

Minority Politics before 1938

In its Austrian half, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy ensured that the nationalities in Article XIX of the Constitution of 1867 were equal before the law. All the same, the developmental possibilities for the Slovenian nationality were different in each Kronland. Political collaboration and cultural development was thus hardly possible for the Slovenian nationality; this was particularly the case in schools. After First World War began, the situation worsened after SlovenInnen fell under unfounded suspicion of high treason.

The dissolution of the Habsburg monarchy and the defeat in the war in 1918 are inextricably bound together. With the creation of a new state, it was now possible to have both the national and the internal boundaries of the old Austria at one's disposal. Southern Slovenian troops occupied the area which they proclaimed as national territory, but neither the new Austria nor the new Carinthia would renounce it. The fight over the borders—named "defense fight" ["Abwehrkampf"] and "the fight for the northern border" ["Kampf um die Nordgrenze"] in Carinthia and Slovenia, respectively—ended in May of 1919 with the occupation of the aforementioned area by southern Slovenian troops. But the peace conference of Paris would not rule in accordance with the outcome of the border fights, and decided that the localization of the national border would be determined by popular vote. This was the first time that women were included in the vote. The Slovenian population that resided in the voting districts did not vote uniformly. Many favored the Republic and the state of Carinthia, which had ensured the security of their national rights. The vote went to Austria. Henceforth, the Slovenian minority in Austria came under the protection of the treaty of Saint Germain. The protection, however, was quite modest and the policy rather unsympathetic toward minorities. The previous promises were quickly forgotten and many wanted to divide the Slovenian population with the term "Windische." Now more than ever, the school became the

instrument for Germanization [Germanisierung].

The homeland alliance of Carinthia [der Kärntner Heimatbund] was the guarantor of this anti-Slovenian policy. With support from the German Empire, the Heimatbund pushed for an aggressive settlement policy by German colonists in the Slovenian region Carinthia; not even the Austrian fascist policy [austrofaschistische Politik], which was more sympathetic toward Slovenian minority, could make changes. With the national socialist seizure of power in Austria in March of 1938, the Carinthian Heimatbund and its leader Alois Maier-Kaibtsche emerged at the center of the illegal Nazism. The Germanization policy [die Germanisierungspolitik] was once more strengthened in Carinthia.