official announcement of the Four-Year Plan in September 1936, for example, a request from the Max Brose metalworks was submitted to the Wehrmacht Office after the company had repeatedly approached the Wehrwirtschaftsinspektion XII (Wehrmacht Economic Inspection XII) in Nuremberg and asked for Wehrmacht contracts to be awarded. The Reich Aviation Ministry was considering using the company to carry out subcontracting work for the aircraft industry. In this context, company owner Max Brose proposed to provide or procure all machinery and other equipment for a new production facility, listed the capacities of his machinery in detail, and referred to his company's experience in the production of various army materials during the previous world war. Brose cited his position as president of the Coburg Chamber of Industry and Commerce as an additional reference, which, together with its employees, was also to vouch for him, and referred to his and Ernst Jühlings' service as reserve officers in the field.[174]After the Army High Command had not raised any objections in September 1936, the company was awarded a secret mobilization contract in December 1936 on the condition that it would be able to additionally manufacture 13,500 mouthpiece sleeves for explosive grenades in the event of mobilization. The company subsequently began special production for the Wehrmacht, which consisted of the manufacture of standard canisters and later ammunition parts.

Despite trial mobilizations carried out shortly before the start of the war, the corresponding changes made to the process, and the experience gained from operations in Austria and the Sudetenland, the mobilization of the Coburg Military Economy Office on August 26, 1939, as well as the entire start of production in the area of the Armaments Inspection of Military District XIII, proceeded only slowly. Deviations from the planned mobilization, such as its gradual

172 See History of the Armaments Inspection of Military District XIII from September 1, 1939, to September 30, 1940. BA MA RW 20/13–8.

173 See ibid.

174 See The Wehrmacht Office W.Stab Department of Military Economy to the Army High Command Economic Department, July 1, 1936. BA MA RL 3/417.

175 See: Army High Command to the Reich Minister of Aviation and Commander-in-Chief of the Air Force, September 9, 1936, and Reich Minister of Aviation and Commander-in-Chief of the Air Force to the Reich Minister of War and Commander-in-Chief of the Wehrmacht, Economic Department of the Wehrmacht Office,
September 23, 1936. BA MA RL 3/417. See also: Schäfer, Claus W.: Brose Fahrzeugteile GmbH & Co. KG. In: Historical Dictionary of Bavaria. URL:http://www.historisches-lexikon-bayerns.de/Lexikon/Brose_Fahrzeugteile_GmbH_&_Co._KG (last accessed October 16, 2023).

The nature of the situation, a lack of information, and uncertainty about the responsibilities of the civilian agencies involved meant that the officers initially had to make numerous phone calls and visits that were not part of their actual duties. The first meeting with the companies involved was held on August 28, during which they were informed about possible scenarios and personnel, vehicle, and fuel issues. On August 29, the Coburg office of the Armaments Inspectorate in Military District XIII, among others, reported the completion of its mobilization. On September 4, the official war order for the armaments industry was finally issued. To regulate the deployment of labor, the Coburg Military Economy Office convened a meeting with the heads and administrators of the employment offices, chambers of commerce, and chambers of crafts in its area of responsibility.

The work of the Armaments Command after the outbreak of war

The transition to an official war economy ultimately meant that all production, issues relating to the hiring or dismissal of workers, material issues, and similar matters were now subject to the control of the military economic offices or armaments commands. The main task of the military economic office was therefore initially to carry out the procedures for securing the Wehrmacht's operations in conjunction with the employment offices and to exempt skilled workers who were necessary for the maintenance of the operations and were therefore initially excluded from conscription into the Wehrmacht. The agency then focused its efforts on identifying available capacity, working closely with chambers of commerce, employment offices, chambers of crafts, and district master craftsmen. This required regular visits to businesses, which also gave the agency's employees a deeper insight into the economic structure of their catchment area. On October 18, a corresponding survey of available capacity in Coburg was carried out, involving the military economic inspection of military district XIII, the chamber of commerce, the employment office, and the chamber of crafts.[177] In November 1939, free production capacities were proposed in the area of the Coburg Armaments Command, but these did not always lead to the acceptance of armaments orders. [178]

The Armaments Command now had to repeatedly mediate between the Army High Command (OKH) and various economic institutions. In order to address the frequent complaints from basket companies, it arranged a meeting in February 1940 attended by the OKH, Armaments Inspection XIII, the district economic office, the Gau economic advisor, representatives of the Chamber of Industry and Commerce and the Chamber of Crafts

176 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command from August 24–26, 1939. BA MA RW 21/12–1 and war diary of the Armaments Inspection of Military District XIII from August and September 1939. BA MA RW 20/13–1.

177 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command from October 8–14, 1939. BA MA RW 21/12–1.

178 Here, the Karl Kaeser company was assigned to machine MG parts for 3,000 hours per month, the Gustav Brückner company in Neuses was assigned to manufacture MG parts, and the Waldrich Coburg company was assigned to deliver 2,000 7.5 to 10.5 grenades per month starting in March. In March 1940, Waldrich was also assigned the production of 25 sets of air pre-chamber parts without cylinders, and Vogt und Göhring Coburg was assigned the production of 5,000 projectile baskets. See the status report of the Armaments Inspection of Military District XIII from September 1939 to May 1940. BA MA RW 20/13–10.

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Coburg and Bayreuth, the state master craftsmen, the employment offices in Coburg and Lichtenfels, the Reich Council of German Crafts, the Reich and district compensation offices, the Nuremberg State Supply Cooperative, the Lichtenfels Supply Cooperative, and the basketry industry trade group coordinated technical issues with each other. To further develop the companies in its area of responsibility, the Armaments Command also organized company tours, such as to Wittenauer Maschinenfabrik GmbH in Berlin Borsigwalde, which was attended by a representative of the Waldrich company from Coburg.[179] Meetings such as these made an integral contribution to the expansion of communication networks and coordination committees, which were also able to resolve specific problems inter-institutionally, bypassing official channels.[180]

Naturally, the transition to a war economy went most smoothly for those companies that had manufactured the same equipment in peacetime. In addition to a partial reorientation of production, the companies were also required to steadily increase production as a result of war mobilization. For example, the production directive issued to Luftwaffe factories at the beginning of war mobilization was "peace production + 10%." One focus of arms production within the Coburg Arms Command had been the manufacture of packing containers, as in World War I, due to the widespread basketry industry. Of a total of 170 packing container factories within the armaments inspection of Military District XIII, 119 were located in the Coburg Armaments Command area, with 34 in Nuremberg, 14 in Würzburg, and three in Karlsbad. Accordingly, the number of munitions factories in the Coburg Armaments Command was rather low, with nine in 1940, while the Nuremberg Armaments Command had 56, Würzburg 17, and Karlsbad also nine.

In addition to the companies commissioned directly by the Wehrmacht, the Armaments Command also called on craft businesses to provide subcontracted services, in particular for the manufacture of tools and dies for the armaments factories, for special parts such as cement bombs, and specifically as subcontractors for individual companies. However, involving craft businesses in high-quality armaments production caused difficulties for the Coburg Armaments Command from the outset, as the few precision-working businesses that also had good machinery were working at full capacity and the remaining businesses were not equipped with the personnel or machinery to participate.[183]

By the summer of 1944, almost all companies still in production in Coburg were integrated into the arms industry in one way or another. By August 1, 1944, 42 companies in the Coburg military registration office area, a remarkably high number, were classified as arms manufacturers.[185] By comparison, there were 21 in the Bamberg military registration office area, 15 in Bayreuth, 48 in Lichtenfels, eight in Naila, and 16 in Marktredwitz.

179 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command dated March 13, 1940. BA MA RW 21/12–2.
180 See Hachtmann: Neuen Staatlichkeit, pp. 60–65.
181 See War Diary of the Coburg Armaments Command, September 24–30, 1939. BA MA RW 21/12–1.
182 See History of the Armaments Inspection of Military District XIII from October 1, 1940, to December 31, 1941. BA MA RW 20/13–9.
183 See review of the Coburg Armaments Command dated March 31, 1940. BA MA RW 21/12–2.
184 See inspections based on the command order of July 10, 1944. StACo War Files 5.
185 See Appendix 3: RU companies in the Coburg military registration office area, August 1, 1944.

Fifteen armaments factories were reported in Münchberg, four in Kulmbach, six in Hof, and four in Erlangen. The range of tasks and development within the individual companies varied greatly, as a few examples show.

Coburg armaments factories

The machine tool manufacturer Adolf Waldrich, initially founded in 1919 in Gerbergasse as Globus-Werke, relocated to Hahnweg on the northeastern edge of the city in 1926. The company initially specialized in machine repairs and then in machines for glass and stone processing, before expanding its range to include the manufacture of sheet metal polishing machines, celluloid cutting machines, and metal planing machines, with a focus on long planing machines. In 1940, the company expanded its operations with a view to being able to carry out larger orders as a Wehrmacht supplier. As the city administration was interested in the resulting increase in tax revenue on the one hand and the company's contribution to easing the housing market by building company apartments on the other, it intervened to provide support, mediating between the company and the owners of buildings that had to be demolished to make way for the expansion and assuming the corresponding liabilities. Mayor Greim was particularly keen to promote the expansion of companies whose owners were local. [187]Although there were requests to manufacture ammunition, the company continued to produce machine tools during the war, which were also necessary for the arms industry. The company's workforce grew from 20 people in 1919 to 240 in 1939 and 411 in September 1944. At the end of March 1944, the company was finally designated a defense industry business under the supervision of the Central Group after Adolf Waldrich was assigned a major contract for the ball bearing rapid action program by order of the Main Committee for Machinery at the Reich Ministry of Armaments and Munitions, which the company accepted on the condition that no further workers would be taken away from it, but rather that additional workers would be assigned to it.[189]

Even before the war, the Max Brose & Co. metalworks had benefited significantly from the economic policies of the NSDAP. In 1932, the company had 60 employees, some of whom only worked three days a week. The abolition of motor vehicle tax in 1933, the boom in the automotive industry, and numerous investments led to an upswing for the metalworks, which increased further after 1939, enabling the company to achieve a turnover of around seven million Reichsmarks by 1941. Max Brose himself was appointed Wehrwirtschaftsführer [Defense Economy Leader]in April 1938, a title he shared with only about 400 other German entrepreneurs. The company, which had also expanded its premises in 1939, consisted of two plants located somewhat apart from each other on Uferstraße and Ketschendorfer Straße on the southern edge of the city. With a "following" of 827 people in the summer of 1944, the company was responsible for the production of

186 See lists of armaments factories in the Coburg Armaments Command area. BA MA RW 21/12–17.

187 See minutes of the council meeting of November 10, 1939. StadtACo A 8074 a.

188 See review of the defense plans of the machine tool manufacturer A. Waldrich, September 4, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–8.

189 See Adolf Waldrich to the Coburg Armaments Command, February 25, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–18; War diary of the Coburg Armaments Command dated March 30, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–6.

190 See registration form Max Brose. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg City B 312. On the military economy leaders, see Erker: Industrieeliten, p. 9.

Fuses, artillery ammunition, fuel containers, crank devices, aircraft seats, and anti-aircraft ammunition. [1991]

The Wilhelm Albrecht furniture factory in Weitramsdorf, which had always been recognized as a model National Socialist enterprise,[192]initially participated in two special programs. First, the company was involved in the production of cargo gliders, which supplied airborne troops with equipment and weapons during the war. To this end, the company formed a consortium with Robert Hartwig in Sonneberg, Chr. Vogel in Steinach, and J. C. Eckart in Sonneberg. Albrecht was able to partially meet the special labor requirements for the program at the beginning of 1941, when 178 of the 240 workers requested were provided through compulsory labor.[193] Despite difficult start-up conditions, the company had completed its cargo glider program on schedule by March 1941 and[194] subsequently participated again, together with the companies Robert Hartwig from Sonneberg and Georg Chr. Vogel from Steinach, in the Go 242 program, the production of a larger cargo glider, which was manufactured at the Gotha aircraft works. However, the production of the Go 242 entailed considerable difficulties because, on the one hand, the appropriate fittings and standard parts were difficult to obtain and, on the other hand, repeated design changes had to be made after test flights, which slowed down production.[195] In addition, the Albrecht company also contributed to the "Warschau-Süd" program, the production of large-capacity gliders, which was carried out at the Messerschmitt works, where it was responsible for the manufacture of ailerons and loading flaps. [196]

As the war progressed, Albrecht also participated in the production of a twin-engine multi-purpose aircraft, the Focke-Wulf Ta 154 *Moskito*, by manufacturing wooden wings. However, production was significantly hampered by inadequate supplies and a lack of skilled workers, with the result that some of the wings had to be delivered without fittings. Other companies engaged by Albrecht were also unable to deliver as desired. The company encountered similar difficulties in delivering its quota for the FI 156 program, the production of the Fieseler Fi 165 *Storch*, an observation and liaison aircraft, for which it reported a production backlog of 38 wings in April 1944.[197] In August 1944, the TA 154 program and the construction of wooden wings were finally halted, and the company was assigned to the TA 152 program, the production of the Focke-Wulf Ta 152 fighter aircraft, in which the fuselage tail with tailplane was constructed of wood and the wings of metal.[198] In order to ensure the transport of workers and thus production at the factory in Weitramsdorf

191 See review of Brose's defense plans, August 28, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–8 and Schöllgen: Brose, p. 103 f.

192 See *Bayerische Ostmark*, May 1, 1937.

193 S e e war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command from January 1–31, 1941. BA MA RW 21/12–3.

194 S e e war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command from March 1–31, 1941. BA MA RW 21/12–3.

195 S e e war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command from November 1–30, 1941. BA MA RW 21/12–3.

196 At the end of October 1942, Wilhelm Albrecht resumed production of the *Warschau-Süd* cargo gliders after it had been temporarily halted due to design changes. See the war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command from October 30, 1942. BA MA RW 21/12–4.

197 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command dated April 30, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–6.

198 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command dated August 31, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–8.

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To make things easier for the workers, many of whom were from Coburg, an additional bus was put into service for the company on the Coburg-Weitramsdorf line starting on May 16, 1944.

The Ludwig Bauer Weidhausen wood and basketware factory and its branch in Untersiemau were voluntarily made available to the Wehrmacht by their owner, Ludwig Bauer. Bauer himself was an SS-Sturmbannführer and head of the main armaments office of the Waffen-SS in Dachau, so the business was run by his authorized representative, Feiler. In May 1944, the company employed 37 men and 81 women and was working at 100% capacity for the Wehrmacht, manufacturing ammunition baskets, carrying baskets, carrying devices, and similar items for the Waffen-SS. The branch plant in Untersiemau produced wooden drums for field cables and, as filler work, file cabinets, printing regulations cabinets, and cash boxes for the SS leadership office.

The armaments companies Franz Dornburg A.G. Coburg, Kabel- und Leitungswerke Neustadt, and Weiler K.-G. Herzogenaurach, among others, were involved in submarine war production and were therefore classified as companies with a particularly important production program.[201]Coburger Maschinenbau AG was also employed as a supplier to the submarine program, manufacturing 1. Type 23 drives for NW 175 quick-closing flaps and 2. Type 21 vent valves. [202]

2.2 Labor management and resource mobilization

The complete conversion of the economy to war production and the associated radicalism in the control and disposal of individuals is hardly as evident in any other area as it is in labor management. Here, the ongoing restriction of civilian life and its subordination to industrial mobilization became clearly apparent. Due to the steady increase in conscription into the Wehrmacht and the increased demand for workers in the arms industry as the war progressed, human labor became one of the most valuable resources, leading to struggles over its distribution. The basic principle behind all measures to recruit and control the workforce was the unconditional maintenance of arms production. The service of the individual to the "people's community" was to be pushed to the limits of performance, especially for the men and women employed in the arms industry and its suppliers. An increase in armaments at any price became the premise of production on the "home front."[203]

2.2.1 The beginning of *human resource management* [204] until 1942

The systematic mobilization of the German workforce began with the start of the National Socialist "seizure of power," when an organizational framework was created that initially aimed at job creation and, from 1935/36, at

199 See the war diary of Armaments Inspection XIII of the Reich Minister for Armaments and War Production from May 1944. BA MA RW 20/13–6.
200 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command dated May 31, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–7.
201 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command dated February 15, 1943. BA MA RW 21/12–6.
202 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command dated July 31, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–7.
203 See: Kroener: Human Resources and Kroener: "Human Resource Management."
204 Ibid.

This led to statutory labor control in certain sectors of the economy and then merged into the measures of the Four-Year Plan for war preparation. In 1938, the Nazi regime initially introduced partial compulsory service and then, in February 1939, unlimited and comprehensive compulsory service, with the result that, on the eve of the war, the freedom of movement of the German workforce had already been severely restricted in favor of war mobilization. The work book established in February 1935 made it easier to control the mobility of workers.

Shortage of skilled workers and labor

Production in the course of mobilizing the local economy depended in particular on the available workforce, the available materials, and the production capacity as the sum of the manufacturing possibilities. Even before the war began, the possibilities for mobilizing additional labor in Germany were considered to be almost completely exhausted. With the outbreak of war, the number of male German workers then declined continuously as a result of ongoing conscription. In September 1939, a shortage of skilled workers was reported, particularly in the air force and munitions industries, and this shortage was only to increase. Due to the uncertainty about the future course of the war and the actual war aims, the question of labor management for individual companies was associated with ups and downs and a multitude of changing regulations.

Initially, the sharp increase in orders and service obligations for the regular workforce of some companies in central and northern Germany and on the Siegfried Line made the shortage of skilled workers an obvious problem. According to the instructions of the military economic office, replacement workers could only be requested from the employment offices after approval by the military economic office itself and after ruthless implementation of internal compensation measures. At the beginning of mobilization, the military economic offices finally intervened outside their areas of responsibility in order to resolve difficulties, thus positioning themselves as a flexible coordinating authority. For the workers themselves, a general ban on changing jobs had been in effect since the beginning of the war, which had completed the authorities' access to all jobs.

Even before the war, individual persons in companies could be declared indispensable to the military replacement services if they were necessary for the maintenance of operations and the execution of mobilization orders. In addition, the so-called skilled worker shortage procedure (FM procedure) came into force, according to which the military replacement authorities had to exempt those workers whose exemption applications had been stamped with the FM stamp by the military economic offices. After the end of the Polish campaign, around 50% of skilled workers in the Coburg armaments command area returned to their companies as a result of the FM procedure. [208]In the spring of 1940, however, the companies were once again faced with the recall of a number of important

205 See Petzina, Dietmar: Die Mobilisierung deutscher Arbeitskräfte vor und während des Zweiten Weltkrieges (The Mobilization of German Workers Before and During World War II). In: VfZ 18 (1970), pp. 443–455.

206 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command dated September 18, 1939. BA MA RW 21/12–1.

207 See RGBl. I 1939, p. 1685 f.

208 See status report of the Armaments Inspection of Military District XIII from September 1939 to May 1940. BA MA RW 20/13–10.

Workers whom they had considered secure after the end of the Polish campaign. The resulting unrest was ultimately only quelled by the standstill agreement ordered in April 1940. This agreement initially guaranteed a legally stipulated three-month deferral for the conscription of reservists who had been declared unfit for military service, as well as those born in 1909 and earlier, in companies with urgent armaments tasks. The agreement guaranteed continuity in personnel planning for armaments companies and enabled them to focus on key production areas. The standstill agreement was repeatedly extended in the following months until the end of 1940, giving individual companies enough time to reorganize their personnel internally.

However, this was compounded by the fact that Nazi war propaganda and the linking of ideals of masculinity to military service at the beginning of the war meant that young skilled workers who had been exempted from military service were often urged to leave their jobs at home to join the SS or serve at the front.[210] Proving oneself in military service, the promise of camaraderie, and the seemingly glorious service of German men for the "people's community" were values that were deeply rooted in society and shaped the image of the "German man." Especially in the early years of the war, when everyone expected it to end soon, young men in particular were afraid of missing out on the war experience. The SS's recruitment efforts in particular drew many important people away from the factories in the Coburg armaments command area. [211] During the phase of Blitzkrieg successes, the armaments command repeatedly reported that it was often difficult to keep men in the factories because they were eager to join the troops. [212]

At the same time, from the beginning of the war-related mobilization, conflicts of competence arose between the Wehrwirtschaftsstelle (Military Economy Office) and the local SS, as well as the Red Cross, which also carried out conscription, which had to be revoked by the Wehrwirtschaftsstelle. The question of the validity of official UK positions vis-à-vis SS orders remained a source of conflict. [213]In addition, SS advertising campaigns in companies caused unrest, to which the Armaments Command had to respond.[214] The Armaments Command also reversed the NSKK's secondment of employees from military economy companies to transfer vehicles to the area of operations by involving the regional command. [215] In these initial explorations of competences, the Armaments Command ultimately retained decision-making authority.

Basically, especially after the Polish campaign, expectations of an early end to the war had been very high in the economy, so that individual companies already wanted to prepare for the coming demand in peacetime. However, after the war entered a new phase, it was sometimes necessary to increase output by 100% of the previous level.

209 See History of the Armaments Inspection of Military District XIII from September 1, 1939, to September 30, 1940. BA MA RW 20/13–8.
210 See Review of the Coburg Armaments Command from March 31, 1940. BA MA RW 21/12–2.
211 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command from April 1–6, 1940. BA MA RW 21/12–2.
212 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command from December 1–31, 1940. BA MA RW 21/12–2.
213 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command from September 24–30, 1939. BA MA RW 21/12–1.
214 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command from February 12–17, 1940. BA MA RW 21/12–2.
215 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command from May 26–30, 1940. BA MA RW 21/12–2.

Production was required. From October 1939 onwards, the armaments commandos, in cooperation with the district economic offices, the chambers of industry and commerce, the chambers of crafts, and the employment offices, sought out additional production facilities, with new capacities being identified in particular in the manufacture of packaging containers in the Coburg armaments command area.

In the spring of 1940, Major Heinrich Michels, who had taken over as acting head of the Coburg armaments command office in February 1940, noted: "The view that the war will be over by summer is constantly being fueled by popular opinion. This could lead to disappointment and thus to serious strain."[217] The fact that the seriousness and urgency of the armament work was at times less strongly perceived by civilian authorities and in factories in the summer of 1940, and that plans were already being considered for the resumption of peacetime production, also testified to the fact that the successes of the Nazi leadership's "blitzkriegs" at the beginning of the war made it possible to the burden on German workers to be kept within reasonable limits, thus taking into account the general mood on the "home front." [218] Those companies under the Coburg Armaments Command that had introduced a 60-hour week by May 1940 were able to withdraw this measure at their own discretion after initial experience. The increase in working hours had led to significant fatigue among the workforce, which at that point was not yet considered acceptable.[219]

In October 1940, the Armaments Command reported that labor deployment was causing difficulties, particularly in the Coburg employment office district. [220]Organizational measures aimed at rationalization, such as internal redeployment, "combing out," and retraining, were necessary to cover up the increasingly obvious shortage. Various "combing operations," which the Armaments Command usually carried out together with the chairmen of the employment offices, representatives of the DAF, and in some cases the district economic office, were intended to uncover all available labor. [221]Here, too, the local network structure was used, which formed stable organizational structures at the lower administrative level. In addition, in May 1940, the Geschosskorb companies were also authorized to award contracts for home-based work, which provided relief for the unmet demand for workers.[222] However, the possibility of employing home workers from areas with poor transport links was hampered by the fact that there was not enough fuel available to transport the workers to their workplaces every day.

216 See History of the Armaments Inspection of Military District XIII from September 1, 1939, to September 30, 1940. BA MA RW 20/13–8.

217 Review of the Coburg Armaments Command dated March 31, 1940. BA MA RW 21/12–2.

218 See War Diary of the Coburg Armaments Command from July 1 to September 30, 1940. BA MA RW 21/12–2; Petzina: Mobilization, p. 452.

219 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command from July 1 to September 30, 1940. BA MA RW 21/12–2 and war diary of the Armaments Inspection of Military District XIII from May 31, 1940. BA MA RW 20/13–2.

220 S e e War Diary of the Coburg Armaments Command from October 1–31, 1940. BA MA RW 21/12–2.

221 See History of the Armaments Inspection of Military District XIII from September 1, 1939, to September 30, 1940. BA MA RW 20/13–8 and History of the Armaments Inspection of Military District XIII from October 1, 1940, to December 31, 1941. BA MA RW 20/13–9.

222 S e e War Diary of the Coburg Armaments Command from May 5–11, 1940. BA MA RW 21/12–2.

transport. In addition, many of them were also employed in agriculture and were therefore tied to their work.[223] Due to the full capacity utilization of civilian production of upholstered furniture, basketware, porcelain, and toys in the Coburg area, it was initially not possible to redeploy any workers here, so that the use of unskilled labor was only possible through compulsory service.[224]

The example of Max Brose & Co. clearly illustrates how the shortage of skilled workers and labor could lead to production difficulties early on in the war. Due to a lack of suitable workers and difficulties in training new skilled workers, the production of ammunition initially came to a virtual standstill.[225] In February 1940, around 45,000 projectile fuses had to be reworked and, in some cases, replaced due to poor workmanship. [226] By May 1940, the shortfall in the production of 2 cm armor-piercing tracer shells had been made up.
127,245 to 38,985 units, but due to a lack of workers for a second shift, the drop in output for the production of anti-aircraft gun fuses also amounted to 935,000 units. A further reduction in personnel in the fall of 1940 continued to have an impact in April 1941, causing the company to fall behind in ammunition production. [228]In May 1941, Brose managed to meet 90% of its production target for 2 cm tracer shells for anti-aircraft guns.[229] A shortage of resources ultimately became an increasingly serious problem. In July 1941, however, the compressor system failed due to constant overuse, resulting in a 30% decline in the production of canisters for the Wehrmacht. At the same time, canister production was hampered by inadequate deliveries of rubber seals.[230] In April 1942, the company's production of standard containers was once again threatened with collapse due to a shortage of sheet metal deliveries.[231]

In August 1941, the Armaments Command reported that the demand for labor could currently be met, but that there were now hardly any reserves of German workers available. In order to achieve this result, however, those responsible within the Armaments Command, the employment offices, and also within the various companies had to demonstrate enormous flexibility, a willingness to improvise, and an ever-increasing determination to now also draw on the entire workforce. Stable cooperation between the Armaments Command and the employment offices, for example, also had a positive effect on labor management. Internal measures to remedy the labor shortage continued to focus on balancing the workforce through the use of unskilled workers, retraining, redeployment of workers, securing the workforce through special company protection, or securing armaments leave, but now also much more on extending working hours.

223 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command from August 1–31, 1941. BA MA RW 21/12–3.
224 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command from January 1–6, 1940. BA MA RW 21/12–2.
225 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command from December 24–31, 1939. BA MA RW 21/12–1.
226 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command from February 25 to March 2, 1940. BA MA RW 21/12–2.
227 See war diary of the Armaments Inspection of Military District XIII from May 31. BA MA RW 20/13–2. In May 1940, the company switched from producing 2 cm tank ammunition to 2 cm explosive grenades.
228 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command from April 1–30, 1941. BA MA RW 21/12–3.
229 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command from May 1–31, 1941. BA MA RW 21/12–3.
230 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command from June 1–30, 1941. BA MA RW 21/12–3.
231 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command dated April 19, 1942. BA MA RW 21/12–4.

However, measures that had previously remained unused, mainly for ideological reasons, now became the focus of attention. These included the recruitment of female workers and, ultimately, the increasingly prominent use of foreigners, Jews, and prisoners of war. At the end of 1941, against the backdrop of the expected arrival of a large number of Soviet prisoners of war, conscription for the war economy was expanded. This meant that unskilled workers born in 1910 and later, as well as skilled workers born between 1919 and 1922 who had been hired by a special company after March 1, 1941, were released for service in the Wehrmacht.[232]Additional external measures to recruit manpower included compulsory service, "combing out" the economy in favor of war equipment production, uk positions, and standstill agreements, but now also increasingly the closure of non-essential businesses. In 1941, various "combing commissions" were formed in the armaments commands, such as in September and October 1941 together with the Coburg district military command, which re-examined the uk positions in the factories and in some cases lifted them. In April 1942, the increase in labor deployment to the maximum level was finally extended to home workers and subcontractors.

However, the new mobilization strategies and the tensions that could no longer be denied in everyday working life now also had a direct impact on the mood on the "home front." Uncertainty about relations with the Soviet Union also unsettled the population. [234] In addition, from the fall of 1941 onwards, the supply situation deteriorated, which, based on the experience of the First World War, was widely seen as an indication that the war was going badly. [235]

2.2.2 The struggle for human labor from 1942 onwards

With the appointment of Fritz Sauckel as Plenipotentiary for Labor Deployment, Albert Speer's takeover of the Ministry of Armaments, the associated restructuring of the war economy, and the fact that the war had now reached a stage where there was no prospect of an end in sight, a new phase of mobilization began in 1942. This resulted in a temporary increase in efficiency and production through the establishment of committees and rings for individual branches of manufacturing. However, it now became clear that the increasingly scarce resources, especially human labor, had overstretched the willingness to cooperate that had previously prevailed at the lower levels.

As the war situation worsened and rationalization measures were implemented, conflicts over distribution and authority led to the Armaments Command becoming a political rival to local authorities on certain issues. The Armaments Command's interventions in the political sphere of influence of the party and local decision-makers were therefore mostly resisted. Mayor Greim in particular was now keen to maintain his political

232 See History of the Armaments Inspection of Military District XIII from October 1, 1940, to December 31, 1941. BA MA RW 20/13–9.
233 See War Diary of the Coburg Armaments Command, April 17, 1942. BA MA RW 21/12–4.
234 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command from May 1–31, 1941. BA MA RW 21/12–3.
235 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command from August 1–31, 1941. BA MA RW 21/12–3.

maintain its power over the Armaments Command and became increasingly self-confident and dismissive. Above all, the closures of factories and the relocation of large urban businesses to the flat countryside proved to be points of conflict in which spheres of influence were demarcated, so that they were exaggerated into political power struggles.[236]Lieutenant Colonel Huch criticized the fact that attempts by local political authorities to interfere were increasing significantly, even though, according to the regulations of the Reich Minister for Armament and Munitions, they were not allowed to interfere in the decisions of the armaments commissions and their organs.

After the key personnel born in 1908 and later had been checked at the end of October 1942 in Coburg's manufacturing companies, a new special conscription campaign took place at the beginning of 1943, targeting skilled and key personnel born between 1908 and 1920.at the beginning of 1943, another special conscription campaign was carried out for skilled and key personnel born between 1908 and 1922, during which the armaments commissions were able to determine at their own discretion which workers were expendable and which key personnel should continue to be protected, as well as how they should be distributed among the individual companies. The Coburg Armaments Command was initially required in January to surrender 23% of its key and skilled workers, which would have been well above the Reich average, before a percentage-based quota uniform for the entire Reich was established in February. In this context, the powers of the armaments commands were explicitly used as intermediaries between industry and the military, since, as agents of the Reich Ministry of Armaments and Munitions, they had the opportunity to identify and exploit the scope for compromise on the part of the companies they supervised when it came to handing over key personnel. The Coburg Armaments Command reported that it had been able to convince all companies that the required transfer was acceptable and could be offset by internal compensation.Ultimately, however, the withdrawals represented an enormous loss, especially for small businesses, which had few skilled workers to begin with. Although circulars and company visits had repeatedly pointed out the imminent action and called for the training of replacement personnel, only very few companies were actually prepared. To make matters worse, the foreign skilled workers promised to the armaments commands as compensation for the key personnel were ultimately not distributed. To compensate, the Wehrmacht had to release soldiers who were serving in garrisons at home or who were classified as fit for work from the troops and make them available to the armaments industry, so that 134 released soldiers could be assigned to the Coburg armaments command.

However, since all recruitment measures were still unable to meet demand, the "Ordinance on the Reporting of

236 See Chapter V2.3.4.

237 See the results of the discussions at the second meeting of the examination committee, the ten subcommittees, and the four working groups of Armaments Commission XIII on May 18, 1943. BA MA RW 20/13–3.

238 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command dated October 31, 1942. BA MA RW 21/12–4; war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command dated January 1–March 31, 1943. BA MA RW 21/12–5 and Werner, Oliver: Guarantors of Mobilization. Die Rüstungskommissionendes Speer-Ministeriums im „totalen Krieg" (Guarantors of Mobilization: The Armaments Commissions of the Speer Ministry in "Total War"). In: ibid. (ed.): Mobilisierung im Nationalsozialismus. Institutionen und Regionen in der Kriegswirtschaft und der Verwaltung des „Dritten Reiches" 1936 bis 1945 (= Nationalsozialistische "Volksgemeinschaft." Studies on Construction, Social Impact, and Memory, Volume 3). Paderborn 2013, pp. 217–233, here p. 222.

239 See clear overview of the development of the armaments economy of the Coburg Armaments Command from March 1943. BA MA RW 21/12–5.

of men and women for tasks related to national defense" counteracted the shortage of workers in the arms industry. The decree freed up workers for the arms industry and, in turn, freed up soldiers for the front by removing additional personnel from the economy. At the same time, however, it introduced a registration requirement for all men between the ages of 16 and 65 and women between the ages of 17 and 50 who had not yet been registered.[240]Although the Armaments Command expected around 10,000 women to be available for work, it became apparent shortly after the decree was issued that the measures would still not be sufficient to compensate for the shortage of labor caused by the conscription in terms of quality and quantity.

In order to be able to respond flexibly to the special requirements of the war, special additional production tasks and special programs were repeatedly assigned to the armaments factories, but these often entailed considerable organizational burdens and interventions for the Armaments Command's planning and also for the companies concerned. During the "Schnellaktion Versorgungsabwurf" (Rapid Supply Drop Operation) from January 20 to March 31, 1943, cargo parachutes, including the associated fabrics, straps, metal fittings, and drop containers, had to be manufactured. A total of 16 companies from the Coburg Armaments Command area were involved in the operation, which required additional workers to be made available at short notice due to the sudden nature of the special operations. In addition to transfers from the clothing industry and the deployment of German women conscripted from the skilled trades, the Red Cross and the NSV were also called upon. In addition, "Eastern workers"[241] were temporarily assigned to the companies.[242] The same applied to the special campaign of the "Adolf Hitler Tank Program," which called for a fourfold increase in tank production for the Eastern Front. Since January 22, 1943, 26 companies belonging to the Armaments Command had been assigned exclusively to the program, all of them suppliers.[243]Problems arose, in turn, as a result of the war supply program, in which the Reich Minister of Economics, in agreement with the Minister of Armaments and Munitions, designated goods that were essential for supplying areas particularly vulnerable to air raids and whose production had to be ensured. In practice, the program meant a massive intervention in the power of disposal of the companies concerned as well as of the Armaments Command, since orders were placed centrally in Berlin without consultation with the local authorities. On the one hand, areas subject to the war requirements program were protected against any "scavenging" of materials and labor for other purposes, and on the other hand, they required a considerable amount of labor that was not available for allocation by the Armaments Command. [244]

240 See ibid.

241 According to the 1942 law, "Eastern workers" were "those workers of non-German ethnicity who were registered in the Reich Commissariat Ukraine, the General Commissariat White Ruthenia, or in areas bordering these territories to the east and the former free states of Latvia and Estonia, and who were brought to the German Reich, including the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, after the occupation by the German Wehrmacht and employed here." RGBl. I 1942, pp. 419–421.

242 See Clear overview of the development of the armaments economy of the Coburg Armaments Command from March 1943. BA MA RW 21/12–5.

243 See ibid.

244 See ibid.

In practice, the various procedures for registering and allocating labor requirements proved to be bureaucratic hurdles for companies, which often hindered rather than promoted production. One example of internal armaments prioritization was the "Rotzettelverfahren" (red slip procedure) for special production, which the armaments command had to process as a matter of urgency before other distributions could take place. The bureaucratic overload of labor management became clear, for example, when a number of workers were withdrawn from the Dornburg company at the end of March 1943, only to be reassigned shortly thereafter through the registration of a "Rotzettel requirement." In practice, the procedures therefore often only resulted in a transfer from one production facility to another, as no additional workers could be provided.[245] The problems that arose locally and the polycratic friction losses that resulted from labor management also became apparent with the involvement of the Gau labor office and the increasing disputes over jurisdiction with the Gau economic office. Decisions were often made in Bayreuth that counteracted the intentions of the armaments command and, since they were not based on local knowledge in the opinion of the head of the armaments command, Huch, had to be compensated for by him.

Further workforce shifts also resulted from the ever-increasing number of conscriptions into the army and mining, as well as from harvest leave, which workers in rural areas in particular were repeatedly entitled to and which caused considerable difficulties for industry. In order to involve companies in the constant withdrawal of workers and to make the redeployments as efficient as possible, companies were asked to draw up their own reports on the order of dispensability of their employees.[247]However, with the expansion of the labor shortage and the ongoing relocation of businesses, a change had now begun with regard to the outflow of workers from more rural areas to the industrial cities. While until 1943, more and more workers from the Coburg armaments sector had been conscripted to Nuremberg and the surrounding area, many of them were now being released from their duties and reassigned to their original companies in order to counteract the labor shortage in the Coburg armaments sector.[248] The recall of designers, technical draftsmen, and skilled workers from the army and air force in July 1943 should also be seen in this context. [249]

In 1943, despite all the adversities, it was ultimately possible to maintain the quantitative workforce in large parts of the economy. However, the decisive and almost unsolvable problem proved to be the qualitative workforce within companies. While companies were faced with ever-increasing demands, their production output inevitably declined. Even the replacement of foreign skilled workers could not compensate for the loss of the internal management layer, which had been familiar with a company and its

245 See the results of the 2nd meeting of the examination committee, the 10 subcommittees, and the 4 working groups of the Armaments Commission XIII on May 18, 1943. BA MA RW 20/13–3.

246 See presentation by the head of the department on the development of the armaments economy during the first quarter of 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–6.

247 See circular from the Coburg Armaments Command dated May 3, 1943. BA MA RW 21/12–9.

248 See circular letter from the Coburg Armaments Command dated May 14, 1943. BA MA RW 21/12–9.

249 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command dated July 22, 1943. BA MA RW 21/12–5.

processes. In September 1943, for example, around 1,700 persons born in 1904 and later formed the backbone of a production facility that employed 25,000 "followers," including around 9,000 German men. The loss of each of these conscripted workers resulted in a far-reaching decline in quality. [250]The labor situation continued to worsen, and the workers needed for the arms industry had to be increasingly drawn from companies with less important production activities. As a result, the majority of companies still in existence in 1944 were directly or indirectly involved in arms production. [251]

Employees in the Coburg Armaments Command

The picture of the composition of the total workforce within the companies supervised by the Coburg Armaments Command at the end of April 1944 reveals the enormous shifts that the practice of conscription and redeployment had brought about. Both the proportion of women and foreign workers had increased dramatically compared to the male and German permanent workforce. At that time, a total of 18,522 men and 14,215 women were employed in the armaments factories, comprising 23,202 German nationals (11,542 men and 11,660 women),
3,245 "Eastern workers" (1,361 men and 1,884 women), 3,088 other civilian workers (2,417 men and 671 women), 1,562 Soviet prisoners of war, and 1,640 other prisoners of war. In addition, semi-skilled workers and unskilled laborers made up a disproportionately large part of the workforce. Among the employees were 266 owners (238 men and 28 women), 3,135 salaried employees (1,777 men and 1,358 women), 391 commercial
Apprentices (167 men and 224 women), 4,063 skilled workers (3,698 men and 365 women),
11,410 semi-skilled workers (5,554 men and 5,856 women), 11,956 unskilled workers (5,618 men and 6,338 women) and 1,516 industrial apprentices (1,470 men and 46 women).[252]

In April, the Coburg Armaments Command had a total requirement of 2,692 men and 3,328 women, and 1,010 men and 1,288 women were available. The companies had requested 631 men and 497 women via requirement lists, of which 447 and 407 were actually approved. The "Rotzettel requests" for 230 people were met by company transfers and incoming transports of
"Eastern worker families" and Polish workers were completely covered. In addition, the Armaments Command requested 1,472 temporary positions. This left an uncovered demand for around 400 skilled workers in April, who could not be assigned to the factories, however, but had to be replaced by unskilled workers who had to be trained. [253]

By the end of July 1944, the situation had worsened again. There were now a total of 20,601 men and 15,940 women, with 12,687 men and 12,572 women among the domestic workers, 1,647 men and 2,434 women among the "Eastern workers," and 2,863 men and 934 women among the other civilian workers. In addition, there were 1,590 Soviet prisoners of war and 1,814 other prisoners of war. While the number of skilled workers had risen to 4,703, the

250 See Development of the armaments industry situation during the third quarter of 1943. BA MA RW 21/12–5.
251 See the report by the head of the department on the development of the armaments industry during the first quarter of 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–6.
252 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command dated April 30, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–6.
253 See ibid.

The number of semi-skilled workers rose to 13,057 and the number of unskilled workers to 13,232.[254] With a total requirement of 3,504 people for the armaments sector, only 1,290 people had been employed. Of the
, only 899 and 696 were approved. Only 124 people were assigned with great difficulty via "Rotzettel requests," leaving a final requirement of 500 skilled workers.

Even after Sauckel, the General Plenipotentiary for Labor Deployment, called for the voluntary labor deployment of all those who were not subject to compulsory labor service but felt able to work in February 1944, nothing changed in this situation.[256]In April 1944, 40 men and 455 women volunteered for honorary service in the war economy, of whom 24 men and 276 women were actually hired.[257] The number of registrations was particularly high in July 1944, when 3 men and 1,623 women registered, but ultimately only the 3 men and 542 women were deployed. [258] In August, again, only 2 men and 591 women could be deployed out of 4 men and 940 women. [259]

Another source of labor was found in the military hospitals on the "home front," whose inmates were involved in the production process. The hospital inmates were employed both within the hospitals, for example in the small-scale assembly of electrical installation materials, the strapping of haversacks and canteens, the manufacture of nets and mooring lines for inflatable boats, backpacks, tent tarpaulins, and deburring work, and outside in spinning mills, weaving mills, and other war-related businesses. In the first quarter of 1944, the military hospitals worked approximately 79,356 hours, in June 1944 89,717 hours, and in August 101,936 hours. [260] In addition, wounded engineers, physicists, and chemists in particular were recruited from the military hospitals as specialists.Officers who had left the Wehrmacht due to age, injury, or illness were employed in the factories in foreigner surveillance or management, material procurement, or as plant security managers and in similar positions.

The demand for labor in September 1944 was partially met by incoming transports, which mostly consisted of families from areas in eastern Poland, Bukovina, and Romania that had been reoccupied by the Red Army. At the same time, however, the deployments for trench digging in the west and the root crop harvest in central Germany continued, which in turn contributed to the shortage of skilled workers. [263] Especially during the harvest months, workers had to be transferred from the armaments industry to

254 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command dated July 31, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–8.
255 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command dated April 30, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–6.
256 See Clear overview of the development of the armaments industry by the Coburg Armaments Command from March 1943. BA MA RW 21/12–5.
257 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command dated April 30, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–6.
258 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command dated July 31, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–6.
259 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command dated August 1, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–8.
260 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command dated April 30, June 30, and August 30, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–6.
261 See circular from the Coburg Armaments Command dated October 21, 1943. BA MA RW 21/12–9.
262 See circular letter from the Coburg Armaments Command dated July 5, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–9. In this regard, the companies of the Coburg Armaments Command reported possible applications in the summer of 1944.
263 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command dated September 30, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–8.

be handed over to agriculture, as securing food supplies was one of Hitler's main concerns.[264] In addition, the Bayreuth district lost an average of 600–700 workers per month due to death, disability, pregnancy, and secondments as anti-aircraft assistants or to the Reich Labor Service.[265]

Once the labor shortage became so acute that even the highest priority orders could not be fully fulfilled, the only option left was to further exploit the labor of armaments workers, forced laborers, and prisoners of war. In 1944, holidays were largely canceled and factories were required to continue working. In October 1944, the Coburg Armaments Command also called for the establishment of a 24-hour shift in order to make the most efficient use of labor and heating materials.[266]Most armaments factories in the Coburg area now worked a 72-hour week after the Waldrich company was included in the ball bearing campaign and the Dietze, Kaeser, and Albrecht companies were included in the "Jäger program." The latter was a measure taken by the Reich Aviation Ministry against the backdrop of intensifying Allied air warfare, which sought to counter the Allied bombings by manufacturing interceptor aircraft. For the "Jäger Program," the companies involved had to increase the weekly working hours for men to 72 and for women and young people to 60. In order to prevent long commutes, workers who lived far away were also housed in camps or collective accommodation to increase efficiency. In addition, work continued over Easter. In order to guarantee May 1 as a public holiday, the corresponding production volume was worked on the Saturday and Sunday before the holiday. [267]The dismissal of armaments workers was also to be organized in such a way that no loss of production occurred by introducing night work in the factories. [268]

More and more new companies were now also being accepted as armaments companies, so that in June 1944 a total of 172, in July 179, and in August 183 companies were assigned to the Coburg Armaments Command. These now included the Bruno Dietze company, Steatit-Magnesia AG in Cortendorf, the Oskar Gaudlitz company, Fa-serindustrie KG, Wilhelm Dahle, Gemmer & Co., Mech Spielwaren, Gebr. Senkeisen, Adolf Waldrich, Zipp-Werke, and Karl Kaeser.[269]Reich order exchanges were now organized for the iron and metal industry to coordinate orders and production. In May 1944, the Armaments Command obliged the companies Brose, Waldrich, Kaeser, Dietze, and Dornburg to send representatives to the Reich order exchanges in Dresden. [270]For their part, the companies had to regularly report on their workforce and coal and energy supplies to the Armaments Command, while at the same time

264 See circular from the Coburg Armaments Command dated August 11, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–9.
265 See minutes of the 15th meeting of Armaments Commission XIII, July 5, 1944. BA MA RW 20/13–7.
266 See circular from the Coburg Armaments Command dated October 24, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–9.
267 See circular from the Coburg Armaments Command dated March 29, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–9 and circular from the Coburg Armaments Command dated April 24 and 26, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–9.
268 See circular letter from the Coburg Armaments Command dated August 11, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–9.
269 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command dated February 22, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–6 and war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command dated June 6, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–7.
270 See circular from the Coburg Armaments Command dated May 4, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–9.

but urged to maintain strict secrecy with regard to war production. Manufacturing employees were therefore repeatedly instructed to maintain absolute silence, even about minor details of the production process, in order to eliminate the "followers" as a "dangerous conduit for information to the enemy" [271].

When Hitler appointed Joseph Goebbels as "General Plenipotentiary for Total War Effort" with comprehensive powers, he issued measures for "total war effort" in August 1944 in order to free up resources for the Wehrmacht and armaments. The effects of these measures were immediately felt at the regional level. Through a "combing operation" of the civilian sector in the summer of 1944, an expanded reporting requirement, restrictions in the administrative system, and measures to eliminate sham employment relationships, the armaments inspection of Wehrkreis XIII was supplied with approximately 11,500 new workers in August and 21,300 in September 21,300 new workers in September. In the "global campaign" to transfer workers from civilian production to urgent armaments production, a total of 31 workers from the porcelain factories Creidlitz, Edelstein Küps, Goebel Oeslau, Rosenthal Kronach, Alks-Kunst Kronach, and Tettau AG to the Annawerke Oeslau in the summer of 1944.[272] At the same time, however, the district representatives, now equipped with more extensive powers, demanded that the ongoing conscription measures of the total war effort free up manpower for the Wehrmacht.[273]

Despite the gains in manpower, the labor situation was exacerbated by the continuous weakening of the skilled worker population in the war-critical commercial sector due to special conscription campaigns and the "Goebbels campaign" in the course of total war effort. At the Bruno Dietze Coburg company, only nine skilled workers remained out of a workforce of 118 at the beginning of 1945.[274] With the latter, the "General Representative for Total War Effort" wanted to free up one million soldiers for war service and instructed party offices to release even furloughed armaments workers for the Wehrmacht.[275] In addition, male workers were conscripted for emergency service to build fortifications on the Siegfried Line, and important skilled workers were withdrawn to rebuild destroyed hydrogenation plants outside the area of the armaments inspection. The advancing front lines and the losses suffered by the Wehrmacht, combined with the expansion of the air war, also led to a reduction in transport and fuel resources and a shortage of all means of transport. This had a particularly negative impact on the supply of raw materials and semi-finished products from the western theater of operations and from the Rhineland-Westphalian industrial area. [276]

271 Circular from the Coburg Armaments Command dated April 24, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–9.

272 See Coburg Armaments Commission enforcement report dated July 4, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–8.

273 See War Diary of Armaments Inspection XIII of the Reich Minister for Armaments and War Production from August 1944. BA MA RW 20/13–7.

274 See District Retraining Committee to the Bamberg Gau Training Commission, Coburg, March 24, 1945. BA MA RW 21/12–12.

275 On Goebbels' campaign, see Fleischhauer: NS-Gau, pp. 283–294. Ultimately, the campaign had to be toned down and some of the workers returned to the factories in order to avoid a slump in arms production.

276 See description of developments in the armaments economy in Armaments Inspection XIII during the third quarter of 1944. BA MA RW 20/23–7.

The labor shortage in the final months of the war

In the final months of the war, worsening supply problems against the backdrop of advancing fronts and expanding aerial warfare provoked disputes over jurisdiction. The imminent collapse of the Nazi state thus became apparent on the ground, not least in the impossibility of reconciling arms production with the tasks of defending the Reich. In the summer of 1944, the Armaments Command intensified its efforts to have new conscription orders for the home air defense force revoked after these had led to disproportionately high work absences in everyday working life. It lodged an appeal with the Nuremberg Military Replacement Inspection Authority on behalf of workers at Dietze, Waldrich, Kaeser, Albrecht, and Gemmer & Co., all of whom worked a 72-hour week and whose departure would have resulted in an enormous loss of working hours. This led to disputes over jurisdiction with the local SA Standarte 95 Coburg. The armaments command had insisted that they, as well as the companies concerned, should be consulted before recruitment to the Heimatflak, while Standartenführer Gerspacher referred the armaments command to a corresponding right of objection on the part of the companies and armaments commands before the issuance of the call-up order by the military registration office, which, however, could only be decided by the district leader. With this in mind, Gerspacher proposed mediation by the district leader, but after the Heimatflak was relocated from Coburg, the Armaments Command no longer sought a final clarification. [277]

Furthermore, at the regional and local level, there was increasing pressure to address bottlenecks and difficulties with the above-ground and underground relocation of central production facilities from industrial centers to the periphery, the increased use of female labor, the continuous closure of non-essential businessesand the universal retraining of male and female workers. The transfer of suitable arms production to home-based war work and the deployment of military hospital inmates or prisoners had also proven to be suitable temporary measures. In the "Wissmann Action"[278], workers who were not tied to a particular location were also transferred to the armaments industry, among other things by merging smaller companies into larger armaments companies. Ultimately, however, despite all the countermeasures, the number of skilled workers declined noticeably because all the semi-skilled workers were unable to compensate for the lack of experience and training.[279]In February 1945, companies once again had to hand over around 30% of those born between 1901 and 1922 who were fit for military service to the Wehrmacht, which led to further rationalization and mobilization measures coordinated by the DAF to tap into the last reserves of the companies' capacity. Despite the intensifying competitive situation, attempts were made to compensate for the losses caused by the conscription through the

277 See Armaments Command Coburg to the Commander of the Military District Command, July 1, 1944, and SA Standard 95 Coburg to the Armaments Command Coburg, August 12, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–18.

278 Named after Ministerialrat Karl Wissmann, who was promoted to General Commissioner for Business Transfers, the campaign aimed to convert businesses from the consumer goods industry to the manufacture of weapons, ammunition, and equipment. See Schumann: Cooperation, pp. 328–348.

279 See description of developments in the armaments industry in the area of Armaments Inspection XIII during the third quarter of 1944. BA MA RW 20/23–7.

i n c r e ased allocation of foreign workers and further retraining measures. [280]

The formation of the Volkssturm ultimately posed a final major challenge in terms of the human resources still available on the "home front." These were urgently needed both for arms production and for tasks related to the defense of the Reich. Disputes over jurisdiction between the armaments command and the district authorities responsible for setting up the Volkssturm were therefore the order of the day. The fact that workers who had become available from the already evacuated border districts were assigned to the Volkssturm and not to factories, and that, particularly in the case of the first contingent of the Volkssturm, which made up about a quarter of the total first contingent in the Coburg district, this led to considerable gaps in armaments production and complaints from the armaments command. "Volkssturm," which made up about a quarter of the total first contingent in the Coburg district, led to complaints from the armaments command. The system of labor allocation that had been established up to that point was ultimately thrown out of balance by the party's authorization in this matter.[281] The special conscription orders issued in the last months of the war and the recruitment quota for the marching units of the "Volkssturm" were intended to deprive the armaments factories in the Coburg district of about two-thirds of their particularly skilled workers in the spring of 1945, making it impossible to maintain production.

2.2.3 Shortage of raw materials and operating resources

In addition to the organization of labor, the distribution of raw materials and operating resources was a second central and problematic issue in the arms industry and for everyday life on the "home front." Due to the constant shortage of raw materials, fuel, and operating resources needed for production, manufacturing conditions deteriorated continuously throughout the war.

The implementation of a 60-hour working week, as was the norm in parts of the armaments industry and introduced in most companies within the armaments inspection of Wehrkreis XIII in May 1940, was not possible everywhere in the Coburg armaments command area in 1940, mainly due to material difficulties and the lack of ammunition gauges, in addition to uncertainties in the reorientation of armaments production.[282]Ultimately, the lack of or delayed delivery of raw materials, semi-finished and finished products meant that factories had to be temporarily shut down time and again, as was the case with the canister production of Max Brose & Co. or due to the shortage of foundry coke at Franz Dornburg AG.

Another important task of the Armaments Command was therefore to record existing coal stocks and procure supplies through direct negotiations with the syndicates and mines. In particular, the munitions factories

280 See circular from the Coburg Retraining Committee dated February 6, 1945, and Der Wehrkreis-beauftragte XIII, February 19, 1945. BA MA RW 21/12–12.

281 See Coburg District Retraining Committee to the Bayreuth Gau Training Commission, March 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–12.

282 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command from July 1 to September 30, 1940. BA MA RW 21/12–2 and war diary of the Armaments Inspection of Military District XIII from May 31, 1940. BA MA RW 20/13–2.

283 See the war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command dated May 31, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–7.

were supplied with special quotas. Already in the first winter of the war, those responsible for the Armaments Command had to intervene in coal management on an almost daily basis. In addition, various civilian authorities had taken it upon themselves to confiscate resources in anticipation of the looming shortage, contrary to the instructions of the Armaments Command. As early as January 1940, problems with coal procurement ultimately led to a partial standstill in production. [284]At the beginning of 1942, production in factories had to be scaled back due to coal shortages and temporarily halted in some factories.[285] In 1943, however, the mild winter meant that coal supplies could be secured by drawing on reserves, resulting in satisfactory production levels for that year. In March 1944, there were further shutdowns, particularly in the porcelain industry, due to a lack of coal supplies, resulting in a total loss of
24,000 working hours were recorded.[286] Gas production in Coburg also experienced bottlenecks, which made urgent capacity expansions impossible and resulted in the expansion of the gasworks. A particular setback was an explosion at the Neustadt gasworks near Coburg on July 13, 1940, and a fire that destroyed the pump house.Measures to save electricity also dominated everyday life on the "home front," both in arms production and in administration and domestic life. For example, the Coburg city administration introduced special office hours with a shortened lunch break in order to make better use of daylight.

Towards the end of the war, problems with fuel supplies also increased, leading to stricter monitoring of consumption. [289] In addition, the transport situation deteriorated noticeably due to a general shortage of tires and a considerable need for road repairs. At the same time, bulk transport by the Reichsbahn was now also inadequate, having already come to a standstill in 1941 due, among other things, to the withdrawal of a number of wagons for the Eastern Campaign.

Right at the start of the official war mobilization of the economy, the Wehrwirtschaftsstelle Defense Economy Office called on companies to exercise extreme economy in their use of operating resources and threatened cuts in the event of non-compliance. Both the shortage of spare parts and of skilled workers who could maintain and repair factory machinery contributed to this order soon proving to be far-sighted. A shortage of suitable machines proved particularly difficult for subcontractors in the skilled trades after the Armaments Command

284 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command from January 14–20, 1940, review of the Coburg Armaments Command from March 31, 1940. BA MA RW 21/12–2 and district economic advisor Rehlein to the Gau economic advisor, December 29, 1939. StABa M 30, 1311.

285 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command from January 1 to March 31, 1942. BA MA RW 21/12–4.

286 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command from March 31, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–6.

287 However, emergency operations were resumed here on July 15 to supply industry.

288 See instruction from the mayor dated November 5, 1943. StACo War Files 2.

289 See circular from the Coburg Armaments Command dated April 20, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–9.

290 See Coburg Goods Dispatch to Mayor Rehlein, October 29, 1941, and War Diary of the Coburg Armaments Command dated March 31, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–6.

291 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command dated September 4, 1939. BA MA RW 21/12–1.

Coburg, the few companies that worked precisely and also had good machinery were working at full capacity, and the remaining companies were not sufficiently equipped in terms of either personnel or machinery. [292]

To provide machines, "machine combing operations" were therefore carried out regularly to integrate used machine tools into the armaments production cycle. From the summer of 1944 onwards, the arms industry also increasingly appropriated machines from smaller craft businesses that had to be shut down after their owners had been drafted. In cases such as this, the tensions associated with resource-related shortages and questions of how to value different sectors of the war economy ultimately came to a head. For smaller businesses in particular, which, unlike the armaments factories, had felt neglected and threatened in their existence since the beginning of the war at the latest, the removal of machinery proved to be a final devaluation. This resulted in vehement resistance and deep incomprehension on the part of the families and relatives of the business owners.

Despite all the adversities, overall production was not significantly affected for the most part until the end of the reporting period. Shortages of raw materials and supplies fluctuated and repeatedly caused considerable difficulties, but thanks to the willingness of local authorities to improvise and the ruthless exploitation of the available workforce, including prisoners of war and foreign civilian workers, it was possible to maintain a large part of production. The work of the Coburg Armaments Command therefore showed that it was only through their organizational flexibility on a small scale that armaments production could be maintained on a large scale.[294]Central guidelines were implemented here, problems were tackled with improvisation skills, and an organizational network was established at the lowest administrative level, which prevented the polycratic conflicts at the Reich level from becoming obstacles at the local level. At the middle level of the districts in particular, armaments inspections ensured inter-institutional coordination, which also benefited the armaments commands in terms of their performance and self-organization capabilities. It is clear that the cooperation and adaptability of regional and local actors, such as the employees of the Coburg Armaments Commission, in a progressive mobilization process, contributed decisively, within the scope of their possibilities, to the Nazi regime's ability to continue its war efforts despite a hopeless military situation. Nevertheless, a massive deterioration is noticeable in the second phase of mobilization from 1942 onwards, when regional egoisms became more apparent. However, as shown, the now even more apparent tension between competition and cooperation as a characteristic feature of Nazi mobilization did not automatically have a mobilization-inhibiting effect, but could in turn give rise to new negotiation processes conducive to mobilization.

292 See review by the Coburg Armaments Command dated March 31, 1940. BA MA RW 21/12–2.

293 See War diary of Armaments Inspection XIII of the Reich Minister for Armaments and War Production from August 1944. BA MA RW 20/13–7.

294 See description of developments in the armaments economy in the area of Armaments Inspection XIII during the third quarter of 1944. BA MA RW 20/23–7.

2.3 Mobilization strategies

A detailed look at the various mobilization strategies can provide even deeper insights into the compensation strategies at the regional and local levels. Mobilization should not be understood purely as military mobilization, but rather as a social process and effort by the regime to foster a willingness within society to make all resources available for the war effort.[294] For a massive mobilization, as necessitated by the war efforts of the Nazi regime, it became particularly necessary at the level of the armaments command to adapt the regulations issued by the Reich leadership to local economic conditions and to redesign them flexibly. Compulsory mobilization from above and the self-mobilization of those affected worked together in this process. While in the early years of Nazi rule, communitarization was achieved primarily through incentives, concrete material advantages, and grand promises, after 1939 it was subject to the constraints of armament policy and the war economy.

2.3.1 Discipline and incentives

In order to increase work performance in the factories, the Armaments Command and the individual plant managers had various reward and punishment measures at their disposal, as work discipline became an increasingly pressing problem as the war progressed. Every form of discipline was linked to an ideological emphasis on the work performance of armaments workers, who, like soldiers at the front, served the "people's community" through their professional commitment and daily workload and were regularly reminded of this task through company roll calls and public lectures. In particular, comparisons with the sacrifices made by soldiers at the front were used as a recurring reminder and to rally the "home front." The pressure on the men who remained at home and did not risk their lives on the front lines was used psychologically and communicatively to mobilize them. The fact that any position of privilege in society could provoke envy and resentment and become a source of conflict contributed to this. This ideological superstructure logically declared every breach of contract, every "slacking off," and every weakness of a worker to be an offense against the German people that had to be punished. Ideological and economic mobilization of forces and discipline went hand in hand.

295 See Werner, Oliver: Mobilization in National Socialism. In: ibid. (ed.): Mobilization in National Socialism. Institutions and Regions in the War Economy and Administration of the "Third Reich" 1936 to 1945 (= National Socialist "People's Community," Volume 3). Paderborn 2013, pp. 9–26, here p. 11. However, the analysis of the Coburg population's willingness to mobilize is significantly limited due to the very restricted source material.

296 See Schmiechen-Ackermann, Detlef: "Mobilization" and "People's Community" – Competing or Complementary Approaches to Analyzing the History of National Socialism? In: Werner, Oliver (ed.): Mobilization in National Socialism. Institutions and Regions in the War Economy and Administration of the "Third Reich" 1936 to 1945 (= National Socialist "Volksgemeinschaft," Volume 3). Paderborn 2013, pp. 59–68.

Initially, the Gestapo was called in to deal with those unwilling to work, and temporary detention from Sunday noon to Monday morning was ordered, which took away not valuable working time, but the already dwindling free time of the armaments workers. The armaments inspection authority of Wehrkreis XIII described this type of punishment as the "most salutary" method. Ultimately, however, the disciplining of individual workers fell within the remit of the Bavarian Labor Trustee, whose office had been introduced in 1933 to mediate between employers and workers. However, the Bavarian labor trustee, Kurt Frey, prohibited the already customary practice of involving the Gestapo and directly imprisoning workers, unless they were foreign workers. Instead, Frey ordered a bureaucratic procedure. In this procedure, the plant managers forwarded the individual applications to the representative of the Reich labor trustee. In practice, however, this procedure proved to be ineffective from the point of view of the armaments inspection, mainly due to the length of time it took to process the applications.

After an increasing number of cases came to light in which overworked armaments workers secured days off and periods of rest by reporting sick, the Armaments Command also ordered stricter medical checks to monitor the workforce more closely. From the spring of 1941 onwards, an additional medical certificate was required for every sick note in order to monitor employees as closely as possible.[298] The Albrecht Weitramsdorf company also took the initiative to investigate workers who had reported sick, took aggressive action against a doctor who allegedly issued sick notes too readily, and reported individual workers to the Armaments Command for refusing to work. [299] In order to prevent excessive sick leave, the Armaments Command primarily called on the plant managers and made them responsible for the amount of work lost by a plant due to insufficient work discipline. Discipline in the armaments factories was thus subject to a hierarchy of responsible persons who were accountable to their superiors and exerted pressure on their subordinates.

In addition to the control and punitive measures, parallel to the measures of the "total war," a bonus system was introduced that was intended to boost performance in essential industries through additional incentives. From March 1943 onwards, workers who contributed to increasing the efficiency of their company through suggestions for improvement were eligible to earn performance bonuses. In the spring of 1943, performance bonuses were also paid to companies involved in the tank program. Individual companies had to report on "followers" who had worked more than 12 hours a day, including Sundays, so that food ration cards could be issued as a special allowance.[302] On the whole, however, it was precisely such special payments that maintained social peace at a

297 See History of the Armaments Inspection of Military District XIII from September 1, 1939, to September 30, 1940. BA MA RW 20/13–8; Circular letter from the Coburg Armaments Command dated May 13, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–9.

298 See Circular from the Coburg Armaments Command dated May 9, 1941. BA MA RW 21/12–14.

299 See Wilhelm Albrecht to the Coburg Armaments Command, April 7, 11, and 12, 1944. StABa Kreisleitungen der NSDAP M33, 501.

300 See circular letter from the Coburg Armaments Command dated August 1, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–9.

301 See circular letter from the Coburg Armaments Command dated March 18, 1943. BA MA RW 21/12–9.

302 See circular letter from the Coburg Armaments Command dated May 1, 1943. BA MA RW 21/12–9.

This significantly upset the economic balance. The different wage levels in the various industries covered by the Coburg Armaments Command alone had a negative effect on the mood of workers in the armaments factories. Metalworkers complained in particular about the high wages in the basket industry, which led to social tensions, especially in the metal industry, where compulsory labor was required. The Coburg Chamber of Industry and Commerce denounced this situation as a failure on the part of the trustees of labor. The payment of special bonuses to the workforces of individual companies or industries now increased the resentment at a location and thus had a negative effect on the mood among the workforce.

Even measures intended to improve the well-being of workers were not primarily aimed at making work easier for individuals, but were primarily intended to maintain the workforce in armaments factories and achieve production targets. With this in mind, factories were instructed to pay close attention to supplying their employees with vegetables and potatoes and, in the event of a shortage, to request a tonic made from grape juice concentrate and rosehip flour as compensation for hardship. An adequate supply of vitamin C was intended to prevent a drop in performance. In fact, in the Coburg armaments command area, the poor supply of beets and potatoes to the "followers" and the resulting vitamin deficiency had already led to lower performance and high sick leave. This was particularly true of relocated factories that had not set up their own canteens to guarantee the supply of food to their employees.[306]

2.3.2 Retraining

Another effective strategy, especially for internal compensation, was retraining and the use of unskilled workers. In a kind of ring exchange, permanent staff were assigned to perform complex and more complicated tasks, while unskilled workers took on simpler tasks. Initially, retraining measures were primarily internal compensation strategies carried out by the companies themselves, without the use of large-scale retraining workshops.

As the war progressed, in order to limit damage within companies, particularly in the iron and metal industry, workers who were suitable for promising further training as skilled workers had to be retrained in just one to two months. Training was carried out directly at the workplace, followed by course-based retraining, provided that the companies

303 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command from October 1–31, 1940. BA MA RW 21/12–2.
304 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command from December 1–31, 1940. BA MA RW 21/12–2.
305 See circular from the Coburg Armaments Command dated March 6, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–9.
306 See report by the head of the department on the development of the armaments economy during the first quarter of 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–6.
307 See History of the Armaments Inspection of Military District XIII from September 1, 1939, to September 30, 1940. BA MA RW 20/13–8 and History of the Armaments Inspection of Military District XIII from October 1, 1940, to December 31, 1941. BA MA RW 20/13–9.

had training personnel at their disposal. [308] Once retraining had proven to be an effective measure alongside the deployment of foreign workers, it was centralized in terms of organization, professionalized as far as manpower reserves allowed, and ultimately extended beyond the sphere of German workers. In 1944 and 1945, selected foreign workers in individual companies were also increasingly retrained in internal and inter-company retraining courses in order to replace younger German skilled workers who had been drafted into military service. Retraining subcommittees set up specifically for this purpose coordinated the relevant courses and, together with the respective trainers, assessed the suitability of the prospective workers for the measures. For the Coburg, Kronach, and Lichtenfels areas, engineer Poland from the Coburg Armaments Commission headed the corresponding district committee.[309]Even after companies had to hand over about 30% of those born between 1901 and 1922 who were deemed fit for military service to the Wehrmacht in February 1945, major retraining measures were again carried out to mobilize the last internal reserves.

Beyond the short-term increase in the efficiency of the war economy, the retraining measures meant a de facto promotion for a large part of the male workforce and brought with them a learning-by-doing effect that also had a long-term impact on the company's qualification structures.

2.3.3 Female workers

The employment of women was a controversial issue both among the general population and among the leadership of the NSDAP, as NSDAP propaganda had designated the private and domestic spheres as genuinely female domains. Ultimately, however, the reality of war and the enormous labor shortage on the "home front" made it inevitable that women would work outside the home. Gender stereotypes and measures that prevented women from working after marriage therefore had to be renegotiated during the war.[311] Especially after the declaration of "total war" in 1943 and the introduction of a comprehensive registration requirement for women between the ages of 17 and 45, which was raised to 50 at the end of July 1944, women's employment was not only tolerated but also demanded.[312]Among the plant managers in the Coburg Armaments Command area, there was

308 See circular from the Coburg Armaments Command dated August 1, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–9.

309 See circular from the Coburg Retraining Committee dated February 6, 1945, and Der Wehrkreisbeauftragte XIII, February 19, 1945. BA MA RW 21/12–12.

310 See Abelshauser, Werner: Kriegswirtschaft und Wirtschaftswunder. Deutschlands wirtschaftliche Mobilisierung für den Zweiten Weltkrieg und die Folgen für die Nachkriegszeit. In: VfZ 47 (1999), pp. 503–538, here pp. 534 f.

311 Under Nazi legislation, married female civil servants were required to give up their jobs, a *numerus clausus* was introduced at universities, limiting the proportion of women to 10%, and in order to be granted a marriage loan, young women had to commit to giving up their jobs upon marriage. See Steinbacher, Sybille: Frauen im "Führerstaat" (Women in the "Führer State"). In: Süß, Dietmar; Süß, Winfried (eds.): Das "Dritte Reich" (The "Third Reich"). An Introduction. Munich 2008, pp. 103–119, here pp. 106–108.

312 On the employment of women, see Hachtmann, Rüdiger: Industriearbeiterinnen in der deutschen Kriegswirtschaft 1936 bis 1944/45 (Female Industrial Workers in the German War Economy 1936 to 1944/45). In: Geschichte und Gesellschaft, 3 (1993): Rassenpolitik und Geschlechterpolitik im Nationalsozialismus (Racial Policy and Gender Policy in National Socialism), pp. 332–366.

There was a wide range of opinions on the use of female labor and their retraining opportunities, which initially led to very different implementations of the use of women in practice. According to the instructions of Reich Minister Dr. Goebbels, women were to be employed primarily in arms production to replace workers who were well suited for physically demanding work. To this end, companies were required to designate jobs that were particularly suitable for women. These positions were then no longer allowed to be filled by male workers from Germany or abroad, or by female workers from the East.[313] Even though hiring in the arms industry had to be prioritized, women were also employed in skilled trades, primarily in repair shops, basket weaving, tailoring, larger locksmiths, and saddleries, where they often worked from home. [314]

Difficulties in employing women arose in particular because the women who were hired often left their jobs after a short time. One reason for this was the disparity between their wages and the support that women received from conscripted soldiers. The frequent wartime marriages, when soldiers married before being drafted in order to provide for their partners, also deprived businesses of young female workers. In addition, the high deductions from family support combined with simultaneous earnings made employment unprofitable for many women. In some cases, even women who had worked in factories before the war resigned due to the lack of financial lucrativeness. The low additional income was not worth the associated practical burden of everyday life, especially for women who had to travel long distances to their place of work.[315] Ultimately, many companies began to introduce special working conditions for women from 1940 onwards, for example by repeatedly giving them Saturdays off as household days to do their domestic work, which became mandatory in November 1943. [316] Legal regulations also had to ensure that the profitability of the workforce was increased in financial terms. However, a change in the way wages were credited to family support in May 1940 had little effect in practice, as the effective wages of female industrial workers remained low and lost relevance against the backdrop of food rationing and control. In addition, the extra days off for laundry and housework guaranteed to women were increasingly restricted due to the worsening labor situation, or subject to stricter regulations that required them to make up for lost working hours.[317] Married women in particular, who were now often single parents, found it difficult to leave their families when the increasing scarcity of food, laundry, and clothing meant that they had to take on additional war-related domestic work.

313 See circular letter from the Coburg Armaments Command dated September 19, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–9.

314 See Coburg District Craftsmen's Association to the Bayreuth District Chamber of Commerce, May 17, 1943; Coburg District Craftsmen's Association to various master craftsmen, September 14, 1944; and Coburg District Craftsmen's Association to the Bayreuth District Master Craftsman, November 29, 1944. StACo Chamber of Crafts 226.

315 See review by the Coburg Armaments Command dated March 31, 1940. BA MA RW 21/12–2.

316 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command from December 1–31, 1940. BA MA RW 21/12–2 and Hachtmann: Industriearbeiterinnen, p. 347.

317 See instruction from Mayor Greim dated February 8, 1944. StACo War Files 2.

and also had to take on tasks that had previously been performed by their husbands, who had now been drafted into military service.

Another attempt to negotiate the employment of women was to hire them as part-time workers, but many companies initially vehemently opposed this. This type of employment was intended to leave enough time for domestic tasks, protect women's fertility, which was endangered by their work, and still relieve the burden on the arms industry. Once companies had overcome their reluctance to employ women on a part-time basis, they were trained primarily as fitters, toolmakers, and for higher positions. By the end of 1943, 1,642 of the 11,914 women working in the Coburg Armaments Command were employed on a part-time basis. However, criticism of the work performance of part-time women by plant managers continued, with the result that the model was less successful in the Coburg Armaments Command.[319] Nevertheless, female labor had become indispensable. By September 1943, there were ultimately more women than men employed in the entire Armaments Command area, with 9,124 men and 9,521 women out of a total workforce of 18,645 German nationals.[320] By the end of May 1944, the ratio had evened out somewhat, with 12,084 men and 12,021 women employed on the German side.[321] In September 1944, the war home work program was launched, in which communal rooms were set up in which an average of 20 to 50 women worked part-time or full-time, supporting arms production by sewing, deburring, punching paper, or manufacturing projectile baskets.[322] From January 1945 at the latest, the removal of workers for military tasks also affected women, when the Armaments Command requested companies to provide female Wehrmacht assistants and leaders between the ages of 18 and 35 for the Luftwaffe, whose recruitment was to be carried out by district commissions.

and thus the district leaders were involved.

Below the company level, the extent to which local women were employed varied greatly, depending on the attitudes of the plant managers and the nature of the tasks at hand. In the summer of 1944, the workforce of Max Brose & Co. consisted of approximately 827 people, including 400 women.[324] At the N. Trutz car body factory,
"staff" of 386 people, only 61 women were employed.[325] At the machine tool manufacturer A. Waldrich, too, there were only 58 women among 411 employees.[326] At that time, almost as many German women as German men were employed in the entire Coburg armaments command area, with 12,687 male employees out of a total of 36,541 people employed in the armaments factories.

318 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command dated December 31, 1943. BA MA RW 21/12–5.
319 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command dated April 30, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–6.
320 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command dated September 30, 1943. BA MA RW 21/12–5.
321 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command dated May 31, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–6.
322 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command dated September 30, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–8.
323 See circular letter from the Coburg Armaments Command dated January 13, 1945. BA MA RW 21/12–9.
324 See review of the defense plans of the Brose company, August 28, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–8.
325 See review of the defense plans of the N. Trutz car body factory, September 4, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–8.
326 See Review of the defense plans of the A. Waldrich machine tool factory, September 4, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–8.

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and 12,572 female Germans were expelled, with the proportion of women being particularly high among semi-skilled workers and unskilled workers and correspondingly low among skilled workers.

Overall, however, the labor provided by German women did not result in the creation of an effective labor reserve. Since the vocational training of women had been severely neglected in the Nazi state for ideological reasons, they were ultimately unable to serve as replacements for the skilled workers who had been drafted, but could only be employed in the short term, primarily for unskilled work. While the proportion of men remained high at the management level, among skilled workers, and industrial apprentices, women were employed primarily as clerical workers, semi-skilled workers, and unskilled workers. In April 1944, for example, within the Coburg Armaments Command, there were 238 men and 28 women at the company owner level, 1,777 men and 1,358 women among the employees, 167 men and 224 women, among skilled workers 3,698 men and 365 women), among semi-skilled workers 5,554 men and 5,856 women, among unskilled workers 5,618 men and 6,338 women, and among industrial apprentices 1,470 men and 46 women.[328]By July 1944, the ratio of skilled workers had changed to 4,335 men and 368 women, semi-skilled workers to 6,379 men and 6,678 women, and unskilled workers to 6,192 men and 7,040 women. [329]Soon, all new female workers were immediately assigned to production, as the workload and order volume increased due to constant program increases. On top of that, towards the end of the war, women were also transferred from administration to production. Even the workers recruited for the armaments industry by the "Ordinance on the Registration of Men and Women for Reich Defense Tasks" of January 23, 1943 [330] for the armaments industry and the "voluntary honorary service to the German people" did not bring any noticeable relief. [331]

2.3.4 Plant closures

The conversion of the economy to war production and the increasing subjugation of industry and trade to arms manufacturing also resulted in the long-term closure of those civilian production facilities that were not classified as essential to the war effort, leading to a decline in civilian production as a whole. In anticipation of a short war, however, the German economy was not geared toward "total war" from the outset of the fighting, but remained in a kind of transitional state for the time being, so that the large-scale shutdown plans, even under the influence of regional Nazi officials, came to nothing at first. [332] The

327 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command dated July 31, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–8.

328 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command dated April 30, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–6.

329 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command dated July 31, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–8.

330 See RGBl. I 1943, p. 67.

331 See Clear overview of the development of the armaments industry by the Coburg Armaments Command from March 1943. BA MA RW 21/12–5.

332 See Müller, Rolf-Dieter: Die Mobilisierung der deutschen Wirtschaft für Hitlers Kriegführung (The Mobilization of the German Economy for Hitler's War Effort). In: ibid. (ed.): Das Deutsche Reich und der Zweite Weltkrieg (The German Reich and the Second World War). Volume 5/1. Stuttgart 1988, pp. 349–692, here pp. 364–405 and Müller, Klaus-Dieter; Wendler, Dietmar (ed.): NS-Zwangsarbeit und Kriegswirtschaft 1939–1945. Ausländereinsatz im Deutschen Reich und in Sachsen. Repatriierung – Nachkriegsprozesse – Entschädigung. Dresden 2021, p. 59.

Coal merchant and trade association leader Otto Schramm began as early as 1939 to reduce the coal trade in Coburg, which he considered to be 50% overstaffed, by closing down businesses, but met with such discontent that he had to abandon his plan immediately.

At the beginning of the war, the dominant civilian basket and upholstered furniture industry in the districts of Coburg and Lichtenfels remained overstaffed, so that the demands of the armaments industry for workers from this sector could not be met, causing unrest. This was due, among other things, to the increasing willingness of large sections of the population to spend money, as they assumed that the war would soon end and that money would be devalued, and they invested their cash assets in goods that did not require ration cards. There was still no corresponding decree that could have stopped production that was not essential to the war effort. [334] As a result of the full capacity utilization of civilian production of upholstered furniture, basketry, porcelain, and toys, the use of unskilled labor was therefore initially only possible through compulsory service. [335] While there was a shortage of workers in the shell basket companies, the civilian basket industry continued to be overworked. Even after the first corresponding shutdown orders came into force, these did not initially have any effect due to the implementing regulations subsequently issued by the Coburg Armaments Command and therefore did not bring any relief in terms of labor deployment. The legally stipulated minimum export turnover of RM 5,000, which entitled a company to continue operating, was already being achieved in some cases by very small companies.

In September 1940, the problem of an alleged imbalance between civilian production and Wehrmacht orders was addressed, and the priority of war production was further emphasized. A categorization of all orders according to urgency and the introduction of special levels by a decree of the armaments department of the High Command of the Wehrmacht on September 20, 1940, introduced a level system in which various programs could be classified according to the war situation. In order not to completely neglect civilian production, which also supplied the Reichsbahn and the Reichspost, individual companies were allowed, with the consent of the OKW, to manufacture orders for civilian and military requirements at the same time. Specialized companies, of which there were 1,169 in the Wehrkreis XIII
, were also protected from any withdrawal of labor.

In 1942, the appointment of Albert Speer as Minister of Armaments marked the beginning of a change, not only in terms of the reduction of civilian production. As early as April 1942, companies were prohibited from continuing and developing plans for civilian peacetime production.[338] The "Ordinance on the Release of Labor for War-Related Employment" of January 29, 1943, authorized the Reich Minister of Economics to issue orders for the closure or merger of companies, which were to be carried out by the Reich Defense Commissioners and the competent

333 See Ernst Bernhard to Martin Bormann, April 3, 1943. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg City B 153.
334 See War diary of the Coburg Armaments Command from November 26 to December 2, 1939. BA MA RW 21/12–1.
335 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command from January 1–6, 1940. BA MA RW 21/12–2.
336 See War Diary of the Coburg Armaments Command, April 1–6, 1940. BA MA RW 21/12–2.
337 See History of the Armaments Inspection of Military District XIII from October 1, 1940, to December 31, 1941. BA MA RW 20/13–9.
338 See RGBl. I 1944, p. 239.

economic districts. [339]Following a decree by the Reich Minister for Armament and Munitions on September 1, 1943, a major campaign to shut down and relocate factories and production facilities was also carried out in September 1943. Once again, resource-related negotiation processes began, which carried enormous potential for conflict on the "home front" and led to overlapping jurisdictions and power struggles. The examples from the Coburg area illustrate both the range of responsibilities that competed in this sensitive matter and the influence that individuals were able to secure for themselves through war-related rationalization measures.

The state agricultural offices were responsible for the closures, with Dr. Otto Graf from the Fürth State Agricultural Office being responsible for the city of Coburg, who consulted the relevant professional associations regarding local conditions.[340] Initially, Mayor Greim in particular vehemently opposed any business closures in his city, but was unable to influence the Gauleiter. Ultimately, the group that had decisively shaped the city's economic policy up to that point once again gained far-reaching influence in the closure process. The head of the economic office, Ernst Kuhn, the district group leader of the NSDAP's retail trade group, Karl Hartung, the district economic advisor, Rehlein, and the city treasurer, Vollmuth, were authorized to prepare expert reports.[341] As a result of their work, the Döring department store, the foreign companies Globus and Gressmann, and a number of smaller businesses such as coal merchants, most of the specialist tobacco shops, and jewelers were ultimately closed in Coburg.

In April 1943, Deputy Mayor and local group leader Ernst Bernhard approached Martin Bormann, head of the Party Chancellery, to complain about the practice of closing businesses in Coburg, after his complaints to Coburg's mayor, Greim, had fallen on deaf ears. According to Bernhard, the approach in the Vestestadt did not comply with the guidelines that had recently been published in the weekly magazine *Das Reich*. According to these guidelines, a double review process was to be applied to the closure of shops and businesses, in which the State Agricultural Office issued questionnaires to those affected and the party, together with the local group leaders, conducted an investigation of the businesses, with the involvement of representatives from the DAF and the women's association. A final decision was then to be made by the Gau economic advisor. Bernhard himself was affected by the closure action in several ways. On the one hand, the coal business attached to Bernhard's bakery had been closed down, as the closures particularly affected double-income households. On the other hand, as local group leader, Bernhard felt ignored by Kuhn and Hartung's practices and denounced them as being based on "discretion and favor, but not on duty" [342]. Bernhard referred in particular to the fact that the Gauleiter

339 See RGBl. I 1943, p. 75 f.

340 The basis for this was the 1934 regulation on the movement of goods, as amended in 1942, according to which the Reich Office for Clothing and Related Areas had been created in Berlin, under which the state agricultural offices operated. See RGBl. I 1942, p. 686.

341 See minutes of the Coburg City Tribunal of April 5, 1948. StAMü Tribunal Box 986, Ernst Kuhn Tribunal File.

342 Ernst Bernhard to Martin Bormann, April 3, 1943. StACo Coburg City Denazification Tribunal B 153.

At the 20th anniversary celebration of the Coburg local group, Wächtler pointed out that everything should be examined fairly and thoroughly, but that the actual plant closures contradicted this. Bernhard attributed the closure of the Schütz coal business, whose owners were both 65 years old, meaning that no workers important to the war effort could be gained from the shutdown, as well as other coal businesses, to the fact that the responsible specialist group leader, Schramm, wanted to claim a kind of monopoly for himself, after he had already approached several businesses that he intended to take over. In the tobacco trade, too, shops whose owners had already been called up for military service had been closed down.

In the textile trade, the self-serving actions of those responsible for the closure campaign became apparent. Since the "Aryanization" of the Conitzer & Söhne department store, a conflict had been smoldering between Karl Hartung and Moritz Döring, with Ernst Kuhn siding with Hartung on one side and Ernst Bernhard siding with Döring on the other. The closure of the department store ultimately culminated in a split within the NSDAP in Coburg, which had already manifested itself in various disputes. Since the takeover of the Conitzer department store, Hartung had opposed Döring in collaboration with Ernst Kuhn and had repeatedly attempted to have his business revoked by reporting him for exceeding his retail license. Döring was not only Hartung's direct economic competitor; Hartung himself had also expressed interest in taking over the department store and had therefore come into direct conflict with Mayor Dr. Schmidt.

The "Ordinance on the Release of Workers for War-Related Employment" ultimately gave Kuhn and Hartung the means to achieve their goal, even though the provisions did not apply to Döring's business itself in such concrete terms, as it was Coburg's largest department store, where the general public could shop and whose closure would not yield any labor for war-related purposes. However, thanks to his good connections, Hartung was assured of the support of the Upper Franconia district subgroup of the retail trade economic group and its managing director, August Heublein, who had already acted in Hartung's interests on several occasions and given him preferential treatment. Although Döring and his lawyer took action against the closure, lodged an appeal with the State Economic Office, and also complained to the expert and representative of the Reich Office for Clothing and Related Areas, Stäudtner, his business was shut down in March 1943, the building was confiscated, and awarded to the insurance company Eos and Excelsior. This automatically resulted in accounts being frozen and deliveries being suspended, and all goods in Döring's possession were distributed to 45 local retail companies at Hartung's instigation. To this end, the State Agricultural Office in Fürth had delegated the rest of the goods to the Coburg Economic Office. On the other hand, businesses whose owners were allegedly directly connected to Hartung were allowed to continue operating.

343 See ibid.

344 See chapters III1.3.2.2, III2.2.3.1, and IV3.2.2.1 on internal party conflicts.

345 See Economic Group Retail Trade District Subgroup Upper Franconia to Karl Hartung, March 14, 1941. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg City H 74.

An administrative fine of RM 1,000 had to be imposed on Döring, who now defied all orders. At the same time, on Hartung's initiative, proceedings were initiated against Döring at the Special Court in Bamberg for war economy crimes. Although these proceedings were discontinued in September 1944, they contributed to rendering Döring incapable of acting. Due to the ongoing proceedings, the Retail Trade Economic Group, which had taken over the distribution of Döring's goods, did not pay him the corresponding value of the goods. For this reason, merchants who were friends of Döring also refused to accept the goods. The closure of Döring's department store ultimately meant that even after it had been carried out, the economic office had to continue to issue permits for Döring to sell in order to meet the needs of the population. Döring suffered massive economic damage as a result of this process.

Although Kuhn and Hartung had achieved their long-cherished goal in Döring's case, the district leadership, which had already shown the two "old fighters" their limits in the past, intervened in the business closure process after Bernhard's letter. As a result, individual businesses were able to reopen and continue operating, particularly through the possibility of consolidation.[347]Ultimately, however, it was precisely the closures of businesses that revealed the close interdependence of the party, the administration, and the economy in the city. Since these closures represented a profound change in the economic structure, in contrast to the "sweeping actions" that were assumed to be short-term measures, the actors involved were forced to engage in negotiation processes.

2.3.5 Impact of the air war on mobilization

The presence of the Allies in the airspace above the "home front" had a massive impact on the threat situation within urban areas and the maintenance of arms production. On the one hand, even in areas less directly involved in the air war, such as Coburg, the relocation of businesses posed administrative and organizational challenges and exacerbated the labor shortage. On the other hand, the entire working day had to be restructured due to the potential danger from the air, and air raid protection measures had to be put in place.

Coburg itself served as a third-order air raid shelter, primarily as a reception area for businesses relocated from large cities that had been severely affected by air raids. The city's location far away from major industrial centers and central transport routes, which had often hindered the development of Coburg's industry, turned out to be an advantage for the city and its surrounding area during the air war. The Coburg Armaments Command was therefore initially primarily occupied with the relocation of companies within its area of responsibility. Based on the reporting of all detached

346 See Ernst Bernhard to Martin Bormann, April 3, 1943. StACo Spruchkammer Coburg Stadt B 153 and interrogation transcript of Dr. Rudolf Schulze-Döbold of the Coburg City Tribunal dated April 5, 1948; Johann Hampel to the Coburg Denazification Tribunal, October 15, 1948, and Dr. Max Fey to the Coburg Denazification Tribunal, October 26, 1948. StAMü Denazification Tribunal Box 986, Denazification Tribunal file Ernst Kuhn.

347 See Ernst Bernhard to the public prosecutor of the Hammelburg camp denazification tribunal. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg City B 153.

or premises to be vacated to the Armaments Inspectorate, the latter decided on the allocation of suitable properties. Initially, the industries in the Ruhr and Rhine regions were considered, and later, relocation companies from Nuremberg, Schweinfurt, and Berlin were added. The relocations themselves were subject to the strictest secrecy, and especially in the case of companies known as specialised war production facilities, new company names were to be used at the new location. [348]

The relocations entailed increased organizational effort for the host regions, which had to be met with extreme flexibility and structural creativity. Although the relocated companies were supposed to bring their own necessary workforce with them, these workers were often tied to their local area due to family, economic, or health circumstances, meaning that the redistribution within the arms industry also resulted in additional labor requirements for the host regions.[349] Newly relocated companies therefore constantly attempted to recruit new workers through their own initiatives or by obtaining Rotzettel contracts, which regulated the preferential allocation of workers to armaments companies over other companies. Ultimately, the impossibility of relocating all permanent workers from a company always resulted in an acute labor shortage. In addition to the labor problem, there were often delays in building permits, as well as a lack of materials and skilled workers to get the businesses up and running.

Since the relocation of businesses had a huge impact on the economic structure and the sphere of influence of local political authorities, political power struggles between civilian and military forces, or rather higher-level defense industry forces, became evident in this area in particular. The relocations often led to disputes over jurisdiction between the armaments command and the local administration, which was involved in the relocations but ultimately unable to make the decisive political decisions. During the relocation of the first manufacturing plant to move to Coburg, Kollmorgen GmbH from Berlin, Mayor Greim felt that he had been bypassed in the organization and decision-making process and, in response, exercised his political power in the allocation of accommodation for the new workers. The Armaments Command therefore complained that the mayor of Coburg and district leader, who still had spacious civilian accommodation at his disposal, had stipulated that the 40 German workers, some of whom were "bomb victims," should live in mass accommodation. Greim also refused to provide sleeping quarters that the workers had already obtained through Coburg workmates. In the eyes of the armaments command, the Coburg mayor's behavior bordered on direct sabotage of his work.

The relocation of Steatit Magnesia Berlin to Coburg-Cortendorf in the Griesbach porcelain factory in June 1944 was also not without problems and highlighted the restrictions that the establishment of an armaments factory could entail for local businesses. Mrs. Emmy Griesbach had voluntarily offered her premises for accommodation.

348 See circular letter from the Coburg Armaments Command dated April 11, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–9.
349 See overview of the development of the armaments economy by the Coburg Armaments Command from March 1943. BA MA RW 21/12–5.
350 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command dated April 30, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–6.
351 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command dated May 31, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–7.

made available for war-related production and was interested in setting up a working group. At a coordination meeting in early July 1944, attended by representatives of the two factories and higher-level departments of the Armaments Inspection and the Gau Economic Chamber, as well as Mayor Greim, district economic advisor Rehlein, and Dr. Weise from the Coburg branch of the Gau Economic Chamber, it was decided that the Griesbach company would only be allowed to continue as a shell manufacturer. To this end, 55 "followers" remained with the Griesbach company itself, while Steatit-Magnesia AG transferred 90 workers and was assigned a further 55 workers who were diverted from the Griesbach company in a ring exchange by the employment office. If the two companies were unable to reach a joint solution on the question of space allocation, the district commissioner in the Bayreuth district, Dr. Draeger, was appointed as mediator. However, it was clearly emphasized that in case of doubt priority must always be given to urgent armaments production and thus to the concerns of Steatit Magnesia.

By the end of 1943, 140 relocations had been approved and carried out in the Coburg Armaments Command area at 125 receiving and 100 transferring companies.[353] By March 1944, a total of 200 companies had been occupied, meaning that almost the entire textile industry and the free capacities of the porcelain and granite factories had been exhausted, and the remaining free space was only suitable for storage.[354] From the spring of 1944 onwards, smaller-scale relocations initially took place in the Coburg area, with the underground relocation of companies already beginning in Bamberg at Bosch and Wieland.[355] By September 1944, the Armaments Command reported the relocation of a total of 500,000 square meters of operating space, some of which was now also operated by the party and Wehrmacht offices.[356] At this point, when the host companies reported that they had reached full capacity, the great wave of relocation began, mainly due to the war events in the West and East and the approaching front lines, as well as the increase in bomb damage. Porcelain factories were now primarily earmarked for further accommodation, but exact figures for this period are no longer available. Since most of the host companies were available in the Coburg Armaments Command area and no relocations took place within the area of responsibility, by far the most relocated companies were accommodated here in comparison to the Nuremberg, Regensburg, and Würzburg Armaments Commands in the area of armaments inspection. [357]

352 See minutes of the inspection of the Julius Griesbach porcelain factory, July 6, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–8. On July 10, 1944, a fire broke out at Griesbach in the building where the male "Eastern workers" were housed. However, production was able to continue as planned both at the Griesbach factory and at Stemag. See report on the fire damage at the Cortendorf porcelain factory on July 10, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–8.

353 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command dated December 31, 1943. BA MA RW 21/12–5.

354 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command dated March 31, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–6. The Nuremberg-based company Zipp-Werke was relocated to the Escora premises, where detonators were subsequently manufactured. See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command dated May 31, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–7.

355 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command dated May 31, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–7.

356 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command dated August 31, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–8.

357 See minutes of the group leader meeting of the Armaments Inspection on July 18, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–8.

In addition to the relocation of operations, various air raid precautions hampered the smooth running and efficiency of production in many ways. In the second quarter of 1943, air raids on West German industry began to disrupt supplies.[358] From March 1944, difficulties with the postal service and telephone lines were added to the mix, which affected the local economy and also the work of the armaments command and could only be partially overcome by initiatives such as a courier service provided by the Hitler Youth, for example for urgent orders, employment notifications, and the like.[359] In addition, operations and production had to be interrupted repeatedly, sometimes daily and, towards the end of the war, several times a day, due to frequent air raid and flying alerts. Since not only the places that were attacked but also those that were overflown were alerted, the alarms could lead to significant short-term production losses. [360]Ultimately, the armaments commands had to react flexibly to the constantly changing strategies of the Allies and took measures that in some cases endangered the safety of armaments workers in order to guarantee the maintenance of production. At an air raid protection conference organized by Air District Command VII to jointly establish air raid protection guidelines, which was also attended by representatives of the Coburg Armaments Command, an attempt was made to organize the internal tasks of factory air raid protection and the air raid protection standby service, which were intended to guarantee the safety of the workforce, in such a way that the already extremely strained workforce of the respective "company staff" was not additionally burdened. In order to maintain production, individual companies were therefore able to apply for exclusion from the air raid warning network in cooperation with the air raid protection area office so that they could continue working despite alarm messages. Only a few companies that were located outside a closed area and could become the target of a systematic attack due to the type of production they carried out were, after a strict selection process, designated as evacuation companies, where the entire "staff" was led out of the company in the event of an air raid.[361] The city administration had already intervened at Brose in 1940, imposing police requirements to fulfill air raid protection obligations in order to adequately protect the workforce in both plants. [362]

As the war progressed, with the actual situation becoming increasingly tense and the presence of numerous workers evacuated from the major cities, experience showed that it was precisely those workers who had been relocated from endangered areas and who in most cases had previous experience of attacks and bombing raids on armaments factories could not be kept in the factories during alarms, despite all instructions to the contrary. Their

358 See the report by the head of the department on the development of the armaments industry situation during the second quarter of 1943. BA MA RW 21/12–5.

359 See Coburg District Retraining Committee to the Bayreuth Gau Training Commission, March 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–12 and circular from the Coburg Armaments Command, September 30, 1943. BA MA RW 21/12–9.

360 In order to avoid disrupting production every time aircraft flew overhead, a decree was issued in August 1942 introducing a public air raid alert system throughout the Reich. Unlike the air raid alarm, the air warning signal was intended to indicate that a minor attack might be imminent, but that economic life and traffic should not be interrupted and that air raid precautions were at the discretion of the population. See Hampe: Luftschutz,
p. 308.

361 Report on the conference organized by Luftgaukommando VII on June 22, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–7.

362 See minutes of the council meeting of November 10, 1939. StadtACo A 8074 a.

The panicked and disorderly exodus from the production facilities ultimately had a noticeable effect on other businesses in the vicinity. On the instructions of the Luftgaukommando, plant managers were therefore urged to counteract this "flight from the factory" as far as possible and to ensure that work continued.[363]

Due to the risk of fire in the event of an actual attack, relocations had to take place within the companies and warehouses, for example, had to be set up and designed in such a way that fire-sensitive production facilities and materials were not stored on the top floors.[364]Tools, gauges, and even typewriters that were not currently in use had to be stored in air-safe locations at all times, as they were irreplaceable in the event of destruction during an air raid.[365] As a precautionary measure to prevent production losses after air raids, companies were also assigned to another company for coordination, to which their production was to be relocated in the event of possible destruction of their facilities. The plant managers drew up plans for the maximum utilization of machine tools and space capacities. [366]

Most serious, however, were the considerable reserves of manpower that had to be freed up for air defense and the practice of air defense measures at all organizational levels. Within the Armaments Command, an experienced team of military personnel and experts was assembled by Captain Pauschmann and Government Building Officer Maaß to repair damage caused by aircraft. [367]However, the daily work of individual armaments workers was also made more difficult by the accumulation of external and internal duties. In addition to their increased working hours, they had to take on tasks for air raid protection or the factory and city guard. At the beginning of 1944, the representative of the Reich Defense Commissioner, SA-Oberführer Gerspacher, conscripted a total of 525 people for various alarm districts to serve in the city guard and its reserve. They were primarily used for blackout measures, but above all for war investigations and raids. [368] As part of the factory air raid protection introduced on the basis of the Air Raid Protection Act, factory air raid protection officers were appointed by the plant manager, who had to draw up a factory air raid protection plan adapted to the individual circumstances of the plant. After a detailed description of the factory facilities, the plan organized the division of the workforce into various air raid protection forces, the expansion of shelters, and the distribution of air raid protection equipment.[369] Fifteen companies in Coburg were assigned to factory air raid protection, and 60 to extended self-protection. [370] Clean-up crews were set up in the individual companies to ensure that production could be resumed as quickly as possible after an air raid. The important tasks of these

363 Report on the conference organized by Air District Command VII on June 22, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–7.
364 See circular from the Coburg Armaments Command dated June 28, 1943. BA MA RW 21/12–9.
365 See circular from the Coburg Armaments Command dated May 6, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–9.
366 See circular letter from the Coburg Armaments Command dated September 30, 1943. BA MA RW 21/12–9.
367 See circular letter from the Coburg Armaments Command dated August 10, 1943. BA MA RW 21/12–9.
368 See inspections based on the command order of January 8, 1944. StACo War Files 5.
369 See Hampe: Luftschutz, pp. 72–76, 452–487. The Reich Industry Group took on the role of central office for training and coordinating the workforce, making use of so-called factory air raid protection liaison offices at state, district, and local level.
370 See inspections based on the command order of January 8, 1944. StACo War Files 5. Extended self-air defense was established for those businesses and agencies that did not yet require factory air defense, but for which self-air defense alone was not sufficient. See Hampe: Luftschutz, pp. 80 f.

Special units were centrally regulated by the Armaments Command. Despite the shortage of manpower, foreign workers were not allowed to be recruited for this purpose.

In addition to factory air defense, the workforce was also required to provide factory security. Defense officers and factory security personnel were to be prepared for appropriate defensive tasks, not only against acts of sabotage by foreign workers, but also in the event of an attack by enemy aircraft. Part of plant security included shooting practice and training the relevant teams in the use of weapons, both tasks being carried out by military units or the local police station. In February 1944, following a decree issued by the Inspector General for Water and Energy on September 1, 1943, workers were to be made available to central power plants for air raid protection work. With the approval of the mayor, ten armaments workers were assigned to the Coburg municipal works for four to six weeks. Both the Trutz & Co. car body factory and the companies Alfred Wagner, Adolf Waldrich, and Dietz & Sohn Neustadt were to be called upon for this special service, although the Waldrich company objected to the secondment of an armaments worker.

Coburg was actually involved in the air war during an air raid on August 17, 1940, in which two residential buildings were damaged and an enemy aircraft had to make an emergency landing. The three occupants were taken prisoner.[374] On September 12, 1944 another air raid was carried out on Coburg airfield, during which three American Aero-Cobra and Mustang fighter planes, coming from Meiningen and Hildburghausen, approached the Brandenstein-sebene from three different directions in a low-level flight and carried out seven attacks on the airfield with their onboard weapons within about eight minutes. The aircraft hangar caught fire, as did one aircraft at the edge of the forest and two in the hangar. The planes also hit the freight station, d a m a g i n g a locomotive. One of the American aircraft probably grazed the edge of the forest near Bausenberg and crashed 100 meters east of Cortendorf, killing the pilot.[375] After that, there were no further attacks on the city until shortly before the end of the war.[376]

The mobilization strategies implemented in Coburg ultimately illustrate not only the importance of the local level in maintaining the war economy. It also becomes apparent that mobilization practices were characterized by constant transgressions. These were noticeable not only in relation to the goals set by the regime itself, for example with regard to women's employment, but in almost all areas of the economy and the world of work. The increasing neglect of basic occupational safety standards, particularly in the negotiation of air raid protection

371 See circular from the Coburg Armaments Command dated May 9, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–9.

372 See circular from the Coburg Armaments Command dated April 16, 1943. BA MA RW 21/12–14.

373 See Armaments Command Coburg to the companies Trutz & Co., Alfred Wagner, Adolf Waldrich, and Dietz & Sohn, February 21, 1944; Adolf Waldrich to the Armaments Command Coburg, February 25, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–18

374 See War Diary of the Armaments Inspection of Military District XIII, August 17, 1940. BA MA RW 20/13–2.

375 See Armaments Command Coburg to Armaments Inspection XIII, September 13, 1944, and war diary of the Armaments Command Coburg dated September 12, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–8.

376 See Chapter V4.

and productivity became apparent, the ruthlessness associated with the acquisition of resources became evident. However, this uncompromising and radical approach was directed even more strongly against the foreigners who were recruited for labor than against the German workforce.

2.4 Use of foreign workers

While the mobilization of the German population for the war was achieved through a combination of self-mobilization and external pressure, one entire group of people was primarily coerced and repressed in order to be recruited and exploited for the German war effort. Shortly before the end of World War II, there were over eight million foreigners in the German Reich, accounting for 11% of the total population and nearly a third of the working population at that time. In total, around 13.5 million foreigners were deployed to work in the German Reich by the end of the war.[377]Even before the war began, the recruitment of foreign workers had been a common means of compensating for shortages in German industry and agriculture. After the occupation of Poland in 1939, workers were recruited throughout the German Reich's sphere of influence, with the exception of North Africa and Norway. In addition, bilateral agreements with allied states such as Italy, Croatia, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria regulated the recruitment of workers. After the Polish campaign, in the wake of which Polish prisoners of war and other Polish civilian workers were brought to the German Reich, French and Walloon prisoners of war were added as a result of the Western campaign. The subsequent Eastern Campaign then brought a new and far larger wave of Yugoslav, Baltic, Ukrainian, and Soviet workers to the German Reich. After Mussolini's fall in July 1943 and the signing of the armistice between Italy and the Allies, Italian soldiers were also brought to Germany as so-called military internees for labor. The workers employed in the German Reich thus consisted of a large number of groups of people with different legal and national backgrounds, ranging from foreign civilian workers to prisoners of war and concentration camp inmates. The recruitment of foreigners in occupied Europe also ranged from active advertising and subsequent more or less voluntary employment in the German Reich to conscription, forced recruitment, and ruthless deportation. Even for many of those who had come to the German Reich of their own accord, the coercive nature of the work resulted from the fact that, as the war progressed, foreign workers were unable to terminate their employment on their own initiative or influence their working conditions. This was particularly true after the

377 See Spoerer, Mark: NS-Zwangsarbeiter im Deutschen Reich (Nazi forced laborers in the German Reich). Statistics from September 30, 1944, by employment office district. In: VfZ 4 (2001), pp. 665–684, here p. 665. On forced labor in the Third Reich and the regulations governing the treatment of workers, which are not reproduced in detail here, see Spoerer, Mark: Zwangsarbeit unter dem Hakenkreuz. Ausländische Zivilarbeiter, Kriegsgefangene und Häftlinge im Deutschen Reich und im besetzten Europa 1939–1945. Stuttgart, Munich 2001; Herbert, Ulrich: Foreign Workers. Politics and Practice of the "Use of Foreigners" in the War Economy of the Third Reich. Bonn 1999 and Grossmann, Anton: Foreign and Forced Laborers in Bavaria 1939–1945. In: VfZ 34 (1986), pp. 481–521.

The appointment of Fritz Sauckel as General Representative for Labor Deployment in 1942 triggered a mass deportation of Eastern European workers, resulting in a significant increase in the number of forced laborers in Coburg.

Since 1941, the German war economy had been virtually dependent on foreign labor. The particular challenge in employing "foreign workers"[379] and prisoners of war on the "home front" arose from the fact that although foreigners were not part of the "national community," their labor was essential for maintaining Nazi rule, so that a certain kind of integration had to take place. In dealing with these "outsiders," the rigid bipolar system of inclusive and exclusive behavior had to be readjusted. In order to maintain economic strength, it was necessary to allow for breaks in the prescribed behavior and contradictions. The discrepancy between inclusion and exclusion in the employment of foreign forced laborers and the tension that repeatedly became apparent in everyday life and in working together had to be renegotiated on the spot by the actors involved.

2.4.1 Extent of foreign labor deployment

On April 11, 1940, companies in the armaments command area were asked for the first time to report their need for foreign workers to the employment offices.[380] The armaments command welcomed the use of prisoners or foreign workers.[381]

378 Mark Spoerer distinguishes between four groups of workers: "1. Voluntary foreign civilian workers. They were able to leave Germany throughout the war [...]. This threat of emigration alone gave them opportunities to influence their living conditions [...]. This group includes workers from the allied states of Bulgaria, Italy (until 1943), Croatia, Romania, Slovakia, and Hungary, from neutral Spain, and from occupied Denmark. In addition, many workers from Western and Southern Europe who came to Germany voluntarily in the early years of the war can be counted among them. 2. Forced laborers with some influence on their living conditions and a normal or only slightly increased probability of death. Regardless of whether they had originally come to Germany voluntarily or under duress, they were subject to compulsory service but had little chance of improving their living conditions. These included civilian workers from the occupied territories outside Poland and the Soviet Union, [...] as well as prisoners of war, mainly from Belgium, France, Great Britain, and Yugoslavia. 3. Forced laborers with no significant influence on their living conditions and with a significantly above-average mortality rate. These included civilian workers from Poland and the Soviet Union, as well as Polish non-Jewish and Italian prisoners of war. 4. Forced laborers with no influence whatsoever on their living conditions and extremely high mortality rates. These included Polish Jewish and Soviet prisoners of war, prisoners from concentration camps and labor education camps, and "working Jews" from forced labor camps and ghettos. Spoerer: Zwangsarbeit, p. 16 f.

379 In contemporary usage, foreign civilian workers were referred to as "foreign workers" or "foreign workers," although the term was colloquially used for all foreign workers, including prisoners of war. For this reason, the term is highlighted here. The umbrella term "forced laborers," commonly used in academia, describes the entire conglomerate of workers who came to Germany, in some cases voluntarily, but mostly under duress, as well as the masses of prisoners of war who were put to work and who, for the most part, had little to no influence on the conditions of their work and deployment. On the use of terminology, see Eitz, Thorsten; Stötzel, Georg: Wörterbuch der "Vergangenheitsbewältigung" (Dictionary of "Coming to Terms with the Past"). The Nazi past in public language use, Volume 2. Hildesheim 2009, pp. 95–108.

380 For the general guidelines of the Nazi regime regarding the provision, accommodation, and treatment of foreign workers, see Spoerer: Zwangsarbeiter.

381 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command from April 7–13, 1940. BA MA RW 21/12–2.

workers to solve the labor shortage at that time and subsequently pushed for its expansion. Applications for the allocation of foreign workers were always submitted by companies via the employment offices. At the same time, the application forms were also to be forwarded to the OKH via the armaments commands so that it could also support them.[382] Companies had to provide information on both the urgency of production and the local conditions for the deployment of foreign workers, such as food, accommodation, and the availability of interpreters.[383] At the same time, individual companies and their employees were repeatedly obliged not to report on the use of prisoners of war or other foreign workers in their annual reports or in any other way to the public. [384]

When it came to the allocation of workers, the armaments and food industries had absolute priority over the needs of the service sector, for example. Once the gaps here had been filled, small businesses, craft businesses, administrative authorities, restaurants, and private households could also apply for the allocation of foreign workers.[385]Politically reliable families with many children were therefore given "Eastern workers" as domestic helpers, who were brought to the German Reich specifically for this purpose. [386]The Reichsnährstand was responsible for foreign workers in agriculture, and the DAF was responsible for all other economic sectors.

In addition to the Polish workers who had been employed in agriculture since before the war began, female Polish workers were deployed for the first time in early 1940 in the Coburg armaments command. In the spring and summer of 1940, numerous Polish farm workers were again brought to Coburg on special trains and handed over to the employment office. In August 1940, around 75,000 prisoners of war were also employed throughout the Nuremberg Military District XIII, almost exclusively French and Belgian nationals,[387] who, in the case of Coburg, were assigned from the main camp (Stalag) in Hammelburg. However, according to the assessment of the Armaments Command, the deployment of prisoners of war was initially inadequate in that they were not yet being employed sufficiently according to their respective professions and were therefore not being used efficiently.[388] In addition, planning the deployment of foreign workers often proved difficult because the promised contingents of foreigners were frequently not realized and the corresponding transports did not arrive as promised.[389] The accommodation of the foreigners and the defense regulations of

382 See circular from the Coburg Rescue Command dated May 26, 1941. BA MA RW 21/12–14.

383 S e e war diary of the Coburg Armament Command from October 1–31, 1941. BA MA RW 21/12–3.

384 See circular letter from the Coburg Armaments Command dated April 18, 1941. BA MA RW 21/12–14.

385 See inspections based on the command order of January 8, 1944. StACo War Files 5. For information on the use of foreign workers in Coburg's skilled trades, see in particular StACo Chamber of Skilled Trades 225 and 227.

386 According to the Coburg residents' register, there were also a number of craft businesses and private households that employed foreign workers. However, their exact number can no longer be determined.

387 See war diary of the Armaments Inspection of Military District XIII dated August 31, 1940. BA MA RW 20/13–2.

388 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command from July 1 to September 30, 1940. BA MA RW 21/12–2.

389 In July 1943, the Armaments Inspection of Military District XIII was promised an allocation of approximately 5,000 Western workers, of whom only 700 arrived and were distributed among the armaments commands and corresponding factories.

In the fall of 1940, a decree requiring the strict separation of prisoners of war and foreign civilian workers in armaments factories initially made it difficult to implement the use of foreign workers in everyday practice. Nevertheless, initial experiences with the use of prisoners of war were extremely positive, with their willingness to work being particularly highlighted.[391]

After the labor situation had already worsened in most companies in November 1941, the Armaments Command urged them to familiarize themselves with the use of Soviet prisoners of war, which would soon become the norm.[392] Since the beginning of 1942, the city administration had also been extensively involved in the employment and accommodation of "Eastern workers," and Mayor Greim assigned all administrative tasks and orders to the Administrative Police Office as the lead department.[393] Ideological concerns about the "Russian subhumans" had to give way to the rational constraints of the reality of war. By the spring of 1942, there were then about 2,000 "civilian Russians" and 1,000 prisoners of war were deployed in the armaments command area, between July and September 2,600 "civilian Russians" and 1,400 prisoners of war, including 400 officers, and from October to December 2,259 "civilian Russians" and 1,353 prisoners of war were deployed.[394] The first Soviet civilian workers arrived in the city of Coburg in August 1942. Their number increased from 28 to 102 by March 1943 and, after a brief decline, to 319 by September 1944.[395] In order to organize the deployment of "Eastern workers" more efficiently, in March 1943 the Armaments Command instructed companies employing more than 20 "Eastern workers" to appoint a special worker to supervise their deployment, who would work with the company managers to oversee the necessary measures. This included, among other things, assigning "Eastern workers" to tasks that corresponded to their level of knowledge, selecting group leaders from among the Soviet civilian workers, and granting benefits.[396] In September 1943, the entire armaments command ultimately had a total of 24,696 employees, 18,645 of whom were German nationals, including 9,124 men and 9,521 women. 6,051 foreigners. Of these, 1,871 were "Eastern workers," including 671 men and 1,200 women, 2,103 other foreign civilian workers, 1,579 men and 524 women, as well as 1,397 Soviet prisoners of war and 680 other prisoners of war.[397] By the end of May 1944, with a total workforce of 44,403, the ratio had changed significantly to 24,105 Germans compared to 10,149 foreign workers.

390 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command from October 1–31, 1940. BA MA RW 21/12–2 and war diary of the Armaments Inspection of Military District XIII from October 30, 1940. BA MA RW 20/13–2.

391 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command from October 1–31, 1940, and from December 1–31, 1940. BA MA RW 21/12–2.

392 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command from December 1–31, 1941. BA MA RW 21/12–3.

393 See order issued by Mayor Greim on June 4, 1942. StadtACo A 8586.

394 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command from April 1 to June 30, 1942, from July 1 to September 30, 1942, and from October 1 to December 31, 1942. BA MA RW 21/12–4 and war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command dated June 30, 1943. BA MA RW 21/12–5.

395 See Registration of foreign civilian workers from January 1 to December 1, 1942. StANü Government of Upper and Middle Franconia, submission 1978 1773.

396 See Circular from the Coburg Armaments Command dated March 18, 1943. BA MA RW 21/12–9.

397 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command dated September 30, 1943. BA MA RW 21/12–5.

postponed, with the "Eastern workers" comprising 1,492 men and 2,095 women, other civilian workers comprising 2,536 men and 694 women, and 1,633 Soviet prisoners of war and 1,699 other prisoners of war. [398]

In September 1944, the number of foreign workers in the entire district of Coburg was 2,674 out of a total population of 52,603. This meant that the district had a high percentage of foreign workers compared to its Upper Franconian neighbors, which was mainly due to the great need for additional labor in the industrial settlements in the area around Neustadt bei Coburg.[399] By contrast, the city of Coburg, with a population of 32,552 at that time, reported 850 foreign workers, which made it, together with Naila, the least industrialized city in Upper Franconia and the lowest in terms of the use of forced laborers.[400] According to the city administration, the foreign civilian workers consisted of one American, five Belgians, three Bulgarians, three Danes, 186 French, 15 Dutch, 22 Italians, three Yugoslavs, six Croats, four Lithuanians, 186 Poles, ten Romanians, 319 "civilian Russians," four Swiss, four Slovaks, five Spaniards, one Serb, four Hungarians, 55 Ukrainians, and 15 stateless persons. [401] Of the foreign workers, about 470 were housed in camps and the rest in commercial enterprises and private households. At that time, 380 prisoners of war, including 80 Soviet officers, were deployed in Coburg. [402]

Accommodation for foreign workers

The initial problems in providing accommodation and barracks for the arriving workers had been resolved by around the fourth quarter of 1942. The foreign workers were mostly housed in residential camps. From

398 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command dated May 31, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–6. See Appendix 4: Employees in the Coburg Armaments Command area.

399 In total, 24 Belgians, 4 Bulgarians, 7 Danes, 21 Estonians, 415 French, 59 Dutch, 82 Italians, 15 Yugoslavs, 111
Croatians, 39 Latvians, 100 Lithuanians, 2 Norwegians, 1,666 Poles, 86 Romanians, 1,664 Russians, 22 Serbs, 64 Slovaks, 43 Slovenians, 4 Spaniards, 99 Czechs, and 60 Hungarians passed through, were employed here, and were therefore subject to health insurance, as evidenced by the records of the Allgemeine Ortskrankenkasse Coburg (Coburg General Local Health Insurance Fund). Of the total of 4,587 foreign workers, 2,710 were men and 1,877 were women. See Arolsen Archives Foreigners' lists of the AOK Coburg. Since some of the original tables are difficult to read and contain conflicting information, there may be minor discrepancies.

400 For a comparison with Upper Franconia, see: Bald, Albrecht: Forced Labor and Arms Production in Upper Franconia 1939–1945. Conditions in the administrative district with special consideration of the city of Hof and the districts of Rehau and Wunsiedel. In: Ibid.; Neblich, Esther (ed.): Forced Laborers in Upper Franconia 1939–1945. Conditions in Northern Upper Franconia. Bayreuth 2008, pp. 11–147, here pp. 30 f.

401 See Records of foreign civilian workers from June 1941 to September 1944. StANü Government of Upper and Middle Franconia, submitted in 1978, 1773–1776. The nationalities were taken from the original sources. During the period documented, the number of workers increased from 74 to 850. The Coburg businesses and companies that employed more than 10 foreign civilian workers from September 1941 onwards were: Sep. 1941: Franz Heid, Autopark; Dec. 1941: Max Brose & Co; Feb. 1942: Konrad Gagel; Aug. 1942: Georg Bauer, tenant farmer at Ernstfarm estate; Dec. 1942: Eu-terpe, Pianoforto and furniture factory; Jan. 1943: Franz Hammerschmidt; Franz Dornburg; Feb. 1943: Hermann Ros; Mar. 1943: Langenstein & Schemann; June 1943: Julius Griesbach; Sep. 1943: Edwin Zapf; Oct. 1943: Glaswolle; Jan. 1944: Johann Lorenz; Reichbahn Betriebswerk; June 1944: Stemag Berlin-Pankow in Cortendorf; Johann Gemmer & Co.; July 1944: Coburg Dairy. See Appendix 5: Foreign Civilian Workers in Coburg.

402 See inspections based on the command order of July 10 and September 13, 1944. StACo War Files 5.

There, the workers were taken to their place of work every day. Several companies also set up barracks on their premises or used unused rooms within the factories as dormitories. More privileged foreign workers from Western or allied countries were initially also able to rent private apartments. However, due to the worsening housing shortage, this option was restricted by September 1944, so that from then on, all workers were to be accommodated in company-owned camps or, if individual companies did not have their own camps for foreigners, in the camps of other companies.[403]A list compiled by the municipal police department showed that in June 1944 there were a total of 16 foreign camps within the city limits of Coburg, housing a total of 462 foreign workers, including men, women, and children. It is not clear what criteria were used to compile this list, which is demonstrably incomplete. In fact, there were a far greater number of smaller, camp-like accommodations for foreign workers scattered throughout the city, but their exact extent cannot be determined in detail.

In the summer of 1940, under the authority of Mayor Rehlein himself, the city set up a prisoner-of-war camp in the Wüstenahorn forest recreation center, which until then had been used by the Chamber of Crafts and the NSV as a children's home and was chosen for the accommodation of foreigners because of its isolated location. In June 1940, the Coburg employment office calculated that the city needed 224 prisoners of war for various construction and carpentry companies, which made it seem sensible to set up a closed collection point and thus establish a separate prisoner-of-war camp. To this end, the commander of the Langwasser prisoner-of-war camp agreed with the city to allocate 150 French prisoners, with 50 men initially being transported to Coburg on July 1 to prepare the camp for the arrival of the remaining prisoners, for example by installing bars on the windows and barbed wire. Ultimately, space was created for 160 men, which was filled by 153 Frenchmen and seven sergeants from the guard unit who were part of work detail 1556. The city itself was responsible for setting up the camp and covering its running costs, while the Wehrmacht covered all costs for food, health and accident insurance, and the guard units. The city's financial expenditure was offset by withholding the prisoners' hourly wage of RM 0.61, minus a 70% levy paid to the Wehrmacht. [405] The camp management was

403 See Secret State Police to the Mayor of Coburg, February 28, 1944; memo from the Residents' Registration Office dated October 10, 1944. StadtACo A 8582. The city was extremely hesitant in implementing the orders. The reason for this can be found in the above-described dispute between Mayor Greim and the Armaments Command regarding the relocation of armaments factories and the corresponding vacating of living space for the workers who had been brought in. See also the list of private apartments occupied by foreigners dated September 13, 1944. StadtACo A 8582.

404 See Appendix 6: List of camp leaders for foreign workers and 7: List of foreign camps in the Coburg city area in June 1944.

405 The city's running costs included the payment of the camp administrator, the camp cook, and additional security guards, as well as camp rent and payments for electricity, water, cleaning, food transport, and the filling of straw sacks. See memo from Mayor Rehlein,
June 24, 1940. StadtACo A 15902/1. From October 1942 onwards, French prisoners of war were bathed in the shower facilities of the municipal utilities on the orders of the mayor. See Mayor Coburg to the Wüstenahorn camp administration, October 23, 1942. StadtACo A 15902/1.

In addition to camp administrator Chief Inspector Schaarschmidt, building inspector Schüßler was appointed in August 1940 to supervise the camp in terms of construction and hygiene, as well as to process applications for work assignments, thus acting as a link between individual work sites or companies and the administration.[406] The workers were primarily employed for public purposes such as road works or the expansion of the sewer system at the city planning office and in construction companies, as well as in the municipal works. From the collection camp for French prisoners of war, workers were sometimes also distributed to the slaughterhouse, the sewage treatment plant, the municipal gardening department, the state foundation, the dairy farm, the Ernst farm, the savings bank, and, in some cases, through the mediation of the Chamber of Crafts, to a number of craft businesses as compensation for employees who had been drafted.[407] In the event of prisoners of war being transferred to the Ebelsbach prison hospital or a large number of workers being assigned, such as 21 men to the Brose company in November 1940, the Hammelburg main camp immediately sent replacements. Although the number of prisoners of war in the Wüstenahorn camp increased somewhat over the course of the following months, the city had to reject the numerous requests for the allocation of prisoners of war from Coburg companies struggling to retain workers, especially from 1941 onwards, as the available workforce was already being used for urgent public contracts.[408]In April 1943, some employers were also able to register the extent to which they could accommodate and feed French prisoners, so that they could be transferred to civilian status. As a result, by the summer of 1944, the camp was occupied by only about 50 men. [409]

In the fall of 1940, the Wüstenahorn camp also had a workshop in Seifartshof, and from February 1941 onwards, it had a branch camp in Mährenhausen, which was mainly used for prisoners who were employed in agriculture.[410]By the beginning of 1941 at the latest, the city also decided to set up another prisoner-of-war camp in Ketschendorf in the former stable building of the Gunzenheimer estate for the assignment of prisoners to larger construction sites, which could accommodate over 100 men. The administration and catering for the new barracks was co-organized by the Wüstenahorn camp, with lunch being brought from there to the individual construction sites and only morning coffee and evening meals being prepared in Ketschendorf by a prisoner-of-war cook.[411] In order to improve coordination in the transfer of prisoners of war from the municipal camp to various armaments factories, which had not always gone smoothly, a verbal discussion always took place between representatives of the employment office, work detail 1556, Mayor Rehlein, and Inspector Schüßler from the city before the workers were distributed.[412]

In the summer of 1942, the city also set up additional barracks camps in Ketschendorf to house "Eastern workers," who were distributed among smaller businesses.

406 See memo from Mayor Rehlein, August 26, 1940. StadtACo A 15902/1.
407 See inquiries and distribution lists StadtACo A 15902/1 and 15902/2 and Coburg resident registry StadtACo.
408 See memo dated November 19, 1940. StadtACo A 15902/1.
409 See note from the city planning office, April 14, 1943, and Mayor Greim to the city planning office, July 24, 1944. StadtACo A 15902/1.
410 See memo from the City Planning Office dated February 4, 7, 1941, and March 31, 1941. StadtACo A 15902/1.
411 See memo from the City Planning Office, undated. StadtACo A 15902/1.
412 See memo from Mayor Rehlein dated February 14, 1941. StadtACo A 15902/1.

should. Initially, the transit camp was intended for 55 workers from the companies Ros, Kaeser, Bruno Dietze, Friedrich Trostdorf, Brückner, Schamberger, Gemmer, and Städtische Werke. For the city itself, there was also a penal camp in Ketschendorf, which was guarded by men from the police force and supervised by the armed camp commander Brockardt. The 14 Soviet prisoners of war in the penal camp in Ketschendorf were employed by the city building authority, were regularly accompanied to their place of work in the morning by designated guards, supervised while they worked, and returned to the custody of the camp guard in the evening.[414] However, after the police officers assigned to guard the camp were temporarily withdrawn to Schweinfurt between July and August 1944, it was no longer possible to guarantee the proper custody of the "Eastern workers" at night, so that individual non-commissioned officers and men from the city guard and air raid protection were called in at night. On August 19, 1944, the prisoners were finally transferred to a communal camp below Ketschenanger.

In addition, the Coburg transport service employed 40 Soviet prisoners of war with a three-man guard and barracks at the freight station. Female "Eastern workers" were employed at the state hospital, the "Adolf Hitler House" and many restaurants in Coburg.

Employment in the private sector

In the private sector, the employment of foreign workers was always linked to economic considerations. Efforts to maintain their own businesses and operate profitably also affected the workers assigned to companies. The framework within which companies could employ foreigners was also characterized by constraints and simultaneous scope for action, which was negotiated in complex interinstitutional communication with, for example, the employment office or the armaments command. In three of the city's most important individual armaments companies, the employment of foreign workers varied greatly. In May 1944, the Brose company consisted of a "following" of 827 people, comprising 210 German men, 400 German women, 17 French prisoners of war, and 200 Soviet prisoners of war, who had been working for the company since the summer of 1942. 150 of the Soviet workers were employed at Plant II. The Wehrmacht assigned a 16-man guard unit to the company for the Soviet prisoner-of-war camp. [417] Also in 1942, 60 Croatian civilian workers were already employed by the company, initially living in a work and residential camp. However, after some of them had expressed a desire to move into private apartments, the company had allowed them to do so, but soon discovered that the apartment was being used as a base for the escape of several workers. Since Ernst Jühling, the chairman for cultural affairs at the Max Brose & Co. metalworks, also considered the apartment to be

413 See memo from the police dated August 19, 1942. StadtACo A 8586.

414 See police memo dated July 24, 1944. StACo War Files 4.

415 See police memo dated August 20, 1942. StadtACo A 8586.

416 See Heusler, Andreas; Spoerer, Mark; Trischler, Helmuth: Armament and Forced Labor in the Third Reich: An Introduction. In: Heusler, Andreas; Spoerer, Mark; Trischler, Helmuth (eds.): Armaments, War Economy, and Forced Labor in the Third Reich. Munich 2010, pp. 1–14, here pp. 1f.

417 See Review of the defense plans of the Brose company, August 28, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–8 and announcement by Max Brose on May 12, 1942. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg City B 312.

described as unhygienic, he asked the city to forcibly bring the workers back. However, as privileged foreign workers, Croatians were able to decide for themselves where they lived, so the city police did not intervene in this case. Between 1940 and 1943, the company also maintained a camp for French prisoners of war at Saarlandstraße 5, now Judenberg, with over 40 beds and two guard posts, which was also used in part by the Trutz company. After the camp was cleared, the French prisoners of war were transferred to the *Kapelle* inn.

At the machine tool manufacturer A. Waldrich, the "workforce" in September 1944 consisted of 411 people, including 194 German men and 58 German women, as well as 159 foreigners, including 150 men. For June 1944, the presence of 21 "Eastern workers," 35 French, one Spaniard, one Italian, one Belgian, 33 Czechs, and two Ukrainians was reported in detail. Throughout the war, the company primarily employed French, "Eastern workers," Poles, and Czechs, but also Belgians, Italians, Spaniards, Hungarians, and Ukrainians, and toward the end of the war, Latvians and Lithuanians as well, most of whom were housed in a camp near the factory.[420] For the deployment of the first "Eastern workers" in the company, the plant manager von Bovert initially employed three people from the plant security service and two men hired by the company. In January 1943, a larger number of "Eastern workers" must have been employed by the company again, as 215 identification badges for "Eastern workers" were initially issued for the company, and 30 more in July 1943.

In the summer of 1944, the N. Trutz car body factory had a "workforce" of 386 men, with 204 German men, 41 German women, 30 Soviet officers, and 9 French prisoners of war working in Plant I. Plant II, which was located on open land in Ketschendorf, employed 32 German men, 20 German women, and 50 Soviet officers. A camp for the 30 Soviet officers employed at the factory was housed in the factory building itself, where the guards' quarters were also located. At Plant II, a small barrack was attached to the east side of the company for the nine French prisoners of war, as well as another camp for the Soviet officers. [422]The first Soviet workers, who had been assigned to the company in the summer of 1942, were transferred to the Waldrich company by September 1942. At the beginning of 1943, the company again requested 45 identification badges for "Eastern workers," so it can be assumed that a corresponding number of "Eastern workers" were employed here.

418 See report by the chairman for ethnic issues at the Max Brose & Co Jühling metalworks to the city of Coburg, June 3, 1942. StABa M30 840. The district representative for ethnic issues, Treuheit, attempted to resolve the matter through health policy measures. The company itself dismissed the Croatian couple who had been assigned the apartment for "continuous agitation" and terminated their employment.

419 See communication from the city planning office dated March 16, 1943; Brose company to Arthur Catterfeld, July 17, 1940, 10. September 1940, November 21, 1940, February 11, 1942, March 23, 1942. StadtACo A 15349.

420 See review of the defense plans of the Waldrich company, September 4, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–8; list of foreigner camps in June 1944. StACo war files 3 and resident registry of the city of Coburg StadtACo. The contemporary designation of nationalities was used here.

421 See memo from the Coburg police dated September 2, 1942, and list of identification badges issued to Eastern European workers in January and July 1943. StadtACo A 8586.

422 See review of the defense plans for the N. Trutz car body factory, September 4, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–8.

423 See memo from the Coburg police dated September 2, 1942, and list of identification tags issued to Eastern European workers in January 1943. StadtACo A 8586.

Jewish forced laborers were also employed in Coburg factories after the members of the Coburg Jewish community who were still present in the city in 1941 were forced to work in the Griesbach porcelain factory in Cortendorf and the Creidlitz porcelain factory until their deportation.[424] From September 1944, 400 Hungarian Jewish women from the Ravensbrück concentration camp were also employed at the Siemens cable and wire factory in Neustadt near Coburg in a camp set up specifically for this purpose, which was organizationally assigned to the Buchenwald concentration camp and guarded by a dozen SS men and two dozen women from Neustadt and the surrounding areawho had been trained for this purpose in Ravensbrück.

2.4.2 Supply and treatment

Initially, it was particularly those arriving in the area of the armaments command who were "Eastern workers" were in such poor physical condition and afflicted with so many illnesses that they were initially of little help due to their extreme exhaustion. However, it was already apparent that the "Eastern workers" could perform remarkably well when well fed. It soon became clear that the ideological premises of treating the "Russian subhumans" with contempt conflicted with the overriding goal of maintaining war production and thus maximizing the exploitation of their labor. The treatment of foreign workers and prisoners of war thus had to be constantly negotiated between the use of coercion or external control and the increase of their working capacity within the factories. After initial experiences with Soviet prisoners of war, the Coburg Armaments Command therefore recommended that better food could be used to increase productivity. [427] Subsequently, the use of "Eastern workers" in particular repeatedly highlighted the extent to which wartime pragmatism required the guidelines for the treatment of foreigners to be adapted to everyday working life.

Rules of conduct

The living conditions of the workers depended primarily on their ethnic origin and thus their rank in Nazi racial ideology. The workers from allied and neutral states such as Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Hungary, and, until 1943, Italy, as well as workers from occupied northern, western, and southeastern European countries such as Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Czechia, and

424 See Fromm: Jews, p. 127.

425 See the war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command dated September 11, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–8. For information on the camp in Neustadt near Coburg, see also: Axmann, Rainer: Neustadt bei Coburg. In: Benz, Wolfgang; Distel, Barbara: Der Ort des Terrors. Geschichte der nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslager, Band 3: Sachsenhausen, Buchenwald. Munich 2006, p. 533f. and Kalter, Isolde: Éva Jenöné Kovács und Györgyné Barnai, zwei Ungarinnen im Neustadter Außenlager des Konzentrationslagers Buchenwald. In: Franger, Gaby (ed.): "Be reasonable!" Women in Coburg's history. Coburg 2008,
pp. 238–247. On the use of forced laborers in the factory, see also: StABa M 30, 1318.

426 See History of the Armaments Inspection of Military District XIII from October 1, 1940, to December 31, 1941. BA MA RW 20/13–9.

427 See the war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command from October 1 to 31, 1941. BA MA RW 21/12–3.

Serbia and Greece. At least in theory, these foreign civilian workers were treated equally to German workers and were not completely restricted in their freedom of movement. In contrast, ethnic Poles and so-called "Eastern workers" were subject to additional discrimination. In particular, they were required to work extremely hard for lower pay, which was lost in the event of illness. At the same time, with the aim of subjecting the "foreigners" to strict control, a labeling requirement with ethnic badges was imposed, according to which Poles had to wear a clearly recognizable "P" badge and "Eastern workers" an "Ost" badge on their clothing.[429]Contact between Germans and "racially inferior" workers was to be avoided in the work process and was prohibited during leisure time. In addition, Poles and Eastern workers were prohibited from visiting public institutions and events, as well as from using public transportation and bicycles. A catalog of penalties was implemented to enforce the control and coercive measures, with the provisions of the "Eastern Workers Decrees" being stricter than those of the Polish decrees.

The treatment of prisoners of war, on the other hand, was regulated by the provisions of the Hague Convention on Land Warfare and the Geneva Convention, which, for example, stipulated that enlisted personnel should not be required to work longer hours than civilian workers and should be given at least 24 hours of rest per week.[431] However, the extent to which these international law requirements were observed in practice in the German Reich when it came to the use of prisoners depended once again on the origin of the soldiers, with the result that they were only applied with restrictions in the case of French and Yugoslav prisoners, and not at all in the case of Polish and Soviet prisoners of war and Italian military internees. [432] In July 1941, for example, Mayor Rehlein informed the companies to which the city had assigned prisoners of war from its camp that, with his permission, they could be used for harvest work and, in emergencies, also on Sundays and beyond normal working hours. [433]The increasing difficulties of the war also undermined some of the requirements regarding prisoners of war. With regard to French prisoners of war, the Coburg Armaments Command pointed out to companies in March 1944 that they must also perform work that was prohibited under Article 31 of the Geneva Convention and could be punished if they refused.[434] In order to completely circumvent the provisions of the Prisoners of War Convention and the costly supervision of prisoners during work assignments, the German Reich changed the status of many prisoners of war to that of civilian workers. In this way, those affected were able to

428 Who exactly was considered Polish was redefined by the German bureaucracy during the various territorial changes in the course of the war, with exceptions being made time and again. See Spoerer: Zwangsarbeit, p. 93 f.

429 See RGBl. I 1940, p. 141.

430 See various instructions, leaflets, and decrees on the use of "Eastern workers" by the Gestapo in Nuremberg-Fürth. StadtACo A 8586 and Spoerer: Zwangsarbeit, pp. 90–99.

431 See RGBl. II 1934, pp. 227–257.

432 According to the Reich government's understanding, prisoners from Poland, the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and Italy in particular were not subject to international law.

433 See circular letter from Mayor Rehleins, July 16, 1941. StadtACo A 15902/1.

434 This did not apply to Belgian prisoners of war, however, who could be replaced by the relevant employment offices in such cases. See circular from the Coburg Armaments Command dated March 29, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–9.

On the one hand, they were granted more freedoms to boost motivation, but on the other hand, they also lost all protection under international law.

However, with Sauckel taking office and the war situation worsening after the defeat at Stalingrad, a rethinking of the situation of foreign workers began, as the German economy's dependence on additional labor could no longer be denied. On the one hand, coercive measures for the recruitment of foreigners were tightened, making it impossible for them to return to their home countries even when the employment contracts of civilian workers expired, and security police surveillance was expanded. On the other hand, the Reich leadership responsible for labor deployment took small steps toward ordering more humane treatment, especially of "Eastern workers," in order to maintain their labor and productivity. The overriding principle remained "to extract as much work performance as possible from the prisoners of war from the Eastern peoples."[436] A leaflet on "general principles for the treatment of foreign workers employed in the Reich" from April 1943, which was distributed in the factories, prohibited corporal punishment and insults and prescribed adequate food, warm clothing, and appropriate accommodation, since, according to Nazi diction, "even the most primitive human being [...] has a keen sense of justice."[437] Measures such as the introduction of a performance-based food rationing system, where rations were based on work performance, or the privileging of high-performing workers were intended to further support this project. [438]

Despite the top-down, strictly hierarchical guidelines for dealing with foreign workers and prisoners of war, it was also a specific feature of the deployment of foreign workers that the living conditions of individual workers depended just as much on the implementation of the National Socialist rules by the people in their working environment, especially by the plant managers and the assigned camp leaders. Companies had considerable leeway here, especially when it came to the central issue of food. Smaller businesses in particular, which were not monitored by a sophisticated control system and were less hierarchical and more personally organized in their treatment of foreign workers, often had more scope for deviating behavior. At the same time, accommodation in camps and employment in larger armaments factories usually meant significantly poorer conditions for individual workers compared to employment in agriculture, for example.

435 The transfer to civilian status affected French and Polish nationals, and from September 1944 onwards, Italians as well. An agreement was also reached with France to exchange prisoners of war for civilian workers. See Spoerer: Zwangsarbeit, pp. 45, 99–107.

436 See information sheet for plant managers, plant supervisors, and sub-managers in the plants. StadtACo A 8586.

437 Deployment of foreign workers. Circular from the Ch.d.SP.u.d.SD. dated May 11, 1943. AES of the RSHA 2. Part 2 A III f, pp. 120–123 and Conduct toward prisoners of war. July 1943 edition. Circular from the Ch.d.SP.u.d.SD. dated August 31, 1943. AES of the RSHA 2. Part 2 A III e, pp. 121–123. Similarly, Government of Upper and Middle Franconia to the Coburg Police Office, March 1944. StadtACo A 12241.

438 See announcement on the treatment of prisoners of war – duties of the guard units dated September 13, 1944. In: Party Chancellery of the NSDAP (ed.): VAB Volume VII, Munich 1944, pp. 278–283 and Spoerer: Forced Labor, p. 130. A proposal by the DAF to establish special visiting hours for the Coburg "Eastern workers" in a restaurant failed, among other things, due to the concerns of Mayor Greim. See DAF Kreiswaltung Coburg, June 29, 1944, and minutes of the meeting with the administrative advisory boards on August 2, 1944. StadtACo A 8586.

The supply situation

With food, clothing, shoes, and medicine becoming increasingly scarce on the "home front," it was precisely those foreign workers at the bottom of the racial hierarchy who felt the shortage most acutely. At the end of 1943, the Armaments Command reported alarming conditions regarding the supply of potatoes and beets to foreigners in the factories.[439] In some cases Soviet prisoners of war or "Eastern workers" were fed only thin beet soup for a period of time or were given food that was already spoiled, which, especially in view of their workload, inevitably led to illness, exhaustion, and fatigue. For this reason, individuals repeatedly took it upon themselves to bring food to the "Eastern workers" in the factories and to provide for them, either out of humanity or in order to maintain the labor force of the workers under their supervision and thus production. The situation was similar in some cases with clothing and shoes, as Soviet prisoners of war usually had only one set of clothes, which were exposed to enormous dirt and wear and tear in their daily work but were not replaced for years in some cases.[440] In August 1943, illnesses among prisoners of war also increased, which was attributed to the fact that they were given inferior baked bread.[441] Due to the very poor nutritional situation of many prisoners of war or foreign civilian workers, the theft of food also increased with their deployment in Coburg, especially by fugitive workers. [442] The poor physical condition of many forced laborers resulting from inadequate supplies and the circumstances of their workand the frequent lack of opportunities for adequate personal hygiene in the camps and in their everyday working lives seemed to confirm the image of the "Russian subhuman" propagated by Nazi propaganda in the public eye, which in turn seemed to justify their contemptuous treatment in a kind of vicious circle. [443]

While there is no information available about the treatment of Soviet urban prisoners of war, conditions in the camps for French prisoners in Wüstenahorn and Mährenhausen appear to have met the requirements. In July 1940, for example, Mayor Greim urged that French prisoners of war be provided with good-quality food that met the

439 See Mayor Greim to Camp Commander Coburg Wüstenahorn, July 17, 1940. StadtACo A 15902/1 and report by the head of the department on the development of the armaments economy during the fourth quarter of 1943. BA MA RW 21/12–5.

440 See, among others: Affidavit by Edith W., November 16, 1946. StACo Spruchkammer Coburg Stadt W 73; statements by Willy S., July 8, 1947; Lydia H., November 23, 1947; Alfred M., July 12, 1947; Kurt M., December 16, 1947; Eduard L., December 16, 1947. StACo Denazification Court Coburg City B 312.

441 See Chamber of Crafts Coburg to the master baker of the bakers' guild, August 3, 1942. StACo Chamber of Crafts 227.

442 See various criminal complaints filed with the police. StACo War Files 4.

443 It is no longer possible to determine exactly how many foreign workers lost their lives while working in Coburg. The AOK files only contain a list for the district of Coburg. In the city cemetery, there is a foreign workers' grave, which was presumably marked with a memorial stone in the post-war period bearing the names of 38 people, mostly Poles and "Eastern workers," who died in Coburg between 1942 and 1945. Among them were also people who were present here as "displaced persons" after the end of the war.

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Food Office and prepared by a French prisoner of war in the camp. He also objected to the supply of inferior bread. However, his reaction was not motivated by the welfare of the workers, but by the resulting loss of work. [444] Allocations were also increasingly restricted, so that in February 1941 the Coburg Food Office announced that, according to instructions from the Bavarian State Food Office, prisoners of war should now receive only two-thirds of the bread allowance given to Germans or foreign civilian workers, that only in individual cases and under strict criteria could an increase in performance be achieved through a full bread allowance, and that butter and special allocations of eggs, poultry, game, or legumes were not available for prisoners of war.[445] A control officer from the Hammelburg main camp regularly inspected the Wüstenahorn and Mährenhausen camps and also recorded complaints and suggestions from a representative of the inmates, for which the city administration was held accountable. The city had to be held accountable for any negligent cleaning or maintenance of the accommodations. In order to subject the distribution of food to additional control, Rehlein agreed to carry this out in the presence of the commandant, but strictly refused to allow French representatives to participate.[446]Individual companies were also instructed to organize work clothes for the prisoners of war employed by them by applying for ration cards.

Disciplining foreigners

The companies often complained to the Armaments Command about work ethic, but also about disputes between foreigners of different nationalities, cleanliness, and moral issues outside the workplace.[448] As early as May 1941, some plant managers also noticed that the use of foreign workers also had an impact on overall work discipline in the plants. [449] Disciplining foreigners was primarily the responsibility of the state police, who were to be called in when problems arose, as well as the Wehrmacht in the case of prisoners of war.[450] A range of different offenses on the part of foreign workers, from grumbling, "loafing," rebellious behavior, and insubordination to absenteeism, could be punished by the Gestapo as "breaches of employment contracts."(451) Especially after

444 See Coburg Chamber of Crafts to the master baker, August 3, 1942. StACo Chamber of Crafts 227.

445 See Mayor Greim to camp commander Wüstenahorn, July 17, 1940, and Food Office to Mayor Rehlein, February 7, 1941. StadtACo A 15902/1.

446 See Control Officer North to Mayor Rehlein, June 16, 1943; Wüstenahorn camp administration to Mayor Rehlein, June 22, 1943, and Mayor Rehlein to Control Officer North, June 25, 1943. StadtACo A 15902/1.

447 See memo dated September 22, 1942. StadtACo A 15902/1.

448 See History of the Armaments Inspection of Military District XIII from October 1, 1940, to December 31, 1941. BA MA RW 20/13–9.

449 S e e war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command from May 1–31, 1941. BA MA RW 21/12–3.

450 See circular from the Coburg Armaments Command dated May 13, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–9.

451 See Deployment of laborers from the East. Circular from the RF.SS.u.Ch.d.Dt.Pol. in the RMdI. February 20, 1942. AES of the RSHA 2. Part 2 A III f, pp. 37–44; Treatment of laborers of Polish ethnicity in the Reich. Circular from the RF.SS.u.Ch.d.Dt.Pol. in the RMdI. dated September 10, 1943. AES of the RSHA 2. Part 2 A III f, pp. 150–176.

After failed escape attempts, workers from non-allied, friendly, or neutral countries could expect to be sent to a concentration camp. Nevertheless, poor treatment, inadequate nutrition, or attempts to locate family members led to escape attempts becoming an everyday phenomenon on the "home front." For this reason, large-scale searches and raids were regularly carried out on the initiative of the Coburg criminal investigation department, involving all available police forces from the criminal investigation department, the uniformed police, and auxiliary units from the party, the Wehrmacht, the technical emergency services, the forest protection service, the railway protection service, and the air raid protection police in three different alert levels. Eleven different posts were manned throughout the city, and all arriving and departing trains were checked, all prisoner and foreigner camps were searched, and barns, gardens, forests, and other possible hiding places were combed through. The Kripo and the SS monitored accommodation facilities and carried out checks on foreigners. [453]After receiving warnings of major breakouts from prisoner-of-war camps, armed assault teams were also assembled and placed on alert. [454]

At the same time, employers could also be reprimanded for being too friendly toward foreigners. When it was reported that French prisoners of war who were employed at the freight station unloading goods had eaten together with German workers and been served beer, the Nuremberg-Fürth Gestapo intervened with the mayor. Mayor Rehlein then instructed the Coburg security police to investigate the matter. The police officers assured him that the applicable regulations had been complied with and that the prisoners of war had been removed from the canteen. Close monitoring was promised[455]The district leadership also closely observed and evaluated behavior in individual companies. On the instructions of the district leadership, the Waldrich company was to remind one of its workers that Poland had allegedly "murdered 60,000 innocent Germans" and [456]that he should adjust his behavior towards them accordingly.

If prisoners of war worked little, the OKH proposed that they be deprived of all benefits such as performance bonuses or tobacco allowances, that portions of their wages or special allowances be withheld, that their working hours be extended, or that costs for room and board be collected.[457]Cases of refusal to work and repeated sick leave on the part of French urban prisoners of war were forwarded directly by Mayor Rehlein to the control officer of Landesschützen Kompanie 2/847, and a statement was requested in each case. Individual employers

452 See Grossmann: Foreign and Forced Laborers, pp. 490–494, 497, 510.

453 See order issued by the Coburg Criminal Investigation Department on January 11, 1943, and memo from the police dated June 7, 1943. StACo NSDAP 9.

454 See Coburg police to the district gendarmerie, August 1, 1943. StACo NSDAP 9.

455 Mayor Rehlein then lodged a complaint with the Reichsbahnbetriebsamt (Reich Railway Authority), which had reported the incident and caused difficulties with the Gestapo. See Gestapo Nuremberg-Fürth to the mayor of Coburg, October 24, 1941; memo from the police department, October 29, 1941, and Mayor Rehlein to the Reichsbahnbetriebsamt, November 1, 1941. StadtACo A 15902/1.

456 See Coburg protective police to the Ansbach public order police, June 14, 1943. StACo NSDAP 9.

457 See circular from the Coburg Armaments Command dated February 21, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–9.

However, it was also pointed out that punishment could result in the loss of a worker and that ultimately a balance had to be struck between regulation and maintaining the workforce.[458] Within individual companies, however, mistreatment and harsh punishment, especially of Poles and "Eastern workers," were commonplace, even if these cases usually only became documented after the end of the war due to the lack of any possibility for the victims to complain or report them. The camp manager in particular was responsible for the treatment of foreigners, who, depending on their loyalty and personality, were able to establish their own regime within the companies.

The situation in individual Coburg companies

Due to a lack of sources, it is usually difficult to reconstruct the extent to which company leaders were involved in the abuses themselves, particularly in terms of whether they directly ordered or tolerated the measures in question. Most of them joined the party in 1933 or later out of conviction, a desire to conform, or self-interest, such as Max Brose, Adolf Waldrich, and Oskar Gaudlitz in May 1933[459] and Hermann Ros in 1935. [460] Only Alexander Glasow Junior from the Trutz company became a member of the NSDAP in 1932 and the SA in 1933, while his father became a member of the NSDAP in May 1937.[461] Karl Kaeser avoided joining the party by joining the NSV, DAF, and the Reich Air Defense League.[462] However, there was no correlation between party membership and the way entrepreneurs treated the foreign workers assigned to them.[463] Overall, very few manufacturers of larger companies participated in mistreatment themselves, leaving this task, if at all, to their subordinates. Only Hermann Ros was accused after 1945 of having beaten Polish workers himself. [464]

At the Adolf Waldrich company forced laborers were mainly mistreated under Otto von Bovert , who was plant manager and director from February 1, 1942, to December 31, 1943, were taken to the air-raid shelter for the slightest offenses and trivial reasons, such as arriving late, and there they were beaten "relentlessly" by a rolling commando of four to five men with rubber truncheons, cables, and compressed air hoses.

458 See Mayor Rehlein to the Control Officer North, State Rifle Company 2/847. StadtACo A 15902/1.

459 See Oskar Gaudlitz's denazification file. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg City G14; Heinrich Adolf Waldrich's denazification file. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg City W 34 and Max Brose's denazification file B 312. Brose's party membership was backdated.

460 See Hermann Ros denazification file. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg City R 188 and Coburg Criminal Police to the Administrative Police Office, August 31, 1942. StadtACo A 8586.

461 See Alexander Glasow Jr. and Sr. denazification tribunal files, StACo denazification tribunal Coburg City G 100, 101.

462 See Criminal Police Coburg to the Administrative Police Office, August 31, 1942. StadtACo A 8586.

463 On the attitude of industrialists during the Nazi era, cf. Erker: Industrieeliten, pp. 7–40.

464 See statements by Antoni W.; Stanislaw M., Dimitro P., Antoni K., Wladislaw T. March 17 and 18, 1947. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg City R 188.

465 Otto von Bovert joined the NSDAP in May 1937 and was previously a supporting member of the General SS. Before working in Coburg, he was employed by Hugo Schneider AG in Leipzig and, at the end of the war, at the underground Mittelwerke in the Harz Mountains. On November 12, 1949, he was classified as a "burdened person" by the Main Chamber in Nuremberg. See StACo Denazification Court Coburg City B 256. For information on the abuse, see also StACo Denazification Court Coburg City O 30.

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Beaten severely."[466] Victims of torture were often not allowed to visit the company doctor to have their wounds treated. Although this torture was known within the company, it was forbidden to talk about it.[467] In addition, Polish workers were repeatedly beaten and punished in front of the entire workforce in order to set an example and maintain work discipline through coercion and threats. Even with medical certificates of incapacity for work, the forced laborers were forced to continue working. [468]

At Max Brose & Co., too, there were allegations of regular abuse and physical punishment of Soviet prisoners of war by individual foremen in the company and the commander of the "Russian camp," Josef Wieder from Mannheim, who served as a Wehrmacht representative from June 1942 to May 1943. In addition to completely inadequate food and accommodation, the prisoners were often malnourished, sick, and physically exhausted, and were beaten for not meeting their work quotas or had to continue working until they did. In addition, the untenable conditions were compounded by deliberate harassment, such as when workers suffering from diarrhea as a result of poor nutrition were forbidden to leave their workplace.

In addition, the municipal police also attempted to contribute to the discipline and control of the "foreigners" within Coburg's wartime society by guarding the workers. In December 1940, the Gaudlitz company had already approached the city of Coburg itself in search of suitable accommodation for its Polish forced laborers, and the city allocated two rooms on the ground floor of the Seifartshof building, which was actually scheduled for demolition. The company itself was subsequently responsible for monitoring the accommodation.

466 Statement by Ernst K. dated January 18, 1946. Arolsen Archives 1100012299.

467 See ibid. and report of a war crime dated November 17, 1945. Arolsen Archives 1100012258. The abuses were reported to the American military government in the post-war period by both those affected and German employees.

468 See, among others, statement by Eduard M. dated January 18, 1946. Arolsen Archives 1100012299; statements by Albert Q., August 18, 1947; Albin R., May 31, 1948; Rudolf U., June 15, 1948; Ludwig G., June 17, 1948. Investigation report of the Coburg City Tribunal dated September 8, 1948; minutes of the meeting of the Main Chamber in Nuremberg from November 9–12, 1949. StACo Coburg City Tribunal B 256. Adolf Waldrich, who had joined the NSDAP on May 1, 1933, was classified as a follower by the Coburg Tribunal in its ruling of January 13, 1947. The *Neue Presse Coburg* newspaper accused him of having destroyed all incriminating documents. The newspaper therefore collected further statements from workers about mistreatment within the company. Waldrich was credited with having employed several *half-Jews* in his company. See Tribunal file Heinrich Adolf Waldrich. StACo Tribunal Coburg City W 34 and Neue Presse of March 8, 15, and May 31, 1947.

469 See, among others, statements by Josef Wieder, August 27, 1945; Willy S., July 8, 1947; Lydia H., November 23, 1947; Albin W., undated, Johann B., July 24, 1947; Reinhold G., July 12, 1947; Viktor M., 16. December 1947; Karl H., January 29, 1948; Martin S., March 1, 1948. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg City B 312. Max Brose was classified as a minor offender by the Coburg City Denazification Tribunal in its ruling of March 22, 1948. Following an appeal, he was classified as a follower by the Bamberg Appeals Chamber in April 1948 and by the Main Chamber in Ansbach in July 1949. However, the American military government and the Coburg public were extremely dissatisfied with the appeal ruling from Bamberg, which is why the occupying power initiated a *Delinquency G Error Report* due to errors in assessment. See ruling of the Coburg City Denazification Court of March 22, 1948; judgment of the Bamberg Appeals Chamber of April 26, 1948; judgment of the Ansbach Appeals Chamber of July 23, 1949; Area Commander Sussel to OMG Bavaria Buskirk, May 4, 1948. StACo Coburg City Denazification Court B 312.

However, the police also conducted regular checks. When the company noticed recurring drinking binges and nighttime escapades by the Polish workers, it again requested the city to intervene, resulting in increased surveillance at the camp from that point onward. As a result, at least one worker was reported to the police for drunkenness and failure to show up for work and was referred by the employer to the labor trustee. Even when the camp moved to Kanonenweg 50 to the Woldt u. Co. company in the spring of 1943, the municipal police department continued its checks until March 1945, which had led to the successful disciplining of the workers. [470] The situation was similar in the case of the Glaswolle KG community camp. W. Schuller & Co. in Schultes-Straße, which had been the subject of complaints from various quarters at the beginning of 1945. Here, the behavior of the Ukrainian and Polish workers in particular had given rise to criticism because it was perceived as provocative and workers had entered the camp without identity papers, for example. The police then issued warnings to the camp inmates and carried out random checks at unspecified times.

The extent to which the local criminal justice system was used to discipline foreign workers is shown by the records of the Coburg district court prison, which document the imprisonment of nine Belgians, three Estonians, 102 French, 223 Poles, five Romanians, 243 "Eastern workers," 18 Czechs, and two Hungarians between 1940 and 1945. In 1943, following the declaration of "total war" and a tightening of coercive measures against forced laborers, there was also a significant increase in their incarcerations. Prisoners of war who had been transferred to civilian status were no longer protected from imprisonment by the local authorities.

German women and foreign workers

Inside and outside the armaments factories, the cooperation between German women and foreign workers had also become one of the greatest concerns of national policy, as contact between the two groups was to be avoided at all costs and was therefore prohibited. Party members down to the block leaders were regularly urged to prevent contact between their fellow citizens and foreign workers. [473]Mayor Rehlein informed the companies that employed the city's prisoners of war that "even in captivity, the enemy is our enemy, who can harm us through espionage and sabotage. Therefore, all contact with the civilian population inside and outside the company must be kept to a minimum."Leaflets and notices also provided company employees with detailed information on the prescribed and prohibited ways of dealing with foreigners. Sexual contact or romantic relationships with foreign workers

470 See Vollmuth to Oskar Gaudlitz, December 21, 1940; Oskar Gaudlitz to Coburg Police Department, September 10, 1941; Coburg Police Department file notes. StACo War Files 3.

471 See file notes from the police dated January 27, February 8, and April 1, 1945; camp commander of Glaswolle KG. W. Schuller & Co to the Coburg Criminal Investigation Department, March 19, 1943. StACo War Files 3.

472 See List of all judicial records, Coburg District Court, September 18, 1946. Arolsen Archives 8198700.

473 See Chronicle of the Coburg-Mitte Local NSDAP Group during the War. StACo NSDAP 8.

474 Circular letter from Mayor Rehlein, July 16, 1941. StadtACo A 15902/1.

475 See announcements by Max Brose dated November 20, 1940, and May 12, 1942. StACo Spruchkammer Coburg Stadt B 312.

were prohibited, with the exception of Flemish, Danish, Norwegian, and Dutch workers. While sexual intercourse with citizens of allied countries, as well as French or Belgian citizens, was to be prevented as far as possible and was usually punished with warnings from the state police, it was considered "racial defilement" in the case of Poles, Czechs, Serbs, and "Eastern workers." Prohibited contact with prisoners of war fell under the criminal offense of "undermining military morale."[476]

The regulations governing the accommodation of foreign workers and the employment of women presented many smaller businesses with practical problems in their day-to-day operations. Air raid regulations stipulated that, in the event of an air raid alarm, it must be ensured that foreign prisoners of war and, above all, "Eastern workers" were not accommodated in the same air raid shelter as German women.[477]However, the logistical conditions within the companies did not always allow the groups to be separated. At the Brose company, there was no separation of the sexes in a workroom where about 100 people worked during the day and about 50 at night. German women and French prisoners of war were able to come into contact with each other here during working hours, but also during some breaks. This was also because the guards on duty had to keep an eye on several workshops at the same time, which meant that the control apparatus was not particularly tight. Nine German women were ultimately charged in a collective trial before the Bamberg Special Court in 1941. They were accused of "forbidden contact" with the French. Among other things, the German women had exchanged letters with them and, above all, sent them gifts in the form of additional food, beer, or cigarettes. The Bamberg Special Court subsequently sentenced the women to prison terms of two to six months, while the French remained unpunished.

Examples such as this demonstrate the challenges that the use of foreign workers posed for Nazi society during the war. Starting with the behavior of children, among whom Nazi propaganda had been so effective that they chose the "Eastern workers" as a popular target for pranks, pelting the toilets of Soviet prisoners of war with stones,[479] to the everyday practical probation of the workers, there was a great deal of leeway for action. In everyday working life with foreign workers, it became apparent that "racial" attributions and the associated hierarchical gradation of exclusion did not directly correlate with the practical experience of foreign workers. With regard to the work management of the individual groups of foreigners, the Coburg Armaments Command carried out a classification in which "Eastern workers" ranked at the top, followed by Polish workers, Soviet

476 See RGBl. I 1939, p. 2319; Schneider, Silke: Verbotener Umgang. Foreigners and Germans in National Socialism. Discourses on sexuality, morality, knowledge, and punishment (= Historical Foundations of Modernity. Authoritarian Regimes and Dictatorships, Volume 2). Baden-Baden 2010; Lang, Urszula: On the criminalization of contacts between Germans and foreigners during World War II in northern Bavaria. Neustadt/Aisch 2017.

477 See review of defense plans for the N. Trutz car body factory, September 4, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–8.

478 See Woehrle, Christophe Lucien: French prisoners of war in Franconia during World War II. A comparison of the Upper Franconian administrative city of Bamberg and the Lower Franconian industrial city of Schweinfurt. Bamberg 2022, pp. 254–257.

479 See memo from the police department dated October 21, 1944. StACo War Files 4.

Prisoners of war and, finally, Western prisoners of war. In addition, particular emphasis was placed on the poor work performance of Soviet officers, who were accused of deliberately withholding their labor, which then allegedly spread to French prisoners of war and civilian workers. There was also great dissatisfaction with the use of Italian workers.

Compared to the use of foreigners in agriculture, for example, the scope for action was nevertheless significantly smaller, especially within the armaments factories, and the workers were subject to less complexity in their initial conditions. Nevertheless, individual factory and camp managers were able to exert considerable influence on the living conditions of the workers under their command and even define different phases in individual factories. Ultimately, it is impossible to determine to what extent the treatment of foreigners was influenced by rational and labor-economic motives, ideological motives, or the personalities of the supervisors. Maintaining work discipline and simultaneously preserving the necessary workforce had to be constantly weighed up.

2.4.3 The problem of "foreign infiltration"

By the second quarter of 1943 at the latest, the increasing shortage of German skilled workers and foremen made the problem of "foreign infiltration" in factories obvious, as the proportion of foreign workers in some factories was already greater than that of German men. The fact that the majority of Germans capable of fighting were now deployed in the war, leaving women, children, and older people behind on the "home front," fostered mistrust and a tense atmosphere toward the foreigners present. This led to growing fears of unrest and acts of sabotage within the factories, where security guards had only limited access to weapons.

For individual companies in the Coburg Armament Command area that employed many foreign workers, special agreements were therefore initially made with the local police stations in order to be able to coordinate intervention in an emergency. The police were involved in the company's security measures, with command being transferred to them via the plant security service from the moment the police arrived on site. Together with the police stations, the plant managers had to plan interventions in the event of unrest or sabotage based on site plans and the relative importance of different parts of the plant. [482]With regard to the deployment of foreign workers, the armament commands and the armament inspection authorities also coordinated with senior SS and police leaders, who provided them with secret information. Particularly before the invasion of Normandy, warnings were issued about foreign workers striking on the basis of an alleged secret order from Stalin.

480 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command dated May 31, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–7; War diary of the Coburg Armaments Command dated August 1, 1944, and report by the head of the department on the development of the armaments economy during the third quarter of 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–8.

481 See report by the head of the department on the development of the armaments economy during the second quarter of 1943. BA MA RW 21/12–5.

482 See circular from the Coburg Armaments Command dated July 16, 1943. BA MA RW 21/12–9.

At the meeting of Armaments Inspection XIII on May 19, 1944, the chairman of the Armaments Inspection, building director Dipl.-Ing. Klingler, therefore called on all business owners to separate foreigners from Germans in air-raid shelters during air raid alerts and to have them guarded by German sentries. Furthermore, prisoners of war should be "Eastern workers" and other foreigners were to be housed separately from each other in these cases. The male German "followers" were also to be gathered together and deployed as a closed defense force if possible. Factory security, factory air defense, political shock troops, and shop stewards also had to be available to defend the factories. Targets particularly vulnerable to sabotage, such as energy facilities or raw material stores, were identified and had to be monitored at all times. In addition, Klingler called for regular raids on the "Eastern worker camps" to check for food reserves or weapons and to remove radio sets from the camps. A stricter curfew was also introduced, requiring all foreigners to report to their accommodations by 10 p.m. The slightest resistance during the raids was to be met with immediate use of weapons. A corresponding leaflet was distributed to all plant managers in the area of armaments inspection. The DAF was responsible for the specific measures in the communal camps for civilian workers, while the corresponding prisoner-of-war camps were responsible for prisoners of war.

The officers at the Armaments Command also initiated the formation of defense blocks within the armaments factories, which had to be ready for joint action in the event of sabotage. Plant managers, defense officers, and factory security and air raid protection officers were briefed by the armaments officers and familiarized with the scope of the agreed measures. In addition, the Armaments Command contacted the senior officer in Coburg, to whom it sent a list of endangered armaments factories, including information on the number of foreigners employed and maps of factories and foreigner camps.[484] In August and September 1944, examination commissions also visited various armaments companies in the armaments command area and issued measures to improve plant security. A review of Brose's defense plans was conducted in August 1944 during a meeting between plant manager Max Brose, authorized signatory Richard Heldrung as plant security manager and defense officer[485] and department foreman Ernst Eisenbarth as plant air raid protection manager, as well as the Gestapo and defense officer from Coburg, Captain Kalny, Captain Quinat from the Armaments Command, Major Kutschnik from the Ansbach Order Police Command, and Captain Preußkerl, First Lieutenant Oberender, and Police Sergeant Franz Kupfer from the Coburg Police. It was objected that the factory, and in particular Factory II, where 150 Soviet prisoners of war were employed, was not sufficiently protected against uprisings or acts of sabotage. On the instructions of those present, it was therefore decided to establish a permanent night watch from the forces of Factory I for the

483 See minutes of the 14th meeting of Armaments Inspection XIII, May 19, 1944. BA MA RW 20/13–6.

484 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command dated May 19, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–7.

485 Before Heldrung, Max Brose himself served as the company's defense officer, who was vetted by the SS security service at the request of the Nuremberg-Fürth Gestapo to determine his suitability for the position. See SD office Coburg to the Nuremberg-Fürth Gestapo, October 1941. StABa M 34 II 30.

Set up Plant II, mount an additional machine gun with 2,000 rounds of ammunition on a truck, and instruct the German men at the plant to improve surveillance of Plant II. It was also ordered that those "followers" who were assigned to the home air defense unit were not allowed to leave the plant during air raid and aircraft alerts. The Coburg police also wanted to set up an alarm unit for the night. [486]At the A. Waldrich machine tool factory, located on the northeastern edge of the city, it was considered problematic that the foreign workers were primarily men and that there were only six Germans working the night shift compared to 34 foreigners. To remedy this situation, employees who were assigned to the city guard had to be assigned to factory security in addition to the city guard during alarms during their working hours. In addition, the foreign workers were to be escorted out of the factory whenever an alarm sounded and kept under constant guard. At night, a factory security team of four to six men was to be quartered in the factory itself, and the production rooms were to be cordoned off to prevent access by foreign workers in the event of an alarm.[487] The N. Trutz car body factory was instructed to arrange for neighboring assistance from the military hospital located near Plant II in Ketschendorf to reinforce its plant security, for which makeshift weapons were to be procured. [488]

Ultimately, however, even after the Allied invasion of Normandy in June 1944, the feared unrest and concerted action among foreign workers failed to materialize. Nevertheless, the events in the East and the approaching front lines, which could not be kept secret from the isolated forced laborers, had a noticeable effect on the behavior of the male "Eastern workers," who were now perceived as more rebellious and, in some cases, "lazy." They were accused of actively holding back on their work performance. [489]Soon afterwards, similar behavior was also reported among French prisoners of war and civilian workers. [490]The companies and the assigned guard units responded to this behavior with increased pressure and stricter control measures.[491]However, large-scale acts of sabotage and a conspiracy among forced laborers and prisoners of war remained horror scenarios on the "home front," which existed particularly in factories important to the war effort and contributed to the further tightening of coercive measures against foreigners. [492]

3 Radicalization and extermination

At the latest with the outbreak of World War II, persecution and the already routine and perfected exclusion measures were once again expanded, and a radical cleansing of the urban area of those elements that

486 See review of the defense plans of the Brose company, August 28, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–8.
487 See review of the defense plans of the Waldrich company, September 4, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–8.
488 See review of the defense plans of the N. Trutz car body factory, September 4, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–8.
489 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command dated April 30, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–6.
490 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command dated August 1, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–8.
491 See war diary of the Coburg Armaments Command dated April 30, 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–6.
492 See the report by the head of the department on the development of the armaments economy during the second quarter of 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–7.

should not belong to the "people's community." The war proved to be a decisive catalyst for exclusion. The changes inherent in it throughout society led to a renewed radicalization of persecution measures. The war was accompanied by a state of social emergency, whereby, especially from 1943 onwards with the declaration of "total war," everyday life was subordinated to the achievement of war aims and energies could be focused on the "purification of the national body" sought by the National Socialists. It was no longer a matter of exclusion, discrimination, and displacement, but of the extermination of entire sections of the population.

3.1 Murder of patients

Because the war affected the healthcare system, led to a significant deterioration in living conditions, and ushered in a new phase of radicalization, the suffering of some victims of forced sterilization did not end with the ordered operation. The "optimization of the national body" now mutated into a plan for the "extermination of unworthy life," which aimed at the targeted, rationalized, and mass murder of mentally disabled or mentally ill people. Against the backdrop of the outbreak of war and war-related rationalization, cost savings were also a decisive motive for the National Socialist murder of people with physical, mental, and psychological disabilities, which was planned centrally from Berlin and later referred to as "Aktion T4."[493] The murders of patients should by no means be seen as an inevitable continuation of eugenic measures, but both were based on the fundamental assumptions of the different values of human groups, the marginalization of their victims, and a biologization of the social, even if, on an ideological level, there were few supporters of eugenics who also supported "euthanasia."[494] The killing of the sick marked a further escalation of violence and, in terms of Nazi health policy, ultimately the transition from persecution to extermination, which was linked to the outbreak of war.

The fate of the Coburgers who were transferred from the Kutzenberg sanatorium to killing centers and murdered there is exemplary in this regard.

493 The term "Aktion T4" was first used in the post-war trials for the Nazi murders of patients and referred to the headquarters of the various front organizations for the implementation of Nazi "euthanasia" at Tiergartenstraße 4 in Berlin. On "Aktion T4," see Aly, Götz (ed.): Aktion T4 1939–1945. Die "Euthanasie"-Zentrale in der Tiergartenstraße 4. Berlin 1989; Klee, Ernst:
"Euthanasia" in the Nazi State. The "Extermination of Life Unworthy of Life." Frankfurt 2010; Süß, Winfried. The "People's Body" at War. Health Policy, Health Conditions, and Murder of the Sick in Nazi Germany 1939–1945 (= Studies in Contemporary History, Volume 65). Munich 2009.

494 On the controversy surrounding the connection between "euthanasia" and eugenics, see Schwartz, Michael: "Racial Hygiene, National Socialism, Euthanasia"? Critical Questions Regarding a Thesis by Hans-Walter Schmuhl. In: Westfälische Forschungen 46 (1996), pp. 604–622; Ibid.: Eugenics and "Euthanasia." The international debate and practice until 1933/45. In: Henke, Klaus-Dietmar (ed.): Deadly Medicine in National Socialism. From Racial Hygiene to Mass Murder. Cologne et al. 2008, pp. 65–83; Ibid.: The Majority and the
"inferior." A global historical view of eugenics and "euthanasia" in the 20th century. In: Czeguhn, Ignacio; Hilgendorf, Eric; Weitzel, Jürgen (eds.): Eugenics and Euthanasia 1850–1945. Early Forms, Causes, Developments, Consequences. Baden-Baden 2009, pp. 127–146.

Overall complex of patient murders, which also claimed victims from Coburg, for example from the institutions in Ansbach and Erlangen, beyond Kutzenberg. Since 1905, patients had been housed in Kutzenberg as an alternative facility to the main institution in Bayreuth, so that the institution, with its 600 places, soon covered the entire western part of Upper Franconia and, from 1920· was also responsible for patients from the Coburg region.

The start of "Aktion T4" was marked by Hitler's so-called "letter of authorization" in October 1939, which was later backdated to the beginning of the war and gave permission to grant selected patients a "mercy killing." The "euthanasia program" initiated as a result and controlled from Berlin initially targeted patients in hospitals and nursing homes via registration forms in order to identify "ballast lives" [496]. Because Philipp Bouhler, head of the Führer's office, and Karl Brandt, Hitler's personal physician, who were appointed by Hitler to organize the campaign, were aware of the population's strong reservations about euthanasia measures, a largely secret practice was established. In a letter from the Reich Ministry of the Interior dated June 21, 1940, and the transmission of relevant registration forms, Dr. Entres, the director of the Kutzenberg institution, was asked to contribute to the "planned economic registration" of hospitals and nursing homes. In particular, patients suffering from schizophrenia, epilepsy, senile diseases, syphilis, "feeble-mindedness," encephalitis, Huntington's disease, and other "neurological terminal conditions" were to be reported. The one-page and therefore extremely brief reporting forms asked, among other things, about the course of the illness to date, race, mentally ill blood relatives, previous criminal offenses, and ability to work. It was made unmistakably clear that the duration of the illness, heredity, and ability to work were the main categories used to assess the value of the patient, enabling selection based on both economic and medical criteria. The type of care required and the ability to work were also to be specified in more detail, with a detailed description of the patient's work performance and thus their potential usefulness. It was also necessary to note how often and by whom the patient received visitors in order to guarantee the secrecy of "Aktion T4."[497] The reporting forms had to be returned by September 1, 1940, to the *Reich Working Group of Medical and Nursing Institutions*, a front organization created specifically for "Aktion T4," whereupon medical experts selected patients for the killing centers in Grafeneck, Brandenburg, Hartheim, Sonnenstein, Bernburg, and Hadamar without ever having seen or examined them themselves. In particular, illnesses that had lasted more than five years and appeared incurable were sufficient grounds for a patient to be selected for transfer. However, against the backdrop of economization, the decisive criteria remained the

495 The murder of the victims from the Coburg region was first documented by Rainer Axmann in 1994. See Axmann, Rainer: "... er ist hier gut angekommen" (He arrived here safely). The story of 60 people from the Coburg region who were murdered as victims of the so-called "euthanasia program" at the Kutzenberg mental hospital. In: Yearbook of the Coburg Regional Foundation 39 (1994), pp. 155–180.

496 The term, introduced in 1920 by the Freiburg physician Alfred Hoche, accompanied the discussion about the destruction of "unworthy life" as early as the Weimar years and was then appropriated by Nazi propaganda.

497 See Landpolizei von Ober- und Mittelfranken, Kriminalaußenstelle Bamberg, February 28, 1949, and interrogation of Dr. Entres by the Landpolizei von Ober- und Mittelfranken, Kriminalaußenstelle Bamberg, February 23, 1949. StACo StAnw 104.

economic usefulness of the individual as well as the cost of care and supervision. The patients' adaptability, cleanliness, and independence also played a role. Unlike the practice of the "Law for the Prevention of Hereditary Diseases," "Aktion T4" aimed to kill patients who were particularly unfit for work and those in the terminal stages of an illness. In the actual implementation of the selection process for "Aktion T4," a diagnosis of schizophrenia therefore meant far worse chances of survival than a diagnosis of "feeble-mindedness," which was often applied to socially disadvantaged people. The high proportion of schizophrenia patients therefore meant that a large number of middle-class people were among the victims of Nazi "euthanasia."[498]

Transports to the killing centers

In a total of three large transports, organized by the specially established front organization *Gemeinnützigen Kranken-Transport-GmbH* (Gekrat), patients were taken from Kutzenberg via intermediate institutions to the Reich institutions Hartheim or Sonnenstein in 1940 and 1941. About a week before each transport, the institution received a notice to transfer a certain number of patients, along with the corresponding transport lists, train connections, and precise instructions on how to pack the patients' belongings. [499]Dr. Entres himself still had the option of removing individual patients from the lists or replacing them with others. In February 1941, for example, 185 people were proposed for transport, of whom he had to select 140 for transfer. The transport lists therefore contain numerous comments from Kutzenberg, where, for example, men who were needed as cobblers or tailors in the institution itself were removed from the lists. It was also noted if patients had already been transferred to another institution or had died.

The nurses prepared the selected patients for transport, packed all their belongings, stuck a plaster strip with their names and dates of birth on their backs, and finally sedated particularly restless patients for the several-hour transport. The staff were instructed not to inform those affected until the day before the actual transfer and to keep the process secret until then so as not to cause any unrest. On the evening before each departure, transport manager Küppers from the cover organization Gekrat arrived and checked the preparations. The patients quickly recognized him as "Schinderhannes" because he and his companions, who were conspicuously strong, treated the patients extremely roughly. The first of the transports was loaded early in the morning of November 26, 1940, at the train station in Ebensfeld, the village at the foot of the hill on which Kutzenberg is located, which caused great unrest among the local population. The following transports were therefore initially carried out by buses belonging to the Gekrat and also the Wehrmacht to Lichtenfels, where the patients had to wait two hours for the train to Saxony or Austria to depart.

A first transport on November 16, 1941, brought a total of 130 people, 49 male patients and 81 female patients, mostly via Niederhart to the Hartheim State Mental Hospital. Among them were 20 people from the Coburg region, 14 of whom were

498 See Hohendorf, Gerrit, et al.: The Victims of the National Socialist "Euthanasia Action T4." In: Der Nervenarzt 73.11 (2002), pp. 1065–1074.

499 See Transport Manager Küppers to Director Entres, November 22, 1940. StACo StAnw 104.

Eight from Coburg. Their murder took place between December 4 and 12. Two women from the Coburg region were taken to the Sonnenstein State Mental Hospital near Pirna.[501] The second major transport on February 28, 1941, involved the transfer of 134 inmates from the Kutzenberg institution, most of whom were taken directly or via the Arnsdorf transit institution near Dresden to the Sonnenstein killing center. Of the 89 men and 45 women, 28 came from the Coburg region and 11 from Coburg itself.[502] One man and one woman from the Coburg region who were part of this transport were killed in Hartheim. A final large transport left Kutzenberg on June 17, 1941, with 140 inmates, 91 men and 49 women, bound for Hartheim. This group also included eight people from the Coburg region, four of whom were women from Coburg. Therese Bauer, Adelinde Michel, Rosa Rädlein, and Rosa Schubert were gassed between June 18 and July 12.

In addition to the three large transports, ten Jewish patients from Kutzenberg had already been transferred on September 14, 1940, as a decree issued by the Reich Ministry of the Interior on April 15, 1940, had ordered the registration of all Jews in institutions. Via the Eglfing-Haar collection center, they were presumably transferred to Hartheim or the Brandenburg killing center. Among them was Meta Frankenberg, born in Coburg in 1867, who had been in Kutzenberg since the spring of 1931 with interruptions on the advice of her doctor, Dr. Moritz Cramer.[504] When her daughter Else Wertheimer was forced to emigrate to Argentina, Frieda Kahn felt responsible for her sister Meta Frankenberg. In the winter of 1940, she tried to organize warm slippers and clothing, but her application to the Coburg municipal economic office was not approved.[505] On September 14, 1940, Frieda Kahn inquired at the sanatorium about the possibility of visiting her sister again, as she had learned of the transfer of other Jewish patients. To ensure she would receive a reply, she enclosed a stamp for the return postage.[506] In October 1940, Alfred Masur also contacted the management in Kutzenberg to find out whether Meta Frankenberg was still in the institution and finally learned that this was no longer the case. [507] The property of the ten transferred Jews became the property of the city of Coburg. [508]

500 Their names were: Kurt Wagner, Johanna Apun, Else Assion, Minna Bauer, Ilse Bonnawitz, Johanna Kestler, Elisabeth Nebl, and Erna Taubald. See transport list for November 16, 1941. StACo StAnw 104 and BA N 2503/1128.

501 See Axmann: Geschichte, p. 158.

502 Their names were: Arno Fischer, Adolf Geupel, Gustav Gültner, Max Kobiger, Friedrich Koch, Julius Kress, Max Probst, Arthur Schäffler, Elisabeth Buchner, Paula Derks, and Else Gernhardt. See transport list for February 28, 1941. StACo StAnw 104 and BA N 2503/1128.

503 Patients who had only recently been transferred to Kutzenberg from the Bayreuth and Gremsdorf nursing homes were also transported.

504 See questionnaire for medical examination dated January 4, 1931. StABa Kutzenberg Sanatorium and Nursing Home K 61 1205.

505 See Coburg Economic Office, January 30, 1940. StABa Kutzenberg Mental Hospital K 61 1205.

506 See Frieda Kahn to the management of the Kutzenberg Sanatorium and Nursing Home, September 14, 1940. For information on the life of Meta Frankenberg, see Schuller, Gabi: Meta Frankenberg, née Rosenthal. URL: https:// coburger-juden.de/meta-frankenberg-geb-rosenthal/ (last accessed October 7, 2023).

507 See Alfred Masur to the Kutzenberg Sanatorium and Nursing Home, October 15, 1940. StABa Kutzenberg Sanatorium and Nursing Home K 61 1205. In this context, however, Masur was not given the actual date of transfer, September 14, but September 20.

508 See Zenk: Kutzenberg, p. 130.

Another smaller transport brought 19 men and 13 women from Kutzenberg via Erlangen to Hartheim on March 28. Among them were four patients from the Coburg region, including Erich Scheler from Coburg. An SS doctor had also selected four patients who had committed crimes before their admission to Kutzenberg and who were transferred to Mauthausen in the spring of 1944. Three of them were murdered in the concentration camp shortly thereafter.

In Hartheim, the patients were taken by train to a station guarded by the SS and located away from the public, or by bus directly to the institution. They were led into the building through a side entrance that was not visible from the outside and had to undress immediately. Their clothes and luggage were numbered and stored. Naked, the patients finally appeared for an examination in which, on the one hand, the cause of death was invented and determined and, on the other hand, those who had gold teeth or whose brains were to be removed and prepared later due to a particular clinical picture were marked. After being numbered and photographed, the patients were led directly into a gas chamber disguised as a shower, into which gas was fed from the adjoining room. After the victims had died, the chamber was kept locked for a long time and the gas was vented, then emptied by the crematorium operators, the burners. After they had sorted the corpses and removed gold teeth or organs, the bodies were dragged to an adjoining crematorium and burned.[510] The process was similar at the Pirna-Sonnenstein killing center.[511]

The relatives of the patients had been informed in writing of the transfer of those affected and their admission to a new institution. By the time the second message arrived, most of those affected were already dead. Shortly afterwards, the special registry offices of the killing centers sent death notices in the form of letters of condolence to the bereaved. The causes of death stated in these letters referred to illnesses that could occur suddenly and lead quickly to death, such as heart attacks, pneumonia, kidney or tonsil infections, abscesses or boils, and subsequent sepsis. In the case of epileptics in particular, a severe epileptic or paralytic seizure was often cited as the cause of death. The letters of condolence also informed the relatives that cremation had been carried out due to the outbreak of an infectious disease in the institution and in order to contain it. The relatives were also asked to waive their rights to the deceased's estate so that it could be transferred to the NSV or given to the institution's funding agency in return. The urns of the deceased could be transferred to their relatives, but they contained randomly assembled ashes.

509 See transport lists from Kutzenberg. StACo StAnw 104.

510 A total of 12 people from the city of Coburg and 40 from the entire district and city were killed in Hartheim after being brought to the killing center via Kutzenberg, Ansbach, and Erlangen. See information from the Hartheim Castle Learning and Memorial Site. In Pirna-Sonnenstein, there were also a total of 12 victims from Coburg. See information from the Pirna-Sonnenstein Memorial Site.

511 See Fischer, pp. 165–169, and Aas: Heil- und Pflegeanstalt, pp. 120–129. On the Pirna-Sonnenstein institution, see Schilter, Thomas: Unmenschliches Ermessen. Die nationalsozialistische „Euthanasie“-Tötungsanstalt Pirna-Sonnenstein 1940/41 (= Schriftenreihe der Stiftung Sächsische Gedenkstätten zur Erinnerung an die Opfer politischer Gewaltherrschaft, vol. 5). Leipzig 1999.

Victims from Coburg and their fate

One of the victims from Coburg on the first transport was Johanna Apun, born in 1899. After attending a special school, she had built a life for herself as a manual laborer at the De-richs & Sauerteig company in Coburg. In 1923, however, she suffered her first mental breakdown and from then on suffered from severe anxiety, which also led to suicidal thoughts. She was admitted to Kutzenberg several times for treatment, but was always able to return home once her condition improved. Dr. Entres ultimately diagnosed her with "congenital mental deficiency" with severe schizoid traits and filed an application for sterilization with the Hereditary Health Court in 1939. Initially, her case was dismissed on the basis of the August 31, 1939, ordinance on the "Law for the Prevention of Hereditary Diseases in Offspring." However, when she was to be discharged from Kutzenberg again after showing signs of improvement, the proceedings were resumed and the court ordered her sterilization. Johanna Apun herself, as well as her mother, who had been appointed as her caregiver, did not want to appeal the proceedings, but asked that the sterilization be carried out as soon as possible so that nothing would stand in the way of her release. In the end, however, the operation did not take place. Johanna Apun was taken on the first transport leaving Kutzenberg via Niederhart near Linz to Hartheim, where she was gassed. Her mother first received a card from Linz and shortly afterwards the news of her death from Hartheim. The cause of death was given as pneumonia, which Johanna's mother immediately doubted. According to her own statements, it quickly became clear to the family that she had been murdered.

Elisabeth Nebl was also part of the first transport. Born in Coburg in 1913, she was described by her teachers as a kind student who achieved good grades. The welfare nurse Erna Puff also gave her and her family a positive reference and confirmed that she came from a good and clean family home. After school, Elisabeth Nebl first took a job as a domestic helper and eventually moved to Holland to work as a domestic helper there as well. During her stay, however, she developed a clinical picture that was described as "sexual influences and sensations," which led to her being deported back to Germany and admitted to Kutzenberg in June 1935. Here, due to her diagnosis of schizophrenia, which was accompanied by depression, an application was made to have her sterilized. Although the police investigation explicitly stated that there was no hereditary predisposition within the family, the court wanted to see the police's findings as proof of the hereditary nature of her illness and decided in October 1935 to sterilize her on the grounds of her alleged particular reproductive danger. Her parents agreed to the forced sterilization, provided that it was indeed a case of schizophrenia. In March of the following year, Elisabeth Nebl underwent surgery. [513]Four years later, her name also appeared on one of the transport lists of the *Gemeinnützige Kranken-Transport-GmbH (Charitable Patient Transport Company)*. Shortly before the transfer, her mother had visited Elisabeth Nebl in Kutzenberg, where she found her in a physically

512 See the case of Johanna Apun. StACo Hereditary Health Court 10 and witness statement by Maria Apun, May 24, 1950. StACo StAnw 104.

513 See the case of Elisabeth Nebl. StACo Hereditary Health Court 572; StABa Kutzenberg Sanatorium and Nursing Home K 61 3761 and witness statement by Elisabeth Nebl, May 1950. StACo StAnw 104.

found to be in good health. When the letter of consolation arrived from the Hartheim home stating the cause of death as a boil on the upper lip, and the mother soon discovered that many others who had been transferred had died on the same day, she too quickly became suspicious.

Once it became apparent to the relatives of the victims that the patients had all died within the same period, many realized that the causes of death could hardly have been natural. In addition, many family members were also aware of the patients' state of health and were able to rule out the stated causes of death on purely medical grounds. The reaction of the relatives ultimately varied widely. While some expressed a kind of relief at being freed from the burden of caring for a relative in the tense conditions of war, others sent letters of protest to the authorities, which were mostly met with threats. It quickly became known among the other institutional patients that a transfer did not bode well, so that the appearance of "Schinderhannes" Küppers soon caused a great stir in the institution. Without the institutional staff being officially informed about the purpose of the transfers, the background to the action soon became apparent.

The extent to which those involved in "Aktion T4" ultimately had the leeway to influence the events during the transfer process is shown by the fact that, after the second transport from Kutzenberg, one man returned to the institution after a short time. At an intermediate institution, those responsible noticed that he was a wounded veteran of World War I and was therefore actually excluded from the measures. Dr. Entres and the doctors and nurses working in Kutzenberg also tried to influence the procedure without actively opposing the measures. On the one hand, they tried as far as possible to remove names from the lists from Berlin. In other cases, the families were notified when their relatives were scheduled for transport, so that they had the opportunity to bring the patients home, provided that the patients had been in Kutzenberg voluntarily. The railway officials at the station in Lichtenfels also took a stand against participating in the transports, as Dr. Entres reported to Senior Government Councilor Gaum·

Another victim of "Aktion T4" connected to Coburg, who was transferred to Hartheim via the Salzburg State Hospital rather than via Kutzenberg and gassed there, was Princess Maria Karoline of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha and Bragança. The princess from the Catholic line of Saxe-Coburg-Kohára was born in Pula in 1899 as the daughter of Karoline of Austria-Tuscany and August Leopold of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha and Bragança. After the "Anschluss" of Austria, her family moved from the hunting lodge in Schladming, where she had lived in seclusion with her mother and siblings, to Budapest. Maria herself was placed in the care of the nuns at the Salzburg nursing home, but was diagnosed with schizophrenia and ended up in

514 See ibid.

515 See Upper and Middle Franconia State Police, Bamberg Criminal Investigation Branch, February 28, 1949, and interrogation of Dr. Entres by the Upper and Middle Franconia State Police, Bamberg Criminal Investigation Branch, February 23, 1949. StACo StAnw 104.

516 See: State Police of Upper and Middle Franconia, Bamberg Criminal Investigation Branch, February 28, 1949, and interrogation of Dr. Entres by the State Police of Upper and Middle Franconia, Bamberg Criminal Investigation Branch, February 23, 1949. StACo StAnw 104.

the killing machinery of "Aktion T4" and was presumably murdered in Hartheim on June 6, 1941. Maria's alleged remains were sent by mail in an urn to Coburg in July 1941 to be buried in the Koháry crypt of St. Augustine. The following entry was made in the death register of St. Augustine: "Maria von Sachsen-Coburg-Gotha, princess, Catholic, unmarried. Mentally ill; official measures. Cremated in Hartheim on June 7 (involuntarily), official measures."[517] As Viktoria Adelheid later admitted, the ducal family was told by their general director that their niece "had died in a place where the insane were gassed."[518]

Transition to starvation rations

After voices speaking out more or less covertly about the killing of patients had finally grown louder, and after, among others, the Bishop of Münster, Clemens August Graf von Galen, had publicly denounced the killing of patients in his sermons in the summer of 1941, "Aktion Gnadentod," the systematic killing in the Reich institutions, was discontinued. However, the killing of patients continued in a second, decentralized phase. In November 1942, Dr. Walter Schultze, the Ministerial Director in the Health Department of the Bavarian State Ministry, Senior Government Official Dr. Gaum, and all the directors of Bavarian hospitals and nursing homes met for a conference in Munich. At the suggestion of Dr. Valentin Falthauser, director of the Irsee institution near Kaufbeuren, it was decided to introduce a starvation diet, whereby institutional patients who were no longer able to perform useful work would be malnourished and thus murdered in the institutions themselves. By decree of the State Ministry of the Interior on December 15, 1942, fat- and vitamin-free starvation diets were also ordered in Kutzenberg and introduced in 1943, having already been tested in Kaufbeuren and Eglfing-Haar.

However, when implementing the measure, the institution directors now had much greater leeway and power to decide how to distribute the resources in their institutions, which were in short supply due to the war. Overcrowding due to the evacuation of other institutions and a shortage of food, heating fuel, medicine, and staff had caused mortality rates in institutions to skyrocket everywhere since the beginning of the war, even before the introduction of "starvation rations." By running his own farm and converting the institution's parkland into vegetable gardens, Dr. Entres had already taken decisive measures since the beginning of the war to continue improving the food in his institution. In 1943, a special low-nutrient diet was introduced, particularly in the *guarded wards for restless men* and *women* in Kutzenberg. Although Dr. Entres ordered that fat continue to be added to this special diet, the mortality rate in the institution rose to 12.3% in 1943, 15.0% in 1944, and 13.3% in 1945, far above the average of previous years. Overall, however, the figures in Kutzenberg remained below those of other similar institutions, which administered starvation rations according to strict

517 Death register, St. Augustin parish archives. On Princess Maria Karoline of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha and Bragança, see Faes, Monika: Schladming's forgotten princess. Maria Karoline of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha (1899–1941). In: Heimatkundliche Blätter von Schladming 81 (2021), pp. 1–6.

518 Viktoria Adelheid to the Coburg Denazification Court, August 17, 1946. StACo Denazification Court Coburg City S1.

519 See statement by Dr. Entres, November 16, 1948. StACo StAnw 104.

standards had been introduced. [520] The fact that mortality among women in Kutzenberg was significantly lower than among men was mainly due to the efforts of the Oberzell nuns, who undermined the measures approved by the institution's management by secretly providing additional food.[521] The extent to which killings were carried out in Kutzenberg under Dr. Entres, as in other institutions, by administering medication is not known.[522] In other institutions, such as the Ansbach mental hospital, there is evidence that residents of Coburg were murdered by means of medication, either through the administration of a special diet or through the administration of Luminal by Dr. Irene Asam-Bruckmüller. Patients were given the barbiturate phenobarbital over a long period of time, which led to slow respiratory paralysis and, in most cases, pneumonia, from which the victims died after days or weeks of agony.[523] Four people from Coburg died in the Ansbach institution between 1941 and 1945, three of whom were presumably actively killed and one victim died due to the catastrophic conditions in the institutions towards the end of the war.

3.2 Coburg becomes "free of Jews"

At the beginning of 1939, the *Bavarian Ostmark* announced "Synagogue into Museum," thus setting the future course of action. At the behest of the NSDAP, numerous objects from Jewish ownership had been collected for a local history museum, which was also to feature the complete furnishings of a Jewish synagogue. Although 64 "practicing Jews" still lived in the city in May 1939, Jewish Coburg was now a thing of the past and, as such, was only part of a bygone era in the museum.[525]Parallel to the process of plundering and expropriating the Jews of Coburg, the urban space available to them was increasingly restricted and became a prohibited zone.

As early as December 1938, following the enactment of the police ordinance on the appearance of Jews in public, the Coburg police department, in consultation with traffic director Weidmann, had defined prohibited zones within the urban area. According to this, there was to be a permanent ban on the Hofgarten, including the Herzogsweg, the

520 At the Ansbach mental hospital, the mortality rate was around 19% in 1943 and 1944 and 30% in 1945. See Weisenseel, Reiner: Ansbach Mental Hospital. In: Cranach, Michael von; Siemen, Hans-Ludwig (eds.): Psychiatry under National Socialism. Bavarian Mental Hospitals between 1933 and 1945. 2nd edition. Munich 2012, pp. 143–157, here p. 157.

521 See Zenk: Kutzenberg, pp. 139–141.

522 In 1949, the public prosecutor's office launched a preliminary investigation against Dr. Entres, who returned to his old position after a short period of imprisonment following the end of the war. Together with Dr. Georg Bischof and Dr. Hans Mönius, he was charged with aiding and abetting murder in approximately 400 cases. However, after Dr. Entres' death in June 1950, the proceedings were discontinued before they even began.

523 See Kaelber, Lutz; Deavin, Mark-Kevin: "Medicinal euthanasia administered to individual children in a moribund state" Dr. Irene Asam-Bruckmüller. In: Proske, Wolfgang (ed.): Perpetrators, accomplices, followers. Volume 15: People with Nazi ties from Middle Franconia. Gerstetten 2023, pp. 295–307.

524 See written information from Mark-Kevin Deavin dated March 4, 2024. See also his forthcoming book on the murders of patients at the Ansbach mental hospital.

525 See *Bayerische Ostmark* dated January 7, 1939, and Bavarian State Office for Statistics (ed.): Die Religionszugehörigkeit der Bevölkerung in Bayern nach der Volkszählung vom 17. Mai 1939 und dem Gebietsstand vom 1. Oktober 1940 (The Religious Affiliation of the Population in Bavaria According to the Census of May 17, 1939, and the Territorial Status of October 1, 1940). Munich, 1941, p. 23.

Arcades with the memorial and the castle square, the garden show, the village green, and all sports fields, as well as visits to theaters, cinemas, swimming pools, or similar facilities. In addition, a temporary ban was to come into force one hour before and after public rallies and events organized by the NSDAP, its branches, and affiliated associations. The same applied during public events organized by the Wehrmacht and on market days. Since September 25, 1939, Jews had also been prohibited from leaving their homes after 8 p.m.

The "first National Socialist city in Germany" now worked diligently to become the "Jew-free" zone. By 1939, the number of Jewish families living in Coburg, which had been around 180 in 1933, had already decreased significantly. The majority of Coburg's Jews had left the city or the German Reich in their difficult search for a safe haven. Those who remained in Coburg were now to be deprived of the little space that was still safe for them, their private homes. Likewise, the last contacts between Jewish and "Aryan" spheres were to be ended. Of the 39 Jewish families still living in Coburg at the beginning of 1939, 18 were homeowners and 25 were families who lived in rented accommodation. Among them were four Jewish women who were married to "Aryans." In addition, there were seven single Jewish persons who were listed as subtenants. In this context, the Coburg police department reported to the regional council that only a few of them still lived with "Aryans" and that these situations would soon be eliminated through relocation or emigration. On the initiative of the city, the further influx of Jews into the city district was also to be prohibited, after several Jews had moved to Coburg in the course of 1938. Despite a number of applications for emigration, the total number of Jews in Coburg had not decreased, which made it difficult for the city to soon be able to call itself "free of Jews."[528] After Mayor Rehlein, even after a meeting with the administrative advisors, came to the conclusion that "in view of the severe housing shortage in Coburg, it would be desirable, in my opinion, if it were legally permissible, to prevent the influx of Jews" [529], the city submitted inquiries to the German Municipal Council and the city of Würzburg, where such a ban had been enacted. While Würzburg reported that it was not the city administration but the police department and state police office that had issued a corresponding order, the German Municipal Council expressly pointed out that a local regulation as a police ordinance was not legally tenable, as jurisdiction for this lay exclusively with Reich legislation. In addition, the Coburg city administration was made aware that Göring, the commissioner for the Four-Year Plan, had ordered that all special actions against Jews were to be discontinued.

In 1939, the "Law on Tenancies with Jews" of April 30, 1939, allowed "Aryan" homeowners to terminate the leases of their Jewish tenants without notice.

526 See memo from the police department dated December 8, 1938. StadtACo A 8521.
527 See Mayor Rehlein to the District President in Ansbach, February 8, 1939. StadtACo A 8521.
528 See ibid. and memo from the police department dated February 7, 1939. StadtACo A 8521.
529 Excerpt from the meeting with the administrative advisors, February 9, 1939. StadtACo A 8521.
530 See Der Deutsche Gemeindetag (German Municipal Association) to the mayor of Coburg, February 10, 1939. StadtACo A 8521.

This was intended to free up living space for "Aryan" families and put an end to the coexistence of Jews and non-Jews once and for all.Not all landlords made use of this option, but as a result, several Jewish families, such as the Plessner family, had to move into houses that were still owned by Jews. Jewish homeowners were now obliged by the Eviction Act to take in Jewish tenants. The houses of Jakob Friedman at Ketschengasse 6, Emil Gutmann at Straße der SA 32, and Eduard Plaut at Hans-Schemm-Straße 15 were converted into "Jewish houses" in this way. Where Nazi legislation expanded the areas of persecution in the city, the urban space accessible to Jews was even more restricted than before.

While the city police administration took less vehement action against the remaining Jews in Coburg, who had almost completely disappeared from the view of the "Aryan" population, the district leadership in particular pushed for a hard line. Unaware of the requirement to wear the Jewish star, which had been introduced by police order on September 1, 1941, and was to take effect on September 19, the district office manager of the NSDAP, Schulz, reported to the mayor of the city on September 4, 1941: "At the same time, there are repeated suggestions that Jews should be identified by a badge, as it has been established that Jews are approaching foreign soldiers without these soldiers knowing that they are Jews."[532] In addition, the district leadership reported alleged complaints from the population that Jews were shopping in Coburg stores outside of designated hours and were also being served. In fact, however, such a regulation had been suspended by the police due to the small number of Jews in the city. Nevertheless, the head of the retail trade group, Karl Hartung, wrote a circular letter to the retail stores in the clothing, textile, and leather trade group, urging store owners to strictly adhere to the business hours of 8 to 9 a.m. for Jews, as he had already ordered in April 1940.[533] In addition, the district leadership suggested that police patrols be set up in the Hofgarten to prevent Jews from using the park benches there. However, police inquiries with the park supervisors revealed that although some Jews living in Coburg had settled on the benches, this had not led to any complaints from the rest of the population. Subsequent checks in the Hofgarten then revealed that no Jews were to be found there. [534]

At the same time as the massive restriction of the freedom of movement of Coburg's Jews within the city, a police ordinance of September 1941 also prohibited them from leaving the city without police permission. Obtaining such permission proved to be extremely difficult, as the police department was extremely restrictive in this regard. When Alfred Plessner, after the death of Alfred Masur in February...

531 See RGBl. I 1939, p. 864 f.

532 District Office Director Schulz to the Mayor of the City of Coburg, September 4, 1941. StadtACo A 8521.

533 See Karl Hartung to the retail stores of the clothing, textile, and leather trade association, June 17, 1941. StACo Denazification Tribunal Coburg City H 74.

534 See police memos dated September 11 and 15 and November 20, 1941. StadtACo A 8521.

535 See RGBl. I 1941, p. 547.

When the chairman of the Jewish community in Coburg reported to the police department in February 1941 that the Jewish community in Bamberg urgently requested his presence, the Coburg officials immediately contacted the security police in Bamberg. Together, the security authorities decided that Plessner's presence in Bamberg was not considered necessary and thus rejected his request.[536] Special permission was only granted if it was necessary for work assignments to which the Coburg Jews were sent in 1941, including the porcelain factories in Creidlitz and Julius Griesbach in Cortendorf. [537]

In September 1941, 16 Jewish men and 23 Jewish women were still living in Coburg. Their actual social isolation became apparent because the opportunities for daily services for the Coburg Jews no longer existed. Members of the Jewish community had normally traveled to hairdressers in the surrounding area for regular haircuts, but this was now impossible due to the ban on leaving the city limits. Requests by Ursula and Lotti Bernstein to be allowed to travel for necessary haircuts were rejected by the police. In addition, the hairdressers who had served Jews were all conscripted. After the remaining local hairdressers also refused to serve Jewish customers in their shops in order not to lose their other customers, Alfred Plessner approached the city administration to find a solution. The district craftsmen's association proposed that a few skilled workers be assigned to cut hair in a room set up privately for this purpose and passed judgment on the completely isolated and dispossessed Jews of Coburg: "The funds for the new facility can easily be raised by the Jews, for they still have a great deal of capital at their disposal. These people also have an abundance of space; we need only recall the sometimes oversized apartments that are sometimes used by only two people."[538] After the administrative advisory board approved Jews being allowed to have their hair cut at home, all hairdressers refused to do so, citing several reasons. Alfred Plessner then asked for permission to be trained himself so that he could at least perform the simplest haircutting tasks and thus regain a measure of dignity for the remaining Jews in Coburg, which was associated with a neat appearance. Shortly thereafter, however, the police reported: "Further action on this matter is not necessary, as the Jews have since been transported to Bamberg and Nuremberg on the orders of the Secret State Police."[539]

The deportations of the last Jews from Coburg began after a ban on emigration was issued in October 1941 and Nazi policy toward Jews had shifted to their extermination. On November 27, 1941, 26 of the 39 Jews still living in Coburg were deported via Nuremberg to Riga. Lotti Bernstein was the only Coburg resident on this transport who survived the Holocaust. A few months later, on
April 24, 1942, five more Jewish Coburg residents were first taken to Bamberg and then

536 See Alfred Plessner to the Coburg Police Department, November 19, 1941, and memo from the Coburg Police Department dated November 20, 1941. StadtACo A 8521.

537 See Ursula Bernstein to the Coburg Police Department, October 12, 1941, and Alfred Plessner to the Coburg Police Department, October 29, 1941. StadtACo A 8521.

538 The district craftsmen's association, district master craftsmen to the Coburg administrative police, September 27, 1941. StadtACo A 8521.

539 Memo from the police department dated December 2, 1941. StadtACo A 8521.

From there, they were taken to Izbica near Lublin. A third transport left Coburg on September 10, 1942, with six Jewish citizens of Coburg who had been among the older members of the Jewish community and who were also taken via Nuremberg to the "old people's ghetto" in Theresienstadt. Only four women remained in Coburg, who lived in "privileged mixed marriages" with "Aryans" and thus escaped deportation. With the departure of the deportation trains to the extermination camps, the end of the Jewish community in Coburg was sealed and the "national community" exclusion policy had come to an end, allowing Mayor Greim to declare the city "free of Jews."[540] Rumors of mass killings in the East had repeatedly spread on the "home front," and soldiers on leave from the front were also able to provide clues, making it quite possible to guess the fate of the deported Coburg residents.

4 End of the war and outlook

At least since the defeat at Stalingrad, the gap between the reality experienced by the German population and Nazi propaganda had been widening. A war situation that was becoming increasingly hopeless, the expansion of the air war, the accompanying destruction in major German cities, and the steady influx of evacuees and refugees caused the inclusive power of the idea of the "people's community" to wane. As the war progressed, the apathy and depoliticization of the population increasingly clashed with the last vestiges of fanaticism on the part of some party officials. These officials had distanced themselves far from the majority of the population, even though some still believed in the "final victory," in "weapons of retaliation," and in "trust in the Führer" in the sense of *the Führer myth*. The scope for action was now determined both by the legal situation, which consolidated the apparatus of coercion in the war, and by the expansion of the party's powers promoted by the "total war" and the shift of responsibilities to middle and lower decision-making levels. Against this backdrop, as the war progressed, a radicalization of individual functionaries could be observed, who attempted to maintain the "home front" through their personal rule by demanding discipline and harsh punishments. In the final phase of the war, the NSDAP's mobilization campaigns ultimately resorted to the slogan "victory or destruction," using coercion, terror, and fear to persuade the population to persevere in a hopeless "final battle."[542]

Martial law executions at the end of the war

In this context, District Administrator Feichtmayr also ordered that a "flying military court-martial" of the 7th Army be set up in the council school by Infantry Major Erwin Helm, as well as a reception camp for scattered soldiers and

540 See Fromm: Jews, pp. 133–138.

541 See Herbert: History, pp. 482–487.

542 On the final phase of the war, see Keller, Sven: Verbrechen in der Endphase des Zweiten Weltkrieges. Überlegungen zu Abgrenzung, Methodik und Quellenkritik. In: Arendes, Cord; Wolfrum, Edgar; Zedler, Jörg (eds.): Terror nach Innen. Verbrechen am Ende des Zweiten Weltkrieges (= Dachauer Symposien zur Zeitgeschichte, vol. 6). Göttingen 2006, pp. 28–31 and Keller: Volksgemeinschaft.

Hospital patients in the General von Selle Barracks. [543] In order to maintain discipline among the exhausted German troops and the civilian population, the courts-martial primarily relied on maximum deterrence, aggressively disregarding proper legal procedure in favor of summary justice. During its period of activity in Coburg from April 2 to 8, 1945, the court martial handed down several death sentences against soldiers accused of desertion or "cowardice," which were carried out by shooting or hanging and can be classified as crimes committed during the final phase of the war.[544]Even insufficient or inaccurate soldiers' papers could be sufficient grounds for a death sentence before the court martial. In particular, the soldiers hanged from trees, whom the Helm court martial left behind on its march from the Rhine to the Sudetenland, were intended to send a warning to the population. An unknown soldier was hanged on Lautererstraße on April 6, 1945. At the shooting range of the Hindenburg Barracks, an unknown soldier was shot on April 4 by a group of soldiers under the command of Captain Karl Sotte, commander of Panzergrenadier Replacement and Training Battalion 12. Members of Panzergrenadier Regiment 12 also shot Lieutenant Paul Carnaps in the barracks on April 7. However, it is believed that neither of them were found guilty by the Helm court-martial, but rather by a field court-martial in the second case by Dr. Karl Eglseer. He also sentenced Private Willibald Frischmann, who was executed in Nordhalben. Bruno Bähr carried out the presumably arbitrary shooting of another unknown soldier during a transfer from Coburg to Kronach in a wooded area between Buch am Forst and Lichtenfels. Martial law executions with proven court martial verdicts were carried out on Lance Corporal Max Kirchner on April 6 at the Coburg-Ketschendorf fork in the road and on Private Erich Angermüller on the same day. After coming under fire from American forces from Würzburg, Schweinfurt, and Bamberg, Kirchner had been sent back to his hometown of Coburg, where he reported to the military registration office and was subsequently arrested by SS men due to ambiguities in his papers and taken to the Von Berg barracks. When the Helm court martial learned of his case, it took over and, after a trial without deliberation at the roadside restaurant, sentenced him to death and hanged Kirchner from a tree. Angermüller, who came from Weishausen near Coburg, was also tried and sentenced to death here for alleged desertion. When the condemned man allegedly attempted to escape on his way to his execution, he was killed with a shot to the head. [546]Such terror measures ensured that the German troops continued to fight to the end, despite the hopelessness of their situation. However, they could no longer change the outcome of the war.

543 On the use of summary courts-martial in the final phase of the war, see Keller: Volksgemeinschaft, pp. 333–345.

544 On crimes committed in the final phase, see Wolfrum, Edgar; Zedler, Jörg (eds.): Terror nach Innen. Verbrechen am Ende des Zweiten Weltkrieges (= Dachauer Symposien zur Zeitgeschichte, vol. 6). Göttingen 2006.

545 On the Helm court martial, see Henke, Klaus-Dietmar: Die amerikanische Besetzung Deutschlands (= Sources and Representations of Contemporary History, Volume 27). Munich 2009, p. 851 and Kalmbach, Peter Lutz: Flying courts-martial. The emergence and impact of an instrument of National Socialist military justice. In: VfZ 69 (2021), pp. 211–239.

546 See summary of the investigation reports in the case against Bruno Bähr in 1952 by the Coburg public prosecutor's office. StACo StAnw 1066.

The last days of the war and the surrender of the city

On April 8, 1945, the approaching end of the war finally became apparent in Coburg, bringing three turbulent days for the city until the Americans marched in. From this White Sunday onwards, the US Air Force carried out several heavy attacks on the city, which were now accompanied by artillery fire, setting several buildings in the city center on fire and destroying them. In a symbolism that could hardly be surpassed, the "Adolf Hitler House," which was fired upon by fighter-bombers, caught fire, and was completely destroyed, was one of the most significant losses of building fabric in the city. A total of 44 houses were completely destroyed, 112 were severely damaged, and 328 were slightly damaged.[547] The air and low-level attacks also claimed the lives of 51 people.[548] Since the beginning of April, the city and its surroundings had repeatedly been the target of US air and low-level attacks. The railways and postal service had already ceased operations. At the beginning of April, Captain Karl Sotte had been appointed commander of the defense of Coburg. As a "cornerstone" on the Main front, the city was to be defended on the orders of the Wehrmacht High Command, for which Sotte had only about 1,500 soldiers at his disposal. To this end, tank barriers were erected at all approaches to the city and bridges and railway tracks were rigged with explosives. The municipal police, barricaded in the police station, had only pistols and old Polish infantry rifles with little ammunition at their disposal to fight the advancing Americans. Mayor Greim had ordered the destruction of the central archives of the party and city administration, handed over the city's affairs to Alfred Sauerteig on April 9, and fled to Regensburg with other Coburg residents. His instruction to those who remained behind was to defend the city to the utmost, in accordance with the orders of the Wehrmacht High Command. [549]Himmler's flag decree had ordered the harshest crackdowns and shootings if white flags were raised, tank barriers opened, or the "Volkssturm" not deployed.[550] Before leaving Coburg, the district leadership also ordered larger companies in Coburg to destroy their factories and machinery so that they would not fall into the hands of the enemy.[551] As in many places, however, these instructions were not followed. Only an army supply depot in Neuses was set on fire. The Coburg "Volkssturm" was also disbanded by its leader, retired Colonel Edwin Pottiez and Sotte, due to its poor equipment and training, before it could be deployed.

547 For information on the damage caused, see the report on the deployment of the fire department at the end of the war in Coburg, undated. StadtACo Coburgica I/510 and Atlas for the reconstruction of the Bavariathek. URL: https://hdbg.eu/wiederaufbau/orte/detail/coburg/45 (last accessed on January 5, 2024). This included, for example, the district court building, which burned down completely, along with all the court files.

548 See report on the deployment of the fire department at the end of the war in Coburg, undated. StadtACo Coburgica I/510 and Nahr, Wolf-Dietrich: Coburg 1945. The Liberation. The Newspaper War. The New Beginning. Erlangen 1995, p. 44. Harald Sandner cites 45 fatalities. See Sandner: Coburg, p. 187.

549 See police report on the last days before the surrender of the city of Coburg, undated. StadtACo Coburgica I/510; OKW order for the defense of cities dated April 12, 1945. Reprinted in: Spiwoks, Erich; Stöber, Hans: Endkampf zwischen Mosel und Inn. XIII. SS-Armeekorps. Osnabrück 1999, p. 418. Wilhelm Rehlein had refused to take over the city's affairs according to the police report.

550 See Himmler's order on measures against the population's willingness to surrender dated April 3, 1945. Reprinted in: Jakobsen, Hans-Adolf: 1939–45: Der Zweite Weltkrieg in Chronik und Dokumenten. Darmstadt 1959, p. 424.

551 See Hitler's order on measures of destruction in the Reich territory of March 19, 1945. Reprinted in: Hubatsch, Walter (ed.): Hitler's Instructions for Warfare 1939–1945. Koblenz 1983, p. 303.

kam.[552] The "people's war" hoped for by the Nazi leadership, with the participation of the entire population, failed to materialize because the limits of mobilization had already been far exceeded. In a kind of comprehensive apathy, the population had awaited the end of the war in air-raid shelters. It seemed like a fatal gamble whether one's own city would experience another catastrophe due to the remaining fanaticism of a few, mostly on the part of the SS, the Hitler Youth, or "Werewolf units," or during a defensive attempt by the Wehrmacht as it fell into enemy hands.[553] Especially in the last days of the war, the "people's community" had proven to be a sham. The majority of the population was now aware that the Nazi state could no longer be saved, so that the priority was now to get their own lives, possessions, and immediate homeland safely through the eye of the needle that was the end of the war. [554]

On April 10, American forces coming from the Lange Berge mountains surrounded the city with a loose siege ring. Sotte had withdrawn his defensive positions at the Callenberger Forest due to the superior strength of the Americans, but was unable to get the order to defend the city of Coburg lifted. An OKW office in the armory in Herrengasse left the city. After the Americans had fired artillery at Coburg, setting several buildings on fire,[555] a white flag was briefly seen on the Veste. It was probably raised with the consent of Duchess Viktoria Adelheid and Captain Sotte, but the flag was taken down again shortly afterwards by Wehrmacht soldiers or SS men who were present.[556]Negotiators sent by Sotte to the Americans to negotiate a ceasefire for the evacuation of refugees from the Veste received an ultimatum from the US armed forces to surrender without a fight and were threatened with the complete destruction of the city. Only after Sotte had left the Veste unnoticed were the two parliamentarians able to accept General George Smith Patton's demands for surrender. Alfred Sauerteig also found himself in a kind of power vacuum without direct contact to Captain Sotte and without the consent of Carl Eduard[557] Police officers on behalf of the

552 See personal report by Edmund Volk, head of security at the town hall, to Alfred Sauerteig, undated. StadtACo Coburgica I/510.

553 See Arends, Cord: Schrecken aus dem Untergrund (Terror from the Underground). Endphaseverbrechen des „Werwolf" (Crimes of the "Werwolf" in the Final Phase). In: ibid.; Wolfrum, Edgar; Zedler, Jörg (eds.): Terror nach Innen (Terror Within). Verbrechen am Ende des Zweiten Weltkrieges (Crimes at the End of World War II) (= Dachau Symposia on Contemporary History, Volume 6). Göttingen 2006, pp. 149–171.

554 See police report on the last days before the surrender of the city of Coburg, undated. StadtACo Coburgica I/510; the various diary entries in Habel, Hubertus: Die lange "Stunde Null" Coburg zwischen amerikanischer Besetzung und Entnazifizierung (= Coburger Stadtgeschichte, vol. 3). Coburg 2005 and Keller: Volksgemeinschaft, pp. 365 f. In preparation for the end of the war, the art collections of the Veste had been moved to Banz Castle. Werner Faber, the mayor of Stettin, also had a collection of paintings from Stettin evacuated to Coburg and stored there in the Rückert School.

555 Firefighting was hardly possible at this point, as the fire department was unable to respond due to the many tank barriers. See report on the fire department's efforts at the end of the war in Coburg, undated. StadtACo Coburgica I/510.

556 For more on the controversy and the various accounts of the raising of the white flag at the Veste, see Wolz, Alexander: Das Hissen der weißen Fahne auf des Veste Coburg im April 1945. In: Coburger Geschichtsblätter 27 (2019), pp. 95–99. Wolz rules out the often-claimed assertion that the SS, which was probably not present at the Veste at the time, shot down the flag.

557 The provisional city administration's attempts to contact Carl Eduard with the request that he take over negotiations with the Americans to protect the city had always gone unanswered.



Fig. 48: End of the war in Coburg, photograph taken by the US Army in 1945

The city administration sent a delegation to the Americans, offering the unconditional surrender of the city. This allowed the American forces to advance into the city center on the morning of April 11, which was now decorated with white flags. The Americans also insisted on a separate surrender of the fortress by Carl Eduard.

With the invasion of American troops and the unconditional surrender of the city on April 11, 1945, the "Third Reich" also came to an end in Coburg. The city had survived the war and the end of the war without excessive destruction, which contemporaries in the Duke's connections to England saw as justified. From then on, the "first National Socialist city in Germany" was faced with the difficult task of finding a way to deal with its very special past, its status as a pioneer, and its seemingly glorious role in establishing the "Third Reich," which had now served for a decade and a half to define, identify, and validate the city and its inhabitants.[559] Some actors now contributed to a complex process of

558 See police report on the last days before the surrender of the city of Coburg, undated; personal report by Edmund Volk, head of security at the town hall, to Alfred Sauerteig, undated. StadtACo Coburgica I/510; Nahr: Coburg 1945, pp. 21–49 and Schmidt, Hans-Jürgen: Coburg und die amerikanischen Streitkräfte 1945–1990 (= Schriftenreihe der Historischen Gesellschaft Coburg, Band 10) Coburg 1995.

559 On the postwar period in Coburg, see Beyersdorf: Military Government; Schmidt, Hans-Jürgen: Coburg and the American Armed Forces 1945–1990 (= Series of Publications by the Coburg Historical Society, Volume 10)

This initiated a process of reappraisal that would ultimately extend over the following decades and into the present day. They set Coburg on the difficult and painful, but necessary and inevitable path of confronting its own past, even though it would take decades and conflict-ridden negotiations before *the great silence*[560] surrounding the events before 1945 was broken and the desire for reappraisal, which could no longer be ignored after years of forgetting and repression, became apparent. Three highlights, outlined here only in broad strokes, are intended to give an impression of the light and dark sides of the process of coming to terms with the past that began immediately after 1945.

Coming to terms with the past after the end of the war

Lotti Bernstein was born in Coburg in 1906 and lived with her sister Ursula and her parents in an imposing villa at Marienberg 2a. Her father, Ivan Bernstein, was co-owner of Bernstein & Saalfeld, a wood and cane furniture factory on Uferstraße, and had achieved success and prosperity for himself and his children in Coburg. On November 27, 1941, Lotti Bernstein and her family were deported to the ghetto in Riga. She was the only person from Coburg on this transport to survive the Holocaust after being separated from her parents and sister during a transfer from the Jungfernhof camp near Riga to the Riga ghetto. In August 1945, Lotti Bernstein finally returned to her hometown. Left destitute after the end of the war, she was determined to at least reclaim her possessions, as the family had been forced to leave behind valuable furnishings and belongings that had already been packed for their departure to America, including clothing, linen, and bedding. [562]She filed a report with the Coburg criminal investigation department.
"due to the acquisition of private property belonging to Jewish persons at below-market prices" [563]and asked the officials for help in recovering her property. Tips quickly came in, and after just a few days she was able to find out where most of her family's property, which had been confiscated during their deportation in 1941, had ended up. Among other things, the police received a report that the wife of a tax official had had a green coat made, the fabric of which reminded some Coburg residents of a distinctive fleece blanket belonging to the Bernstein family. The investigation into the confiscated property of Jewish individuals, in which numerous witnesses were questioned in a snowballing process, first by the criminal investigation department and then by the Coburg police, brought to light the full extent of theinvolvement of the Coburg city administration in the so-called "Aktion 3," the system of racial persecution, and the participation of the population in the disenfranchisement of their fellow citizens just a few months after the end of the war.

In the case of Lotti Bernstein, the aforementioned tax officer Karl Tröger personally returned the items he had acquired to her in August 1945 without any restitution proceedings being initiated in this case. In addition, Tröger gave her a gift of

Coburg 1995; Nahr: Coburg 1945; Habel: "Stunde Null"; Melville, Gert (ed.): 45–75. Coburg's Path to the Present (= Schriftenreihe der Historischen Gesellschaft Coburg, vol. 20) Coburg 2006.

560 See Arnim, Gabriele von: Das große Schweigen. Von der Schwierigkeit, mit den Schatten der Vergangenheit zu leben. Munich 1989.

561 See Affidavit Lotti Bernstein, May 6, 1946. StANü Reparations Authority 3994.

562 See ibid.

563 Transcript of Lotti Bernstein's advertisement. StadtACo A 8391.

Tailor-made women's suit and a dinner service. [564] This circumstance was taken into account in his denazification proceedings and used to justify his classification as a follower. [565]Furthermore Lotti Bernstein brought proceedings before the Reparations Authority for her father's company property, whereby she was paid DM 9,650 in compensation, as well as further sums to three other plaintiffs. Like her, many other former Jewish residents of Coburg who had been forced to leave the country, or the *Jewish Restitution Successor Organization* (IRSO) on behalf of the murdered deportees, took similar action and reclaimed part of their rights by way of restitution or compensation.[566] However, with regard to the restitution proceedings, Dr. Hans Neidiger of the Nuremberg Regional Finance Office noted in 1954: "It can be said in general that the former Nazi stronghold of Coburg is causing the greatest difficulties in terms of restitution."[567]

Former Coburg police inspector Wilhelm Janzen, who had been harassed by the Coburg NSDAP even before 1933 and forced out of office, also endeavored to draw attention to the injustice committed against him from the day he was dismissed.[568]After the end of the war, he saw an opportunity to finally obtain justice and, in this context, came across a circumstance that some Coburg residents who had been targeted by the NSDAP before 1933 were confronted with. Post-war German jurisprudence regarding injustices committed during the "Third Reich" was based on the principle that actual persecution was only possible from the time of the "seizure of power" and the "Gleichschaltung" (enforced conformity) of the judiciary. Cases of harassment prior to this time should have been punished by the existing constitutional state. However, the persecution that had already taken place in Coburg since 1929 and affected Erich Unverfähr and Wilhelm Janzen, for example, now fell outside this legal framework. Wilhelm Janzen turned to the city of Coburg in 1947 because he was in the process of gathering evidence for compensation that his demotion and retirement at that time amounted to a political coercive measure.[569] In 1949, Janzen finally submitted an application for redress to the city of Coburg on the basis of the decision of the Bavarian Council of Ministers of February 23, 1946. He argued that without the National Socialists' seizure of power in Coburg, he could have remained in his position until retirement and that a corresponding complaint against his premature

564 See Karl Tröger to the Coburg City Denazification Court, May 30, 1948. StACo Coburg City Denazification Court T 76.

565 See ruling of the Coburg City Denazification Court, August 5, 1948. StACo Denazification Court Coburg City T 76.

566 See the relevant files of the Reparations Authority in the Nuremberg State Archives and the State Compensation Office in the Bavarian Main State Archives. For an overview, see Hockerts, Hans Günter: Reparations in Germany 1945–1990. An Overview. In: APuZ 25–26 (2013), pp. 15–22.

567 Nuremberg Regional Finance Office, Fürth branch, August 19, 1954. StANü Reparations Authority III JR 4015. A detailed investigation of the city administration's conduct in the postwar reparations proceedings is still a research desideratum.

568 For Wilhelm Janzen, see chapters III3.1.1 and IV3.1.1.

569 See Wilhelm Janzen to Ludwig Meyer, August 17, 1947, and August 17, 1948. StadtACo personnel file Wilhelm Janzen, submitted by the main office. After Janzen had left the service of the state administration of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania in the summer of 1948 and finally the German Trading Company, he was once again dependent on pension payments from Coburg, which were granted to him from August 1948.

Retirement had to be withdrawn due to his internment in the Dachau concentration camp.[570] However, as his application in Coburg remained unanswered, Janzen turned to the Bavarian Attorney General for Reparations, Philipp Auerbach, and also applied to the Bavarian State Ministry of the Interior for a position in the administration.[571] Although the city of Coburg forwarded Janzen's application to the Bavarian State Office for Reparations in July 1949, the incumbent mayor, Walter Langer, vehemently denied any claims for reparations by the former police inspector. Langer insisted, completely disregarding or misjudging the political reality in Coburg before the takeover, that Janzen's dismissal had not been for political reasons, but because of the medical and psychiatric report from 1931. He also pointed out that the dismissal had taken place before January 30, 1933, so that claims for compensation did not apply to Janzen under the law. At the same time, he refused to reinstate Janzen in the city's police service.[572] Although the ministry acknowledged that persecution could have taken place earlier in Coburg, Janzen's plans ultimately did not succeed. In August 1950, the administrative senate initially decided, and after extensive examination of the evidence in November 1952, the city council also decided to reject all of Janzen's claims for compensation.[573] In October 1953, the Janzen case was finally transferred from the Compensation Chamber for the Higher Regional Court Districts of Bayreuth and Bamberg at the Regional Court of Nuremberg-Fürth to the Compensation Chamber at the Regional Court of Munich I. Ultimately, the court did not want to recognize Janzen's individual persecution and upheld the City of Coburg's motion to dismiss the case. While the city of Coburg used the same argument against Janzen as it had in the course of his involuntary retirement, the Compensation Chamber also based its decision on Janzen's actual proven incapacity to work and a corresponding response that was correct under civil service law. Both sides denied that Janzen's state of health could have resulted from persecution, especially before 1933.

Immediately after the end of the war, another persecuted Coburg resident went to the police to report the injustice committed against him. The former Social Democrat

570 Janzen and his lawyer Stammberger were primarily concerned with compensating for the difference in the pension payments that Janzen received from the city of Coburg, which had resulted from his demotion to a lower salary grade ordered by Schwede. See lawyer Stammberger to the mayor of Coburg, December 7, 1949. StadtACo personnel file Wilhelm Janzen, submitted by the main office.

571 See Wilhelm Janzen to Philipp Auerbach, May 12, 1949. StadtACo personnel file Wilhelm Janzen, submitted by the main office.

572 See City of Coburg to the Bavarian State Office for Reparations, November 17, 1949; Mayor Langer to the State Ministry of the Interior, March 23, 1950, and various witness statements in the hearing of evidence on August 20, 21, and November 3, 1952. StadtACo personnel file Wilhelm Janzen, submitted by the main office.

573 In this context, it was stated with regard to the witness statements that the statements of the SPD men Reichenbecher and Meyer were of less importance and that the former NSDAP member Ernst Kuhn was to be believed, namely that Janzen's conduct outside of work had been the actual deciding factor for the NSDAP's behavior. See minutes of the meeting of the Administrative Senate on August 7, 1950, and of the City Council on November 8, 1952. StadtACo personnel file Wilhelm Janzen, submitted by the main office.

574 See motion by the city of Coburg to dismiss the action, July 11, 1955, and judgment of the Compensation Chamber at the Munich Regional Court, August 17, 1955. StadtACo personnel file Wilhelm Janzen, submitted by the main office.

City councilor and union leader Christian Reichenbecher had already informed the authorities on May 25, 1945, about the torture inflicted on him and others in Coburg.
"Beating room." [575]Reichenbecher's statements ultimately led the public prosecutor's office in Coburg to launch an investigation into the incidents of March 1933, in addition to the denazification process now being initiated by the American occupying forces. [576]

The proceedings were part of a series of efforts aimed at bringing those responsible for and involved in Nazi rule to justice. After a period of comprehensive political "cleansing" by the Americans, denazification was initiated with the "Law for Liberation from National Socialism and Militarism" of
On March 5, 1946, it was placed de jure in the hands of German courts. Later than elsewhere, the work of the Coburg City and County Courts began in Coburg on September 24 and 27, 1946, and continued until the end of 1948. Here, attempts were made in vain to punish those who had participated in the Nazi regime and exclude them from public life by classifying them into five groups. The complex problem, which was partly due to the large number of contradictory witness statements made here, lay in the difficulty of finding appropriate standards for behavior within the dictatorship. The question of guilt, for example, proved to be overly simplistic in the case of actions taken during the Third Reich, as it had to be answered on a legal, moral, or historical level. After the denazification proceedings were concluded, those involved summed up: "In this book [Kampf um Coburg, ed.], you will find all the names of the old Pg's from the Nazi stronghold of Coburg, but they all claim to have been nothing; yet in fact, at least some of them contributed with all their might to promoting the Nazi regime of tyranny and also strengthened it accordingly. But all of them appealed, and unfortunately all the activists were classified as followers. It must also be said openly that these gentlemen are already playing an important role again."[577]

Beyond the courts, the public prosecutor's office in Coburg wanted to conduct criminal proceedings to come to terms with the past. Proceedings were brought in the "Prügelstube" case against Franz Schwede, Werner Faber, Emil Mazuw, Fritz von Baczko, August Rittweger, and nine other defendants, among others. Many other auxiliary police officers involved had been killed or gone missing during the Second World War. Numerous witness statements were taken from the victims, but also from the doctors who had treated them at the time, and medical records were obtained from the Coburg district hospital. A total of 152 "protective custody prisoners" were identified during the proceedings, including 85 cases of confirmed abuse, 52 victims who were able to testify to the abuse themselves, 28 cases of abuse that were testified to by third parties,
33 "protective custody prisoners" for whom abuse could not be proven, and
34 "protective custody prisoners" or surviving dependents who denied abuse. [578]

575 For Christian Reichenbecher, see chapters II2.3.2 and IV3.1.

576 See memo from the Coburg Police Department dated May 23, 1945. StACo StAnw 315.

577 Paul Kretschmer to Rudolf Jeskulke, November 18, 1949. StAMü Denazification Tribunal Box 53, Denazification Tribunal File Fritz von Baczko.

578 See also Amend, Gerhard: The investigation of Nazi injustices by the Coburg Regional Court. Events in the Coburg Town Hall's "beating room" shortly after Hitler seized power. In: Coburger Geschichtsblätter 30 (2022), pp. 17–27. For general information on NSG proceedings, see Eichmüller, Andreas: The prosecution of Nazi crimes by West German judicial authorities since 1945. A statistical overview. In: VfZ 4 (2008), pp. 621–640.

In this context, August Rittweger was sentenced to ten years in prison by the Coburg Regional Court in April 1948 for 23 counts of grievous bodily harm, with the sentence being suspended on February 1, 1955, after eight years and nine months.[579] In April 1951, Franz Schwede was found guilty of 52 counts of assault in office and attempted coercion in office, taking into account the judgment of the Bielefeld court, and sentenced to a total of 10 years in prison. Emil Mazuw was found guilty of 52 counts of assault in office, in conjunction with two counts of coercion in office. Taking into account the verdict of the Bennefeld-Bomlitz court, he was sentenced to 8 years and 6 months in prison. The proceedings against Werner Faber, who had already been in pretrial detention from June to the end of October 1949, had to be separated shortly before the main hearing began in January 1951, as the defendant was deemed unfit to stand trial and died on October 9, 1951. With regard to the auxiliary police officers, two convictions were handed down in the cases of Gustav Arnold and Rudolf Höhn, who were sentenced to prison terms of 10 and 8 months, respectively. In addition, there were three acquittals due to lack of evidence[580] and five cases were dismissed,[581] in three cases due to the Immunity from Prosecution Act of December 31, 1949, and in two cases due to the statute of limitations.[582] The proceedings against Arno Fischer for the abuses in the Coburg district office were discontinued in 1957 due to insufficient evidence.[583] Fritz von Baczko, who had already died in 1935, was portrayed in the proceedings by the other defendants, and in particular by Franz Schwede, as the main person responsible, while the former mayor denied all guilt and showed little remorse or sense of responsibility. In this context, Schwede falsely claimed that he himself had never entered the *Alte Herberge*.

When announcing his verdict in the Schwede case in 1951, the presiding judge of the Coburg Regional Court, Dr. Wilhelm Alwens, concluded: "An aggravating factor is also that these riots in Coburg were, in a sense, the prelude to all the atrocities of the National Socialist regime, the murders of the Röhm Putsch in 1934, the November riots against the Jews in 1938, the mistreatment of concentration camp prisoners, the deportations and extermination of the Jews, etc. (...)."[584]

579 See the judgment of the Coburg Regional Court of April 13, 1948. StACo StAnw 315.
580 These were Rudolf Günther, Johann Zapf, and Ernst Lehmann.
581 These were Ludwig Müller, Albert Weissbrodt, Arthur Vogt, Paul Krauss, and Johannes Beyersdorf.
582 See judgment of the Coburg Regional Court of April 7, 1951. StACo StAnw 900.
583 See decision of the Criminal Division of the Coburg Regional Court dated July 23, 1957. StACo StAnw 81.
584 Judgment of the Coburg Regional Court of April 7, 1951. StACo StAnw 900.

VI Conclusion

From the 1920s to 1945, "Coburg ahead!" and "The name Coburg obliges!" were regarded in this medium-sized town in Upper Franconia as powerful battle cries, norms guiding action, and slogans of regulation, encouraging people to act in an exemplary manner in the spirit of a National Socialist pioneer. These maxims alone can provide insight into the profound fusion of the city and National Socialism that took place in Coburg. Against this backdrop, the present study attempts to show how Coburg came to present itself as "Germany's first National Socialist city" and how the Nazi regime presented, shaped, and maintained itself locally.

Answers to the first question can be found in an interplay between the city's structural dispositions, which were rooted in its specific history and internal logic, and favorable situational conditions. The initial enthusiasm for a new era that emerged after the turmoil of the 1918/19 revolution did not last, not least because the economic and political crises of the Weimar Republic fostered discontent and disorientation, which at times could degenerate into hostility toward the state. The legacy of the German Empire and the war was blamed entirely on the new republic. Experiences of decline were mixed with fears of political upheaval and fueled a persistent sense of crisis. Even at the local political level, no adequate answers were found to adapt the prevailing political traditions to the changed social conditions of a new era. Bourgeois Coburg was in turmoil and, within the new political system and against the backdrop of a changed political culture, found itself desperately searching for a new identity and political home. At the same time, there was a longing for a future perspective that would make it possible to maintain the privileges acquired during the empire and the social order, while once again excluding the working class. The ties to the liberal parties had proven to be extremely weak due to the nature of traditional bourgeois politics. Nationalism, as a cross-party mindset that was also woven into the city's historical self-image, acted as a binding link with the potential for mobilization and radicalization. Against the backdrop of the empire-wide political and economic crises in the early 1920s – intensified in the Coburg area by its border location with Thuringia and the establishment of the "Grenzschutz Nord" (Northern Border Guard) – these radicalization tendencies became clearly visible for the first time. During this phase, the integration of a majority of the bourgeoisie into democracy also failed.

At the same time, a process of disintegration began within the bourgeoisie after the
Nationalism as a secular promise of salvation had superseded the existing milieu structures. While the bourgeois voter associations, against the backdrop of the economic crisis, now saw themselves primarily as representatives of the economic interests of the bourgeoisie in the course of interest-based politics, the representation of the nationalist worldview was able to shift to the association system. Due to the change in

Karl - Coburg ahead #8.indd 755 Nov. 4, 2024, 6:14 p.m.

political culture and a shift in the fields of communication in the existing political spheres – the political revaluation of associations in Coburg, and in particular of nationalist associations – the political sphere was ultimately opened up to people outside the traditional class of dignitaries. For representatives of the petty bourgeoisie in particular, opportunities were created in the völkisch association system and later in the Nazi movement that would have been denied to them in the social order of the imperial era. It was precisely those younger representatives of the petty bourgeoisie whose lives had been marked by war, revolution, and poor career prospects who were ready for a more radical path. The propaganda and the offer of the NSDAP fell on fertile ground among them and seemed to offer them protection and prospects for the future. A decisive advantage of the NSDAP was that, despite its fundamental opposition to the existing political system, it was prepared to participate in politics and thus able to harness the dynamism of the völkisch association movement in the democratic process, as the *Jungdeutscher Orden* had already successfully demonstrated in 1924. Here, too, it had become apparent that the question of personnel was a factor in the shift to the right that should not be neglected. Like Helmut Johnsen, Franz Schwede had also managed to closely link the local branch of his party to his own person. Without Franz Schwede as a leader and organizer, the NSDAP's electoral success in 1929 would have been hardly conceivable.

Against this backdrop, the NSDAP emerged as the clear winner of the prevailing crisis of legitimacy and representation of state power. Even in the economically stable years after 1924, there was little confidence among the middle classes at the local level. The overstretched municipal budget and massive tax increases remained perennial topics in local politics and a starting point for effective propaganda slogans. Thanks to the advanced party organization under Schwede and the instruments of *the Weckruf* and the *Coburger Nationalzeitung*, the Coburg NSDAP also had a means of maintaining its agitation and propaganda and not going under even without an acute economic crisis.[1]Nevertheless, in the case of Coburg and the early electoral success of the National Socialists, the motives of the population cannot be sought exclusively in economic dissatisfaction and newly opened opportunities. The latter were still extremely limited in 1929, when the majority of Coburg's citizens voted for the NSDAP, unlike after 1933. Explanations based purely on sociological motives fall short here. At that time, voting for the NSDAP was an act of conviction and could not be explained without ideological motives, even if the National Socialist worldview was not supported in its ultimate radical consequences.

With their symbols, myths, and rituals, the National Socialists were in line with the bourgeois traditions of the 19th and early 20th centuries and were able to integrate themselves into the urban habitus by continuing and incorporating existing knowledge and forms of expression. They benefited from existing patterns of interpretation, practices, and power configurations. Many central elements of Nazi ideology were already established in the Coburg area through the broad nationalist base and everyday culture. In addition to exaggerated nationalism, anti-Semitic ideas, and enthusiasm for racial doctrine and eugenics, the 1920s saw the emergence of

1 Jürgen Falter also highlights the connection between party organization, the press climate, and the success of the NSDAP. See Falter: Wähler, pp. 378–391.

The bourgeois and völkisch associations developed special social practices that could be seamlessly continued with extreme radicalism after the seizure of power. On democratic ground, as in the referendum on the expropriation of princes, attempts were made to restrict the right to free choice and to denounce those who thought differently. A division of the population into those who belonged and those who were to be excluded had already been prepared in the nationalist camp. The NSDAP was therefore able to present itself as a promising alternative to existing structures and prevailing patterns of thought, while at the same time delegitimizing the existing political order. The nationalist movement in Coburg had a very specific character. Nevertheless, it did not generate an unstoppable momentum that can necessarily be seen as a precursor to the National Socialist success in the city. So, without the nationalist thrust in Coburg's development and profile inevitably leading to a landslide victory for the NSDAP, the social practices it generated were an indispensable prerequisite for the emergence of this radical nationalist and völkisch ideology.

A comparison with the Catholic milieu in the Weimar Republic shows the different effects of sociocultural influences. Whereas within the Catholic milieu, an authoritarian and deferential habitus reduced the appeal of the NSDAP by focusing on its own political and spiritual leaders, it promoted it among the Coburg bourgeoisie. While ritualized everyday practices in Coburg were compatible with the NSDAP, in Catholic communities they served to ward off a völkisch and National Socialist usurpation of everyday life. In the Catholic milieu, isolation from the liberals and social democrats contributed to the internal stability of the milieu, whereas bourgeois tendencies toward demarcation in Coburg promoted a concise nationalist and völkisch worldview. The rise of the NSDAP in Coburg unfolded from the urban bourgeois milieu as part of the bourgeois Protestant camp with its structures and associations. In contrast, after 1933, the NSDAP had to establish itself in Catholic communities by suppressing Catholicism from local public life, almost completely replacing the local "establishment," and expelling and "aligning" local culture, clubs, associations, and integration bodies.

In the radicalism of its political struggle, the NSDAP repeatedly marked breaking points at which the political conventions it changed pushed the loyalty of the national bourgeoisie to its limits. National Socialist clamor was contrary to bourgeois thinking about order itself. However, the "people's community" offer and promise of a better future, the desire to be part of an emerging new movement, and the NSDAP's promise of order also overshadowed those points on which the bourgeois and National Socialist worldviews could not be reconciled. The "people's community" was to replace the "bourgeoisie" as a unifying category. To seek the success of the NSDAP solely in a return to the old and in bourgeois revisionism therefore simplifies the

2 For comparison, see, for example, Rauh-Kühne, Cornelia: Katholisches Milieu und Kleinstadtgesellschaft. Ettlingen 1918–1939. Sigmaringen 1991; idem: Katholisches Sozialmilieu, Region und Nationalsozialismus. In: Möller, Horst; Wirsching, Andreas; Ziegler, Walter (eds.): National Socialism in the Region. Contributions to regional and local research and international comparison. Munich 1996, pp. 213–236.

Historical reality. (3) It was not only an insurmountable contradiction between progress and the desire to preserve tradition that lay at the heart of the special appeal of the National Socialist movement and ideology. Since the days of Ernst II at the latest, the role of national pioneer and thus the claim to be a trailblazer for a new era had been woven into the very fabric of the city of Coburg. Like the former Duke of Coburg, Carl Eduard, the majority of Coburg's citizens were no longer concerned solely with restoring old conditions, but also with leading a new movement. In the second half of the 19th century, the city had experienced an upswing in terms of culture, economy, politics, and national prestige. Both Carl Eduard and the city's bourgeoisie were therefore looking for a political force that not only promised a revival of the "good old days," but also brought with it the feeling of a comparable upswing. This highly emotional component was also a decisive factor in the success of the NSDAP in Coburg. Franz Schwede himself described this circumstance in retrospect as follows: "In the course of these first months, I realized more and more clearly how here in Coburg, far more than in any other city, the ground had already been prepared for the völkisch idea. How here in Coburg the obligation of a great past became palpable in each individual, how the strong impulses of traditional German forces began to come alive and take effect once again." The fact that Hitler's appearance in Coburg in 1922, which Schwede glorified as the "first chapter of new German history," could be interpreted as evidence of Coburg's pioneering role, created the basis for the construction of a *myth of Coburg* founded in him. This created an instrument with which the völkisch and anti-Semitic potential that already existed in Coburg before the "German Day" could be united with the NSDAP, and a point of reference for a collective identity was established.

The Coburg case ultimately illustrates how National Socialist ideas were able to develop within society, particularly among the petty bourgeoisie, in the course of disintegration and radicalization, blending with existing patterns of thought and social practices without having to be imposed from outside. As in other former Thuringian royal seats such as Weimar, Gotha, Gera, Greiz, and Arnstadt, where a pronounced local bourgeois self-confidence, national tradition, and strong ties to the court also prevailed, early völkisch mobilization had a decisive influence on this.

Coburg thus followed a political and social development path that was typical of its specific geographical environment, such as other middle-sized bourgeois towns in Thuringia, small towns and rural Protestant Franconia, but also other Protestant small and medium-sized towns.

3 See, for example, Boseckert: Identitätskrise, p. 110.

4 Schwede: Kampf, p. 32.

5 Ibid., p. 38.

6 See Matthiesen, Helge: Bürgertum und Nationalsozialismus in Thüringen. Das bürgerliche Gotha von 1918 bis 1930 (= Publications of the Historical Commission for Thuringia, Small Series Volume 2). Jena 1994, pp. 225–230 and Facius: Thüringens, pp. 398–437. However, due to the success of the socialist camp in Thuringia in the early 1920s, anti-socialism perhaps played the most decisive role in the mobilization of the people here.

was.[7] To varying degrees, following a period of liberal upheaval, radicalization by the military associations, and the failure of the bourgeois parties, the National Socialists came to power.[8] In addition, the structural prerequisites and situational conditions between the "model district of Thuringia"[9] and the "old stronghold of the movement"[10] Franconia. The nationalist tradition of the duchy and the pull of Carl Eduard, the city's border location, and the integrative opportunity offered by stylizing the city as a pioneer accelerated this development process in Coburg. Thus, the *Schwede case* provided the NSDAP with the spark it needed to embark on the path to the "Third Reich" ahead of schedule.

Particularly before 1933, but also beyond, decisive impulses ultimately emanated from the Vestestadt with the aim of contributing to the NSDAP's gain in power and the implementation of National Socialist ideas, as well as participating in the formation of the National Socialist "people's community." The city produced leading political figures such as Franz Schwede and Carl Eduard, who worked their way up to positions of power and unreservedly supported Adolf Hitler. The upstart Franz Schwede in particular shaped his political personality through his activities in Coburg and built his subsequent career within the NSDAP on his work in the city. But even subordinate party officials such as Arno Fischer, Franz Dehler, Emil Mazuw, and Werner Faber, all of whom had completed their decisive political apprenticeships in the special climate of Coburg, worked consistently in their later positions of power to shape the National Socialist state and to implement supra-regional inclusion and exclusion measures.

The city's great *service* to the Nazi state was thus based on its role as "Germany's first National Socialist city," which not only provided the NSDAP with a practical field of action, but also allowed it to exploit the alleged proof of National Socialist governmental success for propaganda purposes. For the party itself, Coburg thus represented a vehicle for gaining power and playing out Reich politics, as well as a local political experiment that allowed political strategies to be rehearsed on a small scale. This was despite the fact that the NSDAP's plan to transfer the Coburg model to other cities and conquer the Reich from the municipal level by means of a "policy of demonstration and encirclement" failed, and despite the fact that Schwede's policies, especially with regard to municipal finances, would ultimately have come to nothing without a Reich-wide takeover. [11] "Coburg"

7 There are also a number of parallels between Coburg and Northeim, which was studied by William Sheridan Allen and was a small Protestant town with many civil servants and pensioners. See Allen: Machtergreifung.

8 See ibid. and Kittel: Province. Similar developments also occurred in bourgeois Erfurt: See Raßloff: Flight. See also: Struve, Walter: Rise and Rule of the National Socialists in a Small Industrial Town. Osterode in the Harz Mountains 1918–1945. Essen 1992. See also: Noakes, Jeremy: National Socialism in the Province. Small and Medium-Sized Towns in the Third Reich 1933–1945. In: Möller, Horst; Wirsching, Andreas: Ziegler, Walter (ed.): National Socialism in the Region. Contributions to regional and local research and international comparison (= VfZ series, special issue). Munich 1996, pp. 237–251.

9 Raßloff, Steffen: The "Model District": Thuringia during the Nazi Era. Munich 2015.

10 *Illustrierter Beobachter* 36 (1930). On the role of Franconia in the rise of the NSDAP, see, among others, Hambrecht: Aufstieg; Greif, Thomas: "Die deutscheste aller Landschaften" (The Most German of All Landscapes). The Image of Franconia in National Socialism. In: Yearbook for Franconian Regional Research 67 (2007), pp. 285–296 and Täubrich, Hans-Christian (ed.): BilderLast. Franconia under National Socialism. Nuremberg 2008.

11 See Hambrecht: Aufstieg, pp. 264–267.

Despite numerous attempts by the opposition to expose the politics of this supposedly pioneering city, it became a powerful argument in the NSDAP's seemingly legal path to "seizing power." Together with its Franconian surroundings, Coburg assumed the role of mediator between the north and south of the Reich for the "Third Reich," acting true to its history as a bridge builder.[12] As one of the central hubs of the Nazi movement in Bavaria before 1933[(13)] ,the city's success also had an impact on the immediate Thuringian environment and, not least through Schwede's propaganda trips and Nazi agitation, far beyond.

At the beginning of the "Third Reich," the city of Coburg had considerable political power compared to other medium-sized cities, which extended through networks and personal connections to the top echelons of the party and administration, giving it not only an idealistic but also a concrete special status in terms of political power. However, Coburg's advantage and the radicalizing and pioneering character of the city's actions were gradually leveled out after 1933. This was not least because the political power of a medium-sized city the size of Coburg was limited in its ability to influence Reich policy, which was increasingly moving in the direction of war preparations. As Franconia lost its importance for the NSDAP, Coburg's political weight also declined. This was all the more true because Franz Schwede, a central figure of power and an important networker, still had a certain say in Coburg and advocated for the city from Pomerania, but had finally shifted his center of power to Stettin, and Carl Eduard had also clearly shifted his focus to international politics. Under Schwede's successors, the city was ultimately given little real political power, for example in the form of Reich institutions, and even Nazi leaders or Hitler himself were increasingly rarely present at the major propaganda events in the city. The Gau leadership expanded its influence in Coburg and the networks with the central leadership bodies dissolved in parts. The fact that Coburg's special significance and contribution to the
"Third Reich" at the time of its founding was already in the past and that, apart from propagandistic reminiscences and the glorification of its own past, little actual political profit could be gained from it in the long term.

Nevertheless, Coburg had an extremely stable system of government, which, despite internal crises and rivalries, was not seriously threatened until 1945. The Coburg NSDAP had adapted to the class-specific expectations of its environment. The integration of the Duke into the local "people's community," the propagandistic exploitation of Coburg's unique past, and the focus on middle-class-friendly policies showed how adaptable and flexible Nazi ideology could be and how individualized Coburg's sphere of influence ultimately was. The fact that two important functionaries of the Coburg sphere of influence, Carl Eduard and Franz Schwede, were avid networkers greatly benefited the city of Coburg and repeatedly made it a hub for informal communication channels. In particular, the ducal

12 On Franconia's role as a bridge for the "Third Reich," cf. ibid.

13 See The Executive Board of the District Office to the State Ministry of the Interior in Munich. September 18, 1931. StABa K3/1967 1707.

House and the networks that converged there, it was not only Hitler personally who benefited in terms of foreign policy. Especially before 1933, the networks emanating from the Ducal House via Carl Eduard and Kyrill represented a significant power factor within the nationalist camp. Alongside the long-term structural conditions in Coburg and the situational tensions that erupted in the *Schwede affair*, they formed the decisive prerequisite for the city's rise to become Germany's first Nazi city and also contributed significantly to the spread and stabilization of the National Socialist movement in its early phase, both locally and beyond. These networks were an essential hinge for the consolidation of Nazi rule and the mediation between new and old elites.

The Coburg domain itself had a very specific character, which stemmed primarily from the city's role as a National Socialist pioneer. At its heart was the *myth of Coburg*, which served as an important integrative and inclusive force and was personified by Franz Schwede, without whom the establishment of Nazi rule in the Vestestadt would hardly have been conceivable to this extent. The strikingly close personal and functional networking between the party and the administration, the practice of anticipatory obedience, the *work done* for Mayor Schwede, and the increased intensity of persecution in the Vestestadt were all attributable to the claim to act as a model National Socialist city. The specific local tradition of the city and the claim to be a pioneer, manifested in the *myth of Coburg*, promoted the radicalism of the Nazi regime. The head start that the city had gained by establishing Nazi rule as early as 1929 meant that a culture of cooperation within the city administration was already well established when the Nazis seized power throughout the Reich. Franz Schwede had long since established a widely networked system of rule, thereby achieving a certain independence for Coburg from the control of the Gau leadership. The ruthlessness with which the Coburg NSDAP, led by Schwede, treated people in order to manifest its power, and the creation of a zone of violence in the middle of the city through the escalation of violence in the Coburg "Prügelstube" (beating room) and in the district office were central effects of this. In addition, the basic personnel situation at the beginning of Nazi rule in 1929 and 1933 was one of its decisive and defining characteristics in view of the *quasi-feudal* structures of the Nazi regime. On the one hand, the networks formed here brought with them potential for conflict, particularly regarding the continuation of Schwede's legacy, which came to light in the disputes with his successors and the Gau leadership. On the other hand, due to their core continuity from the 1920s until the end of the war, they had a power-political and rule-stabilizing function that should not be underestimated.

Coburg serves as a prime example of how municipal officials and employees acted in advance on behalf of the regime and how exclusionary policies were pursued in various areas of city administration, with no departments remaining unaffected by these issues. The unusually close ties between the party and the administration showed that there was hardly any difference between a *normative state* in the sense of an administration that continued to adhere to legal rules

14 See Koehl: Feudal Aspects, pp. 921–933.

and a *state of action* in the sense of a party bureaucracy that limited itself to maintaining its rule and pursuing a policy of exclusion. [15]The employees of the Coburg city administration played a proactive role in the design and implementation of persecution measures and, for the most part, did not use the scope for action available to them in the interests of those being persecuted. Even those who claimed in the postwar period that they had remained in office after 1933 in order to exert a restraining influence on the political system were extremely useful and significant for the development and, above all, the stability of the Nazi system of rule. In the process of a "mutual dynamization of local and central politics"[16], the experiences and measures taken in Coburg before and after 1933 and the networks spanning the city led to a number of initiatives being passed on to the higher authorities and party structures. The Coburg city administration not only implemented the guidelines of the National Socialist leadership with precision, but also helped shape them within the scope of its possibilities. By placing itself at the service of Nazi rule, the municipal level made a decisive contribution to stabilizing the system.

The size and nature of urban space also provided an opportunity to support the process of National Socialist communitization through the expansion of small-scale networks, pervasive staging, and the establishment of spaces for persecution and violence. The urban space as it had appeared at the beginning of the 20th century underwent considerable change until the end of Nazi rule, which would also shape the coming decades. After 16 years of Nazi rule, it had succeeded in inscribing lasting folk community hierarchies into it and merging them with the existing spatial markings. The most obvious example of this was, of course, the complete displacement of the Jewish community and Jewish life in the city, as well as the redistribution of their assets and possessions. In addition, despite the failure of most of the plans for the architectural redesign of the city, efforts were made to recode Coburg in line with its role in the "Third Reich." In addition, the urban space was significantly expanded through incorporations, various infrastructure measures, and the construction of housing estates. The promotion of industries important for armament and war production, which experienced a war boom, also triggered a structural change in which traditional industries such as textiles and basketry lost importance in contrast to the automotive, plastics, and electronics industries. Ultimately, the rigorous National Socialist war economy also created development potential in Coburg, which formed the basis for reconstruction and economic growth after 1945.

The population's loyalty to the regime was guaranteed by a combination of self-mobilization and coercion to conform. Nazi rule in the Vestestadt was based on the acceptance and cooperation of the broad majority of the urban middle class, which had helped the NSDAP to power, subsequently established itself in the Nazi state, and built up its own spheres of action and communication here. Given the vehemence with which the concept of the "people's community" was promoted with the

15 See Fraenkel, Ernst: Der Doppelstaat (The Dual State). Hamburg 2001.
16 Gruner: NS-Judenverfolgung, p. 75.

When attempts were made to enforce radical exclusion in Coburg, it was primarily representatives of the petty bourgeois middle class who came to the fore, setting themselves the standard of preemptive action and fully accepting Franz Schwede as a charismatic leader. Alongside the group of violent thugs, they formed the action-oriented and radicalizing foundation of local Nazi rule. In addition to receiving material benefits, many of them also attained leading positions and played a decisive role in shaping Nazi rule. In addition, representatives of the upper and educated middle classes continued to hold important positions in society in Coburg and formed functional elites within the Nazi regime, which enabled them to pursue their own goals with its support. The example of Coburg thus shows how Nazi rule was able to develop from within a society that wanted to believe in the promises of the "people's community" and was in part willing to "self-align." This willingness to participate and conform permanently changed the institutional structure within the urban area even before it had to be enforced through violence and prohibitions. In Coburg, where the majority of the population had already placed their trust in the NSDAP in 1929, an effective symbiosis had taken place between the city's stubbornness and need for recognition and the ideals and promises of National Socialist ideology. The *myth of Coburg* played a decisive catalytic role in this process. The pride and ambition of being a pioneer reinforced the mobilizing effect of constantly reassuring oneself that one's actions were true to the ideal of the "people's community." Between 1929 and 1945, contributing to the welfare, reputation, progress, and success of the city meant promoting the image of the "first National Socialist city in Germany" and acting in a particularly exemplary manner in line with the regime.

The integrative effect of the empire-wide recognition of the city's achievements, which was also promoted by the party leadership and for personal self-positioning, in conjunction with a policy that brought about noticeable political and economic successes and improvements in everyday life, both large and small, through measures such as the Coburg labor service, job creation, infrastructure measures, housing construction, and the restoration of its status as a garrison town, brought about political and economic successes and improvements that were noticeable in everyday life on both a large and small scale, thereby strengthening loyalty to the system in the long term. It was precisely this intertwining of increased prestige with material living conditions and hope for a better future that formed the basis for conformity with the system. Material gains and an improvement in one's own standard of living thus ultimately represented a link in the "Third Reich" that should not be underestimated and served precisely the motives that had turned many members of the middle class into NSDAP voters. After the losses experienced during the economic crises of the Weimar years, the propaganda and promises of the NSDAP held tremendous appeal. The years after 1933 and the economic upswing associated with them ultimately provided evidence of the apparent effectiveness of the regime, as its promises were repeatedly fulfilled on a small scale and made tangible. However, these promises could only be realized against the backdrop of rearmament and war preparations, soon came at the expense of those "alien to the community," and made many actors accomplices of the regime. In the social practice of the "people's community," the enrichment of individuals through the system and the exploitation and robbery of those "alien to the community" proved to be elements that intertwined rule and society. The fact that, in the course of pursuing their own interests, inclusive and exclusive mechanisms became closely intertwined meant that many Coburg residents ultimately became so entangled in the regime

that they supported it until the end, even in the face of deprivation during the war, due to considerable pressure to conform and coercion.

The history of the city of Coburg between 1929 and 1945 therefore does not present itself as a contrast between blind fanatical conviction and stubborn resistance. Openly rebellious or resistant behavior was hardly ever recorded in Coburg, which indicates the depth of the regime's penetration into society. Even before 1933, local experience in Coburg revealed the criminal, ruthless, and cruel nature of the regime. The "beating room" and the subsequent measures of repression, persecution, and extermination took place mostly with the knowledge of the general population, without seriously jeopardizing their loyalty to the Nazi regime. A separate National Socialist value system, fed by nationalist and ethnic traditions, had created a sense of injustice that only included ideologically defined compatriots and partially overrode bourgeois Christian morality.[17] The few actions taken to express dissatisfaction, for example in pubs and restaurants, usually ended with the issuance of "protective custody orders" or with charges before the special courts, which legally legitimized this perverted normative order. It is difficult to say how strongly the particularly high intensity of persecution should be weighed against an actual internalization of the "people's community" ideology. What is certain, however, is that the relevant social groups in Coburg from which a serious potential for resistance could have emerged either supported Nazi rule, were incapable of action, or did not exist. The depth of psychological and physical violence in 1933 had completely crushed the labor movement in the city, which had never been known for its radicalism. While there were still concerted actions after 1929, such as the open singing of communist songs or a protest march through the city, nothing similar was recorded after March 1933. The Catholic Church was in an absolute minority position in Coburg and could hardly exert any political power. The Protestant Church, on the other hand, was largely willing to cooperate with the regime and was inhibited by fear of separatist movements. Furthermore, the city did not have a pronounced intellectual milieu, as found in university towns, that could have formed a nucleus of resistance. While there was no suitable environment locally that would have given people who were opposed to the NSDAP, critical thinkers, or those disappointed by the regime the space to unite and take concerted action, the path taken by Georg Alexander Hansen, who was socialized in the Duchy of Coburg in the postwar years, from being a model soldier with sympathies for the völkisch movement to becoming a resistance fighter on July 20, 1944, showed what such a transformation could look like.resistance fighter on July 20, 1944, [showed] what such a transformation could look like.

17 For discussion of National Socialist "morality" and the question of whether such a thing existed, see Fritz Bauer Institute; Konitzer, Werner; Gross, Raphael (eds.): Moralität des Bösen. Ethik und nationalsozialistische Verbrechen (= Yearbook on the History and Impact of the Holocaust 2009). Frankfurt am Main, New York 2009; Bialas, Wolfgang; Fritze, Lothar (eds.): Ideology and Morality in National Socialism (= Writings of the Hannah Arendt Institute, Volume 50). Göttingen 2014 and Gross, Raphael: Remaining Decent. National Socialist Morality. Frankfurt am Main 2010.

18 Cf. Bartl: Verschwörer (Conspirators).

Nevertheless, fault lines repeatedly became apparent, which could always be traced back to attempts to intervene too deeply in existing bourgeois customs and habits in the course of a National Socialist transformation process and to suppress them. These were particularly evident in the area of staging and the National Socialist takeover of the Coburg State Theater. The Coburg State Theater in particular represented a space for communication in which criticism was openly expressed and demands were made by the population. Along these fault lines, on the one hand, the limits of "national community" appropriation were revealed, and on the other hand, processes of appropriation took place that ultimately shaped the specific Coburg sphere of influence and the living environment. In this process, compromises were repeatedly found which, given the different groups and interests that communicated and interacted within the urban space, also allowed for disparate interpretations and appropriations of Nazi rule and gave rise to a particular form of National Socialism that was adapted to local conditions. However, these fault lines did not pose a serious threat to the regime, as they were still based on a broad consensus within the population regarding the promises of the "people's community," the associated national awakening, and the anti-Semitism anchored within it. Ultimately, the administration and the population did little to counter the rapid radicalization of the mechanisms of exclusion based on this anti-Semitism.

Overall, the Coburg case impressively demonstrates how much initiative, mobilization, and stabilization could emanate from the municipal level. Here, the NSDAP found an important battleground both for seizing power and for maintaining the regime. It was precisely in the formation of municipal National Socialism that a process of adaptation took place that was able to cushion and balance conflicts.[19] It developed the potential to resolve the rivalries, antagonisms, and contradictions within the
"Third Reich," between the state and the party, violence and seductive propaganda, private and public spaces, between everyday personal preferences and radical processes of repression.

If one now wants to classify the case of Coburg in the Nazi regime in an overall view, the city was certainly both: on the one hand, a typical example of those small and medium-sized German towns with a predominantly Protestant population and homogeneous social structure that developed into early Nazi strongholds and served as a foundation for the Nazi regime, especially before 1933. On the other hand, the history of the city of Coburg in the "Third Reich" was a special case, with its early National Socialist city council majority and "Gleichgeschaltete" city administration, the systematic and excessive use of violence in 1933, and a myth about its own role that had a profound impact on the design and development of the area of rule and the living environment. In only a few German cities did Nazi rule enter into such a close symbiosis with the city's own logic as in the
"first National Socialist city in Germany."

19 See also Speitkamp: Eschwege, p. 292 f., Allen: Machtergreifung, p. 279 f. and Großbölting, Thomas: Volksgemeinschaft in der Kleinstadt. Kornwestheim und der Nationalsozialismus. Stuttgart 2017, p. 171–173.

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VI Appendix

1 List of abbreviations

ADAV	General German Workers' Association
ALU	Unemployment benefit
ApuZ	From Politics and Contemporary History
BA	Federal Archives
BayGVBl.	Bavarian Law and Ordinance Gazette
BayHStA	Bavarian Main State Archives Munich
BBG	"Civil Service Act"
BDC	Berlin Document Center
BDM	League of German Girls
BMP	Bavarian Center Party
BVP	Bavarian People's Party
Ch.d.SP.u.d.SD.	Head of the Security Police and Security Service CVP Christian People's Party
DAF	German Labor Front
DAP	German Workers' Party
DC	German Christians
DDP	German Democratic Party
DEK	German Evangelical Church
DGO	German Municipal Code
DGT	German Municipal Council
DNVP	German National People's Party
DP	Displaced Person
DVP	German People's Party
DVSTB	German People's Protection and Defense League
FAD	Voluntary Labor Service
FDP	Free Democratic Party
FM procedure	Skilled Worker Shortage Procedure
Gekrat	Non-profit Kranken-Transport-GmbH
Gestapo	Secret State Police
Ed.	Publisher
HJ	Hitler Youth
IfZ	Institute for Contemporary History
IRSO	Jewish Restitution Successor Organization
Jungdo	Young German Order
KdF	Strength Through Joy
KPD	Communist Party of Germany
KRU	Crisis support
KZ	Concentration camp
LAELKB	State Church Archive of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria LRA District Office
NDA	National German Automobile Club
NKP	National Conservative Party (in Bavaria)
NLLP	National Liberal Party in Bavaria
NS	National Socialism, National Socialist
NSAK	National Socialist Automobile Corps
NSBO	National Socialist Factory Cell Organization
NSDAP	National Socialist German Workers' Party

NSFB	National Socialist Freedom Movement
NSFK	National Socialist Aviation Corps
NS-HAGO	National Socialist Crafts, Trade, and Industry Organizations NSKKNational Socialist Motor Corps
NSKOV	National Socialist War Victims' Welfare Service
NSRL	National Socialist Reich Association for Physical Exercise
NSV	National Socialist People's Welfare
n.d.	no year
no place	no place
Öffa	German Society for Public Works AG
OKH	Army High Command
OKW	High Command of the Armed Forces
Pg.	Party member
RAD	Reich Labor Service
RdErl.	Circular
RF.SS.u.Ch.d.Dt.Pol.	Reich Leader of the SS and Chief of the German
Police RGBl.	Reich Law Gazette
RLB	Reich Air Defense Association
RM	Reichsmark
RMdI.	Reich Ministry of the Interior
RSHA	Reich Security Main Office
RVG	Reich Supply Act
SA	Storm Troopers
SD	Security Service of the SS
SDAP	Social Democratic Workers' Party
SHAEF	Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force
SPD	Social Democratic Party of Germany
SS	Protection Squad
StABa	Bamberg State Archives
StACo	Coburg State Archives
StadtACo	Coburg City Archives
Stalag	Main camp
StAMü	Munich State Archives
StANü	Nuremberg State Archives
StAnw	Public Prosecutor's Office
TSV	Gymnastics and Sports Club
TV	Gymnastics club
uk	indispensable
UNRRA	United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration US United States
USPD	Independent Social Democratic Party of Germany
V.f.Z.	Quarterly Journal for Contemporary History
VfB	Association for Movement Games
WHW	Winter Relief Fund
WOLU	Welfare for the unemployed

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Appendix 1: Overview of election results in Coburg[1]

City Council

City council elections November 13, 1921

	USPD	SPD	United Citizens' List (DDP, DVP, and DNVP)
Votes	786	2,563	6,335
%	8.12	26.47	65.42
Seats	2	6	17

City council elections December 7, 1924

	SPD	DDP	Citizens' and Economic Bloc	Patriotic Bloc	People's Bloc	Common Good
Votes	3,933	1,122	1,802	3,463	1,850	292
%	31.56	9.00	14.46	27.79	14.85	2.23
Seats	8	2	4	7	4	0

City council elections June 23, 1929

	KPD	SPD	DDP	BVP	National Liberal Party (DVP)	DNVP	NSDAP
Votes	148	3,440	420	376	1,057	1,357	5,140
%	1.24	28.82	3.52	3.15	8.85	11.37	43.06
Seats	0	7	0	0	2	3	13

City council elections, December 8, 1929

	KPD	SPD	National Liberal Party (DVP)	Economic List	BVP	DDP	Citizens' and Economic Bloc (DNVP)	NSDAP
Votes	117	3,789	266	408	470	475	1,914	6,348
%	0.85	27.48	1.93	2.96	3.41	3.45	13.88	46.04
Seats	0	7	0	0	0	1	4	13

Reich and state elections National election

January 19, 1919

	USPD	SPD	DDP	CVP (Center Party and BVP in the Reich and Bavaria, respectively)	DNVP/DVP
Free State of Coburg					
Votes	712	20,865	13,081	186	3,253
%	1.87	54.77	34.34	0.49	8.54
Reich %	7.62	37.86	18.10	18.82	14.69

1 Results according to *Coburger Zeitung*, Bavarian State Office for Statistics (ed.): Statistical Yearbook for the Free State of Bavaria. Volume 15 Munich 1921, Volume 16 Munich 1924, Volume 18 Munich 1928; Statistical Office (ed.): Statistics of the German Reich. Volume 427 Berlin 1932, Volume 321 Berlin 1925, Volume 315 I–VI Berlin 1928, Volume 372 I–III Berlin 1931, Volume 382 I-II Berlin 1932, Volume 434 Berlin 1935; Statistical Office of the Reich (ed.): Quarterly Reports on the Statistics of the German Reich. Volume 28 First Supplement Berlin 1919, 4th Issue Berlin 1919; Journal of the Bavarian State Statistical Office 64/2,3 (1932).

Reichstag election June 1920:

	KPD	USPD	MSPD	DDP	Bavarian Center Party, Coburg Farmers' Association (DNVP)	BVP	DVP
Free State of Coburg							
Votes		1333	3419	3057	1263	288	2890
%		11	28	25	10	2	24
Reich %	2.1	17.6	21.9	8.3	15.0	18.0	13.9

State elections April 6, 1924

	KPD	SPD	United Loyalists of Coburg (DVP, DDP, DNVP, etc.)	Völkischer Block
City of Coburg				
Votes	244	4,116	1,632	6,875
%	1.88	31.78	12.60	53.08
Coburg District Office				
Votes	616	7,267	5,856	4,491
%	3.37	39.80	32.07	24.59
Bavaria %	8.3	17.2	~42.5	17.1

Reichstag elections May 4, 1924

	KPD	USPD	SPD	DDP	Center	BVP	DVP	DNVP	NSFB
City of Coburg									
Votes	150	65	4,144	820	29	400	172	1,531	5,344
%	1.18	0.51	32.49	6.34	0.23	3.14	1.35	12.01	41.93
Coburg District Office									
Votes	489	78	8,092	408	16	91	64	5,282	3,671
%	2.68	0.43	44.33	2.24	0.09	0.50	0.35	28.94	20.11
Reich %	12.61	0.80	20.52	5.65	13.37	3.23	9.00	19.66	6.55

Reichstag elections December 7, 1924

	KPD	USPD	SPD	DDP	BVP	DVP	DNVP	NSFB
City of Coburg								
Votes	108	400	4,186	1,094	397	596	3,713	2,567
%	0.83	0.31	32.20	8.41	3.05	4.58	28.56	19.74
Coburg District Office								
Votes	426	71	8,628	627	121	255	7,786	2,345
%	2.07	0.35	41.93	3.05	0.59	1.24	37.84	11.40
Reich %	8.94	0.33	26.02	6.34	3.74	10.07	20.49	3.00

Reich President election March 29 and April 26, 1925

	Erich Ludendorff	Dr. Karl Jarres	Dr. Heinrich Held	Dr. Wilhelm Marx	Dr. Willy Hellpach	Otto Braun	Ernst Thälmann
City of Coburg							
Votes	702	7,098	224	34	638	3,754	83
%	5.60	56.63	1.79	0.27	5.09	29.95	0.66
Coburg District Office							
Votes	489	8,791	49	30	349	7,096	256
%	2.86	51.47	0.29	0.18	2.04	41.55	1.50
Reich %	1.06	38.77	3.75	14.477	5.84	29.04	6.97

Second round

	Ernst Thälmann	Dr. Wilhelm Marx	Paul von Hindenburg
City of Coburg Votes			
%	120	4,904	10,323
	0.78	31.95	67.25
Coburg District Office			
Votes	331	8,008	12,571
%	1.58	38.28	60.09
Reich %	6.36	45.31	48.29

Reichstag elections May 20, 1928

	KPD	SPD	DDP	BVP	DVP	DNVP	NSDAP	Other
City of Coburg								
Votes	184	4,178	1,005	474	414	3,782	3,492	587
%	1.30	29.60	7.12	3.36	2.93	26.79	24.74	4.16
Coburg District Office								
Votes	369	8,233	378	83	138	6,338	2,578	329
%	2.00	44.63	2.05	0.45	0.75	34.36	13.98	1.78
Reich %	10.61	29.77	4.81	3.08	8.71	14.25	2.63	26.13

State elections May 20, 1928

	KPD	SPD	DDP	BVP	DVP	DNVP	NSDAP	People's Bloc	Other
City of Coburg									
Votes	166	4,059	932	462	294	3,617	3,055	582	446
%	1.22	29.84	6.85	3.40	2.16	26.59	22.46	4.28	3.28
Coburg District Office									
Votes	356	7,980	365	82	115	6,199	2,359	397	217
%	1.97	44.16	2.02	0.45	0.64	34.31	13.05	2.20	1.20
Bavaria %	3.80	24.24	3.28	31.57	3.31	9.26	6.13	0.24	17.84

Reichstag elections September 14, 1930

	KPD	SPD	German State Party	BVP	DVP	DNVP	German Peasant Party	NSDAP	Other
City of Coburg									
Votes	303	4,425	789	488	283	1,310	42	7,416	713
%	1.92	28.06	5.00	3.09	1.79	8.31	0.27	47.03	4.52
Coburg District Office									
Votes	793	8,646	257	93	106	339	4,682	5,535	239
%	3.83	41.19	1.24	0.45	0.51	1.64	22.63	26.75	1.16
Reich %	13.13	24.53	3.78	3.03	4.51	7.03	3.17	18.25	22.56

Reich President Elections March 30 and April 10, 1932

	Ernst Thälmann	Paul von Hindenburg	Gustav Winter	Theodor Duesterberg	Adolf Hitler
City of Coburg					
Votes	615	6,711	88	1,452	8,348
%	3.57	38.99	0.51	8.43	48.50
Coburg District Office					
Votes	1,094	9,161	90	2,470	11,013
%	4.59	38.44	0.38	10.36	46.21
Reich %	13.24	49.54	0.30	6.79	30.12

Second round

	Ernst Thälmann	Paul von Hindenburg	Adolf Hitler
City of Coburg Votes			
%	325	6,895	9,594
	1.93	41.00	57.05
Coburg District Office			
Votes	716	9,396	13,874
%	2.98	39.17	57.84
Reich %	10.16	53.05	36.77

State elections April 24, 1932

	KPD	SPD	Bavarian Farmers' and Small Business Association (German State Party and Bavarian Farmers' Association)	BVP	DVP and Economic Party	DNVP	NSDAP	Other
City of Coburg								
Votes	385	3,783	165	546	337	1,329	9,240	119
%	2.42	23.78	1.03	3.43	2.11	8.35	58.09	0.79
Coburg District Office								
Votes	930	6,621	115	275	94	1,834	12,195	107
%	4.19	29.86	0.52	1.24	0.42	8.27	55.00	0.48
Bavaria %	6.64	15.45	6.46	32.55	1.69	3.27	32.52	1.43

Reichstag elections July 31, 1932

	KPD	SPD	German National People's Party	BVP	DVP	DNVP	NSDAP	Other
City of Coburg								
Votes	623	3,716	145	533	145	1,445	9,564	156
%	3.82	22.76	0.89	3.26	0.89	8.85	58.58	0.96
Coburg District Office								
Votes	1,411	7,017	42	264	41	1,355	13,230	305
%	5.96	29.65	0.18	1.12	0.17	5.73	55.91	1.29
Reich %	14.32	21.58	1.01	3.23	1.18	5.90	37.27	15.50

Reichstag elections, November 6, 1932

	KPD	SPD	German National People's Party	BVP	DVP	DNVP	NSDAP	Other
City of Coburg								
Votes	961	3,579	155	508	212	2,261	8,349	226
%	5.91	22.02	0.95	3.13	1.30	13.91	51.38	1.39
Coburg District Office								
Votes	1,835	6,499	38	250	48	1,926	11,628	421
%	8.09	28.65	0.17	1.10	0.21	8.49	51.27	1.86
Reich %	16.86	20.43	0.95	3.09	1.86	8.34	33.09	15.38

Reichstag elections March 5, 1933

	KPD	SPD	German National People's Party	BVP	DVP	DNVP	NSDAP	Other
City of Coburg								
Votes	653	3,698	166	540	147	2,432	9,889	98
%	3.71	20.98	0.94	3.06	0.83	13.80	56.11	0.56
Coburg District Office								
Votes	1,297	6,331	52	2,631	25	2,290	14,846	108
%	5.14	25.11	0.21	10.44	0.10	9.08	58.89	0.43
Reich %	12.32	18.25	0.85	2.73	1.10	7.97	43.91	12.86

Appendix 2: Overview of "Aryanizations" and liquidations of Jewish businesses

Company, name of business owner	Taken over by (Aryanization)	Subject of the business	Address	Closed/deregistered
Meyer Salazin		Textile and colonial goods store	Steinweg 31	June 1932 Relocation
Max Kahn		Livestock trading	27 Löwenstraße	October 1932
Benno Kaufmann		Cattle dealer	Market 3	December 1932

Kaufmann Brothers Owner: Adolf Kaufmann		Paper goods wholesaler	Bahnhofstr aße 25 a	1932 Closed 1938 emigration

Fechheimer & Co. department store Owners: Hugo Fechheimer and Julius Blüth		Manufactured goods and fashion items, department store	Spitalgasse 12	March 1933
Katzenstein, Bernhard		Manufactured goods and fashion store	Ketschengasse 31	April 1933
Radek's Owner: Sally Radziejewski		Ready-to-wear clothing store	Mohren Street 35	June 1933 Relocation
S. Rawak Owner: Siegfried Besser		Textile goods	Spitalgasse 11	June 1933
Stern & Co. Owner: Siegfried Braun	Kurt Sitte	Footwear	Spitalgasse 1	August 1933
Nuremberg Bazaar, Owner: Moritz Bissberg	Armin Hoffman	Linen, wool, and haberdashery store	Spitalgasse 9	September
Josef Goldberg		Commercial enterprises	Walkmühlgasse 8	October 1933 Relocation
Großmann & Kisch A.G.; General Manager Abraham Friedmann	C. Großmann A.G.	Meat and sausage factory	Ketschen-gasse 22/24	1933/34
Max Kohn		Department store	Steinweg 38	1933
Julius Fleischmann	Ernst Bräcklein	Fishmonger	Steinweg 12	1933
Richard Löwenherz		Sawmill and timber merchant	Alexandri-nenstr. 14	1933 Relocation 1936 Closure
Jeanette Frank		Food store	Obere Salvatorgasse 7	1935
M. Conitzer & Sons, Owner: Max Frank, Adolf Friedländer	Döring Textile Store	Department store	Spitalgasse 19	August 1936
Gutmann Brothers, owners: Herbert, Adolf, and Emanuel Gutmann		Cattle dealer	Zinkenwehr 18	December 1936
Julius Wertheimer	Arthur Roth	Butcher	Steinweg 53	1936 Emigration
Leschziner Owner: Wilhelm Sandler		Department store	Spitalgasse 21	1936
Tiez Owner: Caesar Caspary		Department store	Steinweg 11	Closed in 1927 (owner died in 1932), 1936 Abandoned
Alkan Adolf Jr., owner: Albert Sachs	Wagner K.G. Coburg	Linen store	Spitalgasse 2	Moved away in 1936, liquidated in May 1939
Elias Wiegand, owner: Siegfried Cramer		Men's tailor	Mohrenstr. 21	1936
Hecht Sally	Erwin Derks	Tobacco and spirits wholesaler	Albertsplatz 5a	Early 1937

Nathan Ludwig		1) Cattle dealer 2) Linen sales representative	Brückenstraße 3	March 1937 January 1939
Ernst Zeilberger Fashion House, Owners: Leo and Heinrich Zeilberger rich Zeilberger	Walter Willeke	Fashion House	Steinweg 16	April 1937
Julius Klein Successor to Dr. Sadler	Gaudlitz & Kaiser	Trading company for ceramic technical insulation products	Kanonenweg 35	May 1937
Leo Sachs, owner: Bella Sachs	Christian Zeitler formerly L Sachs	Darm wholesale	Güterbahnhof 9, Bahnhofstraße 27 hofstr. 27	October 1937
Julius Weiß	Kressmann Shoe Store	Footwear	Spitalgasse 5	November 1937
Jakob Friedmann		Cattle dealer	Ketschengasse 28	December 1937
Leonhard Klein		Ceramic Technology Factory	Kanonenweg 33	1937
Nathan Wertheimer		Cattle dealer	Löwenstraße 23	February 1938
Markus Stern, owner: Siegfried Stern		Cattle trading	Mohren Street 10	February 1938
Hermann Strauß		Livestock dealer	Callenberger-str. 4	March 1938
Sally Kahn		Intestines and meat supplies store	Mohrenstraße 7b	May 1938
Ernst Lewy		Glue and Cigars	Kreuzwehr-str. 3	Died in July 1938
Ignaz Stern	Zetzmann & Jablonka	Manufacturing and fashion goods	Judengasse 20	August 1938
M. Elsbach & Co. Owner: Ella Elsbach		Basket furniture and basket goods factory	Ketschendorf Street 6a	October 1938
Coburg Wood and Unfinished Furniture Factory Bernstein & Saalfeld Company: Ivan Bernstein, Martin Saalfeld, Wilhelm Lautermilch		Wood and unfinished furniture wholesaler	Ufer Street 9	October 1938 Closure, February 1939 Deregistration
N. Forchheimer & Co. General partner: Max Forchheimer Limited partner: Marie Forchheimer	Wilhelm Knoll	Wholesale wood and upholstered furniture	Bahnhofstr. 31	October 1938
Julius Plaut		Manufactured goods	Bahnhof Street 27	October 1938
Siegfried Kohn		Manufactured goods, department store	Mohren Street 36	November 1938 Deceased January 1939 Deregistration

Wolf Cotton spinner (foreigner)		Clothing store	Judengasse 8	December 1938
Karl Ehrlich Partnership Hermann and Sally Ehrlich	Scheuer & Hochrein	Wholesale hats and caps	Zinkenwehr 39	December 1938
Emil Forchheimer		Basket and upholstered furniture	Bahnhofstr. 30, Kreuz-wehrstraße 5	December 1938
Gutmann Brothers Owner: Simon Rothschild		Manufactured goods and Cigars	Ketschen-gasse 6	December 1938
Heinrich Zucker		Shoe store	Steinweg 19	December 1938
Kurt Ehrenhaus, branch office Headquarters Berlin, Wilmersdorf, Sandauerstr. 14		Distribution of cardboard, paper, twine	Bahnhof Street 27	December 1938
Meyer Levenbach		Cattle dealer	Spitalgasse 4	1938
Simche Drattler		Trading company	Ketschengas se 26	1938
Lina Töpfer		Stocking trade	Steintor 10	January 1939
Minna Schleien Merchant (foreign national)		Trading company, textiles	Spitalgasse 9	January 1939
E. Plaut Owner: Eduard Plaut	Ernst Morjan	Manufactured goods, department store	Steinweg 15	January 1939
Wilhelm Mannheimer Owner: Martin Mannheimer heimer		Horse trading	Heiligkreuz-str. 22	January 1939
Klein & Co Partner: Klara Klein Limited partner: Julius Klein		Ceramic articles, porcelain wholesale and export	Bahnhofstr. 40	January 1939
Benjamin Schmerler Dealer (foreigner)		Short goods and cut goods	Herrngasse 7	January
Hugo Holländer		Paint and varnish factory	Sonntagsan-ger 8	February 1939
Julius Weiß		Shoe Wholesaler	Mohrenstr. 1a	February 1939
Martin Saalfeld		Basketware factory, toys, and furniture	Uferstr. 9	March 1939
Altmann Brothers Company Josef and Jakob Altmann		Basketware wholesaler	Kreuzwehr-str. 9	June 1939

Appendix 3: RU companies in the Coburg military registration office area, August 1, 1944.

1. Albrecht Wilhelm Weitramsdorf
2. Farmer Ladwig Weidhausen
3. Behringer August Coburg
4. Bonsack Rudi Ebersdorf/Coburg
5. Dornburg Franz (now Cob. Maschinenbau AG) Coburg Neuses
6. Diets & Sohn Neustadt/Coburg
7. Escher & Koch. Niederfüllbuch
8. Ewald Franz Steinach
9. Friedrich Willy Ebersdorf/Coburg
10. Gagel, Konrad Coburg
11. Goelhaar Gustav Coburg
12. Huck & Stüpfert Sonnefeld
13. Arthur Jacob Coburg
14. Industrie-Werk Seifert Nachf. Neustadt/Coburg
15. Kabel- u. Leitungswerke AG. Neustadt/Coburg
16. N. Trutz Coburg
17. Cheesemaker Karl Coburg
18. Kuhn Fritz Coburg
19. Lieberknecht & Schurg Coburg
20. M. Brose & Co. Coburg
21. Rädlein Reinhold Weidhausen
22. SSW AG. Rodach/Coburg
23. Senkeisen Brothers Coburg
24. Seifert Edmund Sonnefeld/Coburg
25. Schindhelm I.N. Coburg
26. Schmidt Fritz Hassenberg
27. Streng Heinrich Wörlsdorf
28. Vogt & Göhring Coburg
29. Wachsmann Adolf Ebersdorf
30. Wetterhahn Otto Coburg
31. Zeidler Carl Sonnefeld/Coburg
32. Wagner Alfred Siemau-Scherneck
33. Wachmann Adolf Grub am Forst
34. Dahle Wilhelm Coburg
35. Farmer Ludwig Untersiemau
36. Heublein Fritz Neustadt/Coburg
37. Gemmer & Co. Coburg
38. Dietze Bruno Coburg
39. Waldrich Adolf Coburg
40. Gaudlitz Oskar Coburg
41. Mechanical Toys Coburg, Callenberg
42. Denner-Werk II Ketschenbach/near Neustadt

2 BA MA RW 21/12–17.

Appendix 4: Employees in the Coburg Armaments Command area.

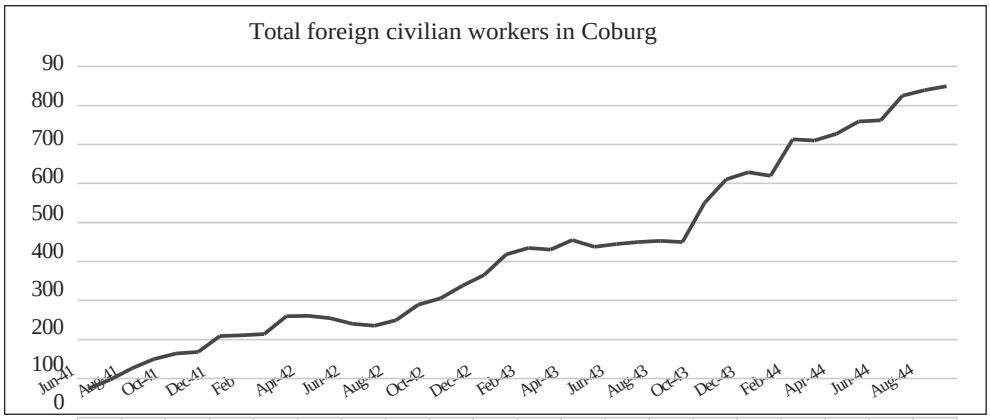
	Sept 43	Dec 43	March 44	April 44	May 44
Total employees Men Women	24,696	26,350	30,307	32,737 18,522 14,215	44,403
Total domestic residents Men Women	18,645 9,124 9,521	19,401 9,373 10,028	21,638 10,573 11,065	23,202 11,542 11,660	24,105
Total foreigners	6,051	6,949	8,669	9,535	10,149
Total Eastern workers Men Women	1,871 671 1,200	2,080 749 1,331	2,981 1,273 1,708	3,245 1,361 1,884	3,587 1,492 2,095
Total foreign civilian workers Men Women	2,103 1,579 524	2,249 1,694 555	2,759 2,130 629	3,088 2,417 671	3,230 2,536 694
Soviet prisoners of war	1,397	1,406	1,328	1,562	1,633
Other prisoners of war	680	1,214	1,601	1,640	1,699

Appendix 5: Foreign civilian workers in Coburg. [4]



3 BA MA War diaries of the Coburg Armaments Command from September 1943 to May 1944. BA MA RW 21/12–5,6.

4 See records of foreign civilian workers from June 1941 to September 1944. StANü Government of Upper and Middle Franconia, submitted in 1978, 1773–1776.



Appendix 6: List of camp commanders of foreign workers. [5]

Company	Operating location	Camp location	Warehouse manager
Railway maintenance depot	Adamistr. 8	Freight station	Zapf, Alfred
Brose	Uferstraße	Uferstraße	Heldrung, Richard
Brückner	Neuses	Neuses	Greiner, Ms.
Dornburg AG	Neuses	Callenberger Str. 56	Hartleb, W.
Elfabana	Callenberger Str. 10	Callenberger Street 10	Meyer, Fritz
Emmerling	Adamistr. 9	Adamistr. 9	Karl, Otto
Waldrich	Hanhnweg	Hahnweg	Rommel
Langestein-Schemann	Cortendorf	Cortendorf	Bonnewitz
Stemag at Griesbach	Cortendorf	Cortendorf	Bonnewitz
Schuller	Uferstr	Von Schultes Street	Geuß, Adam
Ros	Uferstr.	Ufer Street	Ros, Hermann
Scholz Company	Kasernen Street	Kasernen Street	Scholz, Alfred
Gaudlitz	Kanonenweg	Cannon Road	Ice cream
Cheesemaker	Hahnweg	Rosenauer Str. 87	Wunder
Milk farm	Cannon Path	Cannon Path	Reißenweber
Gagel Company	Bridge Street	Bridge Street	Jaumann
Lorenz	Hahnweg	Kalenderweg	Hammerschmidt
City Council		Ketschendorf	Brockardt

5 StABa M33 501. The tables in Appendices 5 and 6 are only snapshots and therefore cannot provide a comprehensive overview of the camps located in Coburg. This is not least because a large number of companies had accommodated foreign workers in various types of accommodation, raising the question of the size at which such accommodation could be classified as a camp. For this reason, the lists from the records of the municipal administration and the Coburg district administration are reproduced here.

Appendix 7: List of foreigner camps in the Coburg city area in June 1944.

Company	Street	Nationality	Male	Female	Children
Coburg City Council	Ketschendorf, Barracks Camp	Russians	14		
Adolf Waldrich Machine Factory	Hahnweg 116	Russians French Spanish Italians Belgians Czechs Ukrainians	19 35 1 1 1 33 2		
Franz Dornburg Machine Factory	Callenbergerstr. 56 and 58	French Poles Ukrainians Eastern European workers	4 38 3 5		
Langenstein and Schemann Machine Factory	Cortendorf	French Poles Ukrainians	4 10 1		
Max Brose & Co. Metalworks Plant II	Ketschendorfer Street	French	11		
Griesbach Porcelain Factory	Cortendorf	Eastern European workers French	14	12	
Johann Lorenz Upholstered Furniture Factory	Kalenderweg 29	Poland		5	
Conrad Gagel Wicker Furniture Factory	Brücknerstr. 6a	Ukrainians Polish Eastern European workers Italians	9 5 8 1	7 2	1 2
Stemag (near Griesbach)	Cortendorf	Eastern workers	10	7	
Glass wool trading company	Von Schultes Street	Soviet Russians		29	33
Hermann Ros	Uferstraße 12	Poles Ukrainians	10 2		
Oskar Gaudlitz	Cannon Road 50	Poland	12		
Elfabana Electrical Engineering Factory	Callenbergerstr. 16	Poland	5		
Emmerling and Pfister Canning Factory	Adamistraße 9	Eastern European workers		13	
Alfred Scholz	Kasernen Street 21	Eastern laborers		4	
Coburg Railway Maintenance Depot	Freight station Barracks camp	Eastern workers	66	15	13

6 StACo War files 3. The information on nationalities was taken from the sources.

4 List of sources

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NS 19 (Personal Staff of the Reichsführer SS): 2473, 1825
NS 23 (Storm Troopers of the NSDAP): 1401
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