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THE SATURNALIAN STATE: CARNIVAL AND THE SURVIVAL OF THE VOLK,

1890-1939

By

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Saturnalian State: Carnival and the Survival of the Volk, 1890-1939

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This dissertation explores how people mobilized Carnival in different ways in Germany from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century, as Carnival, its forms, applications, and meanings changed dramatically alongside the flux of German history at this time. Carnival was a set of practices and symbols that became part of a city holiday through the efforts of citizens and municipal leaders, in cities like Cologne, within regions with predominantly Catholic populations like the Rhineland. But people elsewhere also took up practices and symbols under the mantle of “Carnival” at this time, as was the case in cities like Berlin, within heavily Protestant regions like Prussia. Indeed at different points within Carnival’s history during this period, a highly diverse spectrum of people in Germany—bourgeois Carnivalists, religious moralists, Social Democratic statesmen, Rhenish separatists, French, British, and Belgian occupation authorities, queer communities, women of all demographics, and members of the far right, among many others—connected Carnival to an equally diverse spectrum of agendas and aspirations: civic pride, commercial success, triumph in the First World War, autonomy in the Rhineland, social unrest, international diplomacy, the reconstruction of Germany, moral health, community formation, the fight against internal enemies, and ultimately the strength of a German race. My principle argument then is that Carnival was a set of

practices that different groups instrumentalized in diverse ways, which when studied together crystalize important themes in German history of this period.

A study of Carnival over time in Germany is significant for how it demonstrates dramatic change over time. It also reveals how consistently and broadly Carnival was connected to danger, anxiety, and even violence within society across the German regimes of the nineteenth to the early twentieth century. This scholarship is also novel though because it brings together themes and contexts historians of modern Germany wouldn't normally think about together and invites them to think about these topics anew. Indeed Carnival opens up certain larger themes in German history and enables historians to look at them with fresh eyes. By bringing together these disparate cultures, this dissertation often brings out the spaces of overlap between them, as Carnival repeatedly pointed to issues around identity and community membership, public order and security, morality and respectability, and commercialization and economic issues. In this way then Carnival both displayed important debates and perspectives about central issues in German society, but also took part in the maintenance of these issues during several critical moments in modern German history. Carnival is thus a powerful interpretive tool for socio-cultural battles in modern Germany, a prism through which to view some of the most important issues in Germany during these periods as they evolved over time.

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Introduction

This dissertation is about how people mobilized Carnival in different ways in Germany from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century, as Carnival, its forms, applications, and meanings changed dramatically alongside the flux of German history at this time. Carnival was a set of practices and symbols that became part of a city holiday through the efforts of citizens and municipal leaders, in cities like Cologne, within regions with predominantly Catholic populations like the Rhineland. But people elsewhere also took up practices and symbols under the mantle of “Carnival” at this time, as was the case in cities like Berlin, within heavily Protestant regions like Prussia. These cultures and the populations that shaped them, often officials and elites, differed in a lot of ways, but what they shared was this utilization of Carnival, connecting Carnival and its regulation to burning issues within German society. Indeed at different points within Carnival’s history during this period, a highly diverse spectrum of people in Germany—bourgeois Carnivalists, religious moralists, Social Democratic statesmen, Rhenish separatists, French, British, and Belgian occupation authorities, queer communities, women of all demographics, and members of the far right, among many others—connected Carnival to an equally diverse spectrum of agendas and aspirations: civic pride, commercial success, triumph in the First World War, autonomy in the Rhineland, social unrest, international diplomacy, the reconstruction of Germany, moral health, community formation, the fight against internal enemies, and ultimately the strength of a German race.

How did Carnival take on such important politics during this period? Between 1914 and 1927, and again from 1930 to 1933, the German holiday of Carnival was banned either locally in cities with large celebrations like Cologne, or for the entire German nation. World War I put a stop to this city and regional custom, a holiday with early-modern roots that by the late nineteenth century had become a massive thriving week-long celebration that enveloped entire cities and all their industries and institutions in places primarily in the South and West of Germany. The hardships and dislocations of the war transformed this holiday, of “age-old joy,” a “patriotic” “folk festival” cherished in these regions before the war, into a national threat instead, a symptom of German decline that had to be stopped. Following the November Revolution and ensuing crisis in Germany, Carnival was banned nationwide for the first time in the holiday’s history, amidst widespread public debate nationwide. The resulting national prohibition stubbornly persisted through all the ongoing flux and tumult of the Weimar years. Perhaps surprisingly, it was National Socialism that then saw the holiday’s full revival as a traditional custom, returned to its status as cherished holiday of the Volk together with its purportedly problematic elements purged. This is the story of official public Carnival in Germany from the Kaiserreich to the Nazi era: officially, for nearly two decades, there simply was no Carnival in Germany.

And yet, the politics of Carnival were compelled further by another story that can be told about still other Carnival cultures in Germany at this time. Indeed arguably, the Weimar era also marked a golden age of new unofficial Carnival cultures that posed issues of their own. Some of these events were the result of traditional Carnival revelers in cities like Cologne who bucked the system by organizing private Carnival events in

closed rooms. Still other enthusiasts of traditional Carnival moved their festivities to other places in Germany without a Carnival history where enforcement of the laws would be lax. However, these years of great tumult and flux also saw Carnival cultures of an entirely different nature, initiated by groups not understood to be part of the traditional Carnival milieu at all. During the Rhineland occupation, British occupation soldiers and their families took over the usual Carnival spaces for their own events while associating the city and its inhabitants with a sort of tourist version of Carnival. In the context of bitter geopolitical tensions in the region the French occupation forces, together with Rhenish separatists, used Carnival as a symbol of revolt against the Prussian Reich government in order to spark separatist revolutions and oppose republicanism. In Berlin, at the same time, flourishing queer masquerading subcultures for men, women, and so-called transvestites emerged under the banner of “Carnival,” crafting subcultural practices and displays from an appropriated set of Carnival rituals and symbols. Still other mainstream masquerade ball vogues in the city raged in the republic’s capital under the mantle of “Berlin Carnival,” even as official public Carnivals like those in the Rhineland had never really existed before in the Protestant North of Germany. These stories point to another history of Carnival—to unofficial forms of Carnival that flourished primarily in the holiday’s formal absence up to 1933. During the Third Reich the efforts of the party to use Carnival to spread shared notions of a diverse pan-German race led to the creation of still more new Carnival celebrations in Berlin and elsewhere, as well as attempts to naturalize Carnival cultures in other German cities. In both its official and unofficial forms from the late nineteenth to early twentieth century then, Carnival in Germany was no small business—and for most of this time it was a phenomenon with

surprisingly high stakes. The principle argument of this study then is that Carnival was a set of practices that different groups instrumentalized in diverse ways, and that were always wrapped up in contemporary politics, which when studied together crystalize important themes in German history of this period.

To explore these collective mobilizations of Carnival over time, this work turns to cultural sources about Carnival and its forms as well as discourses about Carnival that proliferated at this time, with this particular focus on Cologne and Berlin. The nature of Carnival and its history during this period required an eclectic assemblage of sources, as a tremendous body of sources mention or point to Carnival in this period but don't always take it up at length. For the forms and symbols of Carnival over time this study looks to accounts of annual public Carnival events, like in newspapers, but also other cultural sources, including about private or unofficial Carnival events: documentary films, poetry, speeches, songs, photographs, advertisements, novels, and memoirs. The simultaneous application of Carnival to competing aims is best seen within contemporary discourses or debates about Carnival. For this the dissertation takes up records of internal government correspondence between members of the German governments as well as letters between government officials, organizations, and members of the German public about Carnival. These are coupled with interviews, domestic and foreign newspapers, city guides, magazines, queer periodicals, feature films, protest materials, psychological and sexological case studies, and organization publications and newsletters.

These sources implicate Carnival in a highly diverse set of issues within modern Germany. Six studies of Carnival in Germany follow, a chapter on each, on the areas, themes, and arguments around which significant bodies of sources clustered. Together

the chapters point to how strikingly mobilizations of Carnival changed over time. During the Kaiserreich, Carnival in Cologne was made into a commercialized city holiday with tremendous power for bolstering civic pride but also concern over bourgeois and urban vice. With the onset of World War I, Carnival became an affront to the suffering of soldiers dying for the Fatherland, and its restriction a sign of support for Germany and the war effort. After the war in the occupied Rhineland, Carnival took on wholly new dangers and political associations, connected to the political aspirations of competing powers in the regions, including to the most violent episodes of these crisis years in the hyperpoliticized Rhineland. In this region Carnival also became connected to the new culture of amusements for British forces and their families that made up their everyday life in occupied Cologne. Across the nation and within every wrung of the Weimar government, Carnival and its regulation became a means to rebuild the struggling nation, connected to the suppression of various kinds of vice as symptomatic of moral bankruptcy and illness within the German people. At the same time, Carnival subcultures in Berlin became a powerful tool for community building for queer communities, even as these cultures were connected to the most objectionable of contemporary Carnival practices within national debates. Finally, during the Third Reich Carnival became a safe and commercially viable national folk holiday, a celebration of “Germanic peoples” and the triumph over national enemies and collective German trauma.

This dissertation is significant not only for how it demonstrates this dramatic change over time. It is the first English-language study of Carnival in Germany in general, either in the modern period or in the medieval and early-modern era, which also traverses regional boundaries and multiple German regimes, which no extant scholarship

on Carnival has explored thus far. Most modern treatments of Carnival in Cologne end with World War I, while still others begin with the Third Reich. Occasional anecdotal and brief commentary on Carnival during the Weimar years is sometimes found in extant literature, but virtually all scholarship on the history of the holiday skips over this period and picks Carnival back up as an element of public culture during the Third Reich.¹ This is the first study of Carnival to discuss the Weimar Republic at length, turning to previously unaccessed archival collections on measures against Carnival and masquerade balls, and only the second to discuss Carnival during the Third Reich despite the clearly robust and influential Carnival cultures that Germans revived across the country in the 1930s. Furthermore, while some scholarship exists on Carnival in the modern era, these studies focus exclusively on Carnival's forms, on Carnival as a holiday and also

¹ On Carnival scholarship in Germany to 1914 see: Christina Frohn, *Der organisierte Narr: Karneval in Aachen Düsseldorf und Köln von 1823 bis 1914* (Marburg: Jonas Verlag, 2000). James Brophy, *Popular Culture and the Public Sphere in the Rhineland, 1800-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). Elaine Glovka Spencer, "Regimenting Revelry: Rhenish Carnival in the Early Nineteenth Century," *Central European History* 28, No. 4 (1995): 457-481. Elaine Glovka Spencer, "Custom, Commerce, and Contention: Rhenish Carnival Celebrations, 1890-1914," *German Studies Review* 20, No. 3 (October 1997): 323-341. Klaus Schmidt, *Klaus Raveaux: Karnevalist und Pionier des demokratischen Aufbruchs in Deutschland* (Cologne: Greven, 2001). On Carnival to 1914 that skips over both the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich see Helene Klauser, *Kölner Karneval zwischen Uniform und Lebensform* (Münster: Waxmann, 2007). Jeremy DeWaal, "The Reinvention of Tradition: Form, Meaning, and Local Identity in Modern Cologne Carnival," *Central European History* 46, no. 3 (Sept 2013): 495-532. On Carnival leading up to the war and then again from 1933 on see: Joseph Klersch, *Die kölnische Fastnacht von ihren Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* (Köln: Bachem, 1961). On Carnival scholarship during the Third Reich, see Carl Dietmar and Marcus Leifeld, *Alaaf und Heil Hitler: Karneval im Dritten Reich* (Munich: Herbig, 2010). Jürgen Meyer, "Organisierter Karneval und >>Narrenrevolte<< im Nationalsozialismus. Anmerkungen zu Schein und Sein im Kölner Karneval 1933-193," *Geschichte in Köln* 42 (Dec 1997), 69-86: 73. One exception to this trend can be found in the scholarship of Hildegard Brog, within which a chapter is devoted to the time without official Carnival. Hildegard Brog, *Was auch passiert, D'r Zoch kütt!: die Geschichte des rheinischen Karnevals* (Frankfurt: Campus: 2000).

principally as a source of festive merriment. This dissertation differs in that it demonstrates how consistently and broadly Carnival was connected to danger, anxiety, and even violence.

This dissertation is a comparative history of Carnival cultures from the late nineteenth to early twentieth century that identifies with the riches of a case study approach, as a great number of German history works use German cities or regions, often in the Rhineland, Berlin, and Bavaria, as case studies in order to analyze questions central to this study.² This dissertation takes up a particular focus on the urban histories of Cologne and Berlin in order to explore important transformations within the history of Germany. Not only were Carnival's uses and meanings especially widespread and diverse during this period, but the holiday's official forms were also highly specific to each city. Because of this, this study takes up a focus on Cologne, one heart of Carnival in the

² Martin Geyer, *Verkehrte Welt: Revolution, Inflation und Moderne, München 1914-1924* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998). Lynn Abrams, *Worker's Culture in Imperial Germany: Leisure and Recreation in the Rhineland and Westphalia* (New York: Routledge, 1992). Kathleen Canning, *Languages of Labor and Gender: Female Factory Work, 1850-1914* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996). David Crew, *Town in the Ruhr: a Social History of Bochum, 1860-1914* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979). Niall Ferguson, *Paper and Iron: Hamburg Business Culture and German Politics in the Era of Inflation, 1897-1927* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). Jonathan Osmond, *Rural Protest in the Weimar Republic: the Free Peasantry in the Rhineland and Bavaria* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993). Volker Standt, *Köln im Ersten Weltkrieg: Veränderungen in der Stadt und des Lebens der Bürger 1914-1918* (Göttingen: Niedersachs Optimus Mostafa Verlag, 2014). J.M. Winter and Jean-Louis Robert, *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin, 1914-1919* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). Belinda Davis, *Home Fires Burning: Food, Politics, and Everyday Life in World War I in Berlin* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000). Mary Nolan, *Social Democracy and Society: Working-Class Radicalism in Düsseldorf, 1890-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981). David Imhoof, *Becoming a Nazi Town: Culture and Politics in Göttingen between the World Wars* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013). Andrew Bergerson, *Ordinary Germans in Extraordinary Times: the Nazi Revolution in Hildesheim* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2004).

Rhineland highly emblematic of official Carnival in Germany, and Berlin, Prussian capital of the republic known for and often emblematic of unofficial Carnival in Germany. Cologne was one of the cities with the largest, most famous, well visited, and oldest public Carnival celebrations in Germany by the turn of the twentieth century, alongside Munich, Mainz, Frankfurt, Aachen, Düsseldorf, and Bonn. As a significant Carnival capital in the Rhineland, where Carnival was part of regional and national contestations over identity and power from at least the early nineteenth century, and which would take on particular geopolitical significance after World War I, Cologne offers an especially rich example of how the holiday intersected with important German issues over time. By contrast, Berlin provided an important tension with and contrast to Cologne throughout the period, both due to longstanding fissures within a unified Germany and due to the city's Carnival history. The Prussian capital became a site of flourishing unofficial Carnivals both before and after the war, including booming queer Carnival subcultures in the city during the years of the republic, as populations across the country saw such occurrences in the nation's capital, despite a nationwide ban on Carnival, as symptomatic of moral bankruptcy and German national decline. The division between official sanctioned Carnival and unofficial or private Carnival would prove especially significant for definitions of morality and health in leisure and amusements like those seen within Carnival debates, which in turn shaped the legislation and policy choices of those in power. Taking Cologne and Berlin together then, this study traverses important demographic divides in German regions during this period, including Rhenish and Prussian, Catholic and Protestant, occupied and unoccupied, while analysis in and about these case studies spans Carnival experience and discourse from a broader

representation of class, gender, race, age, political affiliation, region, religion, and sexuality. While this study relies on case studies, it also demonstrates how Carnival became a national issue and a national phenomenon at different points during the period, an effect of severe conditions and sustained tumult in Germany over these decades and attempts by contemporaries to grapple with those serious conditions.

This study of Carnival over time in Germany is novel thus because it brings together themes and contexts historians of modern Germany wouldn't normally think about together and invites them to think about these issues anew. Indeed Carnival opens up certain larger themes in German history and enables historians to look at them with fresh eyes. By bringing together these disparate cultures, this dissertation often points to the spaces of overlap between them, as Carnival repeatedly pointed to issues around identity and community membership, public order and security, morality and respectability, and commercialization and economic issues. In this way then Carnival both displayed important debates and perspectives about central issues in German society, but also took part in the maintenance of these issues during several critical moments in modern German history. Carnival is thus a powerful interpretive tool for socio-cultural battles in modern Germany, a prism through which to view some of the most important issues in Germany during these periods as they evolved over time.

I. Terminology

This study relies on the usage of specific terms, foremost among them "Carnival," "Volk," and "queer," each of which defy easy categorization but nevertheless drive the

current study and must be explained here. Each of these terms has been widely discussed and debated within theoretical and historical scholarship, and have been subject to shifts in meaning and application over time. They are conceptualized and mobilized in specific ways in this work in large measure due to historical conditions as well as historical actors' formulations of them found within the sources taken up.

Firstly, Carnival is understood in this work as a set of practices as well as a cultural framework that is mobilized by different groups in the service of highly varied agendas. Chapter 1 details the central rituals, sites, and symbols of Carnival as they developed within the holiday traditions of Cologne during the nineteenth century in an attempt to illustrate the diverse panoply of Carnival practices that were understood as part of the public and officially sanctioned holiday around the turn of the twentieth century. As the following chapters will demonstrate though, not only were these practices subject to change over time but so too were their meanings and uses, which changed dramatically in conversation with the historical dramas of early-twentieth-century Germany. Carnival practices are traced then, especially from the onset of World War I, through the debates and discourses of "Carnival" by historical actors, as the practices of Carnival, their applications, and their meanings changed strikingly over time. Although at times phenomena are taken up due to what seems like an applied framework of Carnival—as arguing that something constitutes the structure of Carnival—this study is primarily concerned with Carnival the holiday and practices that historical actors understand as part of a Carnival holiday culture. In other words, this study primarily avoids taking up phenomena that might be labeled as "carnavalesque," either most banally as something

characteristic of Carnival, or as part of its theoretical formulation as a potentially subversive and/or liberating literary mode emergent from humor and chaos.

Secondly, discourses about Carnival in Germany are filled with ideas about the *Volk*, which functioned as a cultural and political multivalence from the nineteenth to the twentieth century. Of its many appeals, the word conjured ideas about folk practices and tribes of German people, a collective mass of like people, citizens who made up a nation, the nation itself, and eventually the German race. As Carnival changed over time, its discourses reflected the shifting applications of this term and what was at stake to different people over it. What resulted was a lack of cohesion between applications of the term indicative of the broader social, political, and cultural battles to which Carnival points. Carnival debates over the *Volk* though put on display the problems within and surrounding city, regional, national, and subcultural identity in these years. Because in essence the *Volk* points to a collectivity within which somebody or something belongs, Carnival's *Volk* connections often occasioned or even relied on aversion to groups perceived as different from or not belonging to that identity—be these perceived differences regional, moral, or even racial ones. Thus at the center of contestations over Carnival were these competing applications over an imagined *Volk* and interpretations about what or who belonged within it or was, for instance, an illegitimate usurper, a “true German,” or an immoral person, or an enemy of the nation or race. Such tensions were embedded for instance within the question of whether the *Volk* was subsumed within the Weimar state or existed outside of it.³ The chapters then follow competing appeals in

³ See a discussion of the conception of the *Volk* embedded in the formulation of the Weimar constitution for instance in: Michael Wildt, *Hitler's Volksgemeinschaft and the*

Carnival debates and discourses to the *Volk*, even as an imprecise concept within German language and history, because it gets at the perceived divisions within German populations that often made Carnival matter to different people.

Finally, Chapter 5 relies on a language of “queerness,” taking up terminology like “queer” Carnival and “queer” communities. While Carnival spaces in Berlin could potentially be queer in the sense of queer theory—namely with Carnival as a dynamic and fluid phenomenon possessed of subversive or transgressive potential that could provide both liberating and dangerous opportunities to individual and community—the use of “queer” in this study emerges from a more pragmatic explanation. The nature of sources on both mainstream and queer subcultural Carnival in Berlin, presents terminological challenges regarding subjective identification vis-à-vis Carnival practices. One historical message at annual Carnival in the prewar years entailed that all rules in society were suspended, which over time made the holiday especially popular since at least the mid-nineteenth century among people of nonnormative sexualities due to the permissibility and frequency of social and sexual displays and practices at Carnival celebrations that were otherwise deemed inappropriate. These included cross-dressing, homoerotic acts, as well as anonymous sex acts while in costume. As a result, Carnival may have created queer spaces—it probably did—but this did not necessarily translate to fixed subjectivities that can be assigned on the basis of source documentation that rarely support such claims. The traces of this history are scattered and eclectic, and rarely speak to identification politics, perhaps unsurprisingly as Carnival celebrations so often involved role-play. Moreover, between the emergence of new sexological research with

new theories and definitions, the popular gender and sex play of fashions and aesthetics within Weimar culture, and the rich new languages of identification about gender and sex identification in the Weimar years, an attempt to use terms like “homosexual,” “gay,” “bisexual,” “lesbian,” or even “transgender” or “transvestite” really can only be rationalized when historical actors themselves took up such language. Because this is rarely the case in the sources taken up here, this work accepts the less definite but more capacious language of “queerness” to encircle the highly diverse cultural, gender, and sex practices that were part of this Carnival subculture in Berlin. Terms like “lesbian” are only used when ego documents point to an actual identification with such language, which in most cases only occurred in postwar memoirs and interviews about the Weimar years. “Men,” “women,” and occasionally “transvestite” by contrast are used because the subcultures themselves, although notably not always their patrons, were divided along these lines.⁴

II. Theory & Literature

This study of Carnival connects to a number of big topics in the history of Wilhelmine, Weimar, and Nazi Germany. Five major themes and bodies of scholarship

⁴ This is a critical point due for instance to the involvement of so-called “transvestites” in the queer subcultures of Berlin during this years, in particular within the women’s Carnival scene, which was often more inclusive in nature. On the now expanding work on the history of transvestites in Weimar society, see Laurie Marhoefer, *Sex and the Weimar Republic: German Homosexual Emancipation and the Rise of the Nazis* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015). Katie Sutton, “‘We Too Deserve a Place in the Sun’: the Politics of Transvestite Identity in Weimar Germany,” *German Studies Review* 35, No. 2 (May 2012): 335-354. Rainer Herrn, *Schnittmuster des Geschlechts: Transvestitismus und Transsexualität in der frühen Sexualwissenschaft* (Gießen: Psychosocial-Verlag, 2005). Katie Sutton, *The Masculine Woman in Weimar Society* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011): 111-125.

and theory that have played significant roles in the historiography on modern Germany and the history of Carnival guide the current work: regional and national identity in Germany; the association of the Weimar Republic with disorder and a resulting backlash surrounding this crisis over order; the symbolic political culture of ceremony or festivity in Germany; queer subcultures in Berlin; and the theory and history of Carnival during the medieval, early-modern, and modern period in Europe. This section will briefly discuss the development of scholarship on these themes and how this study connects to these bodies of scholarship and theory.

Most generally, this study contributes to the broad literature on regional and national identity in Germany during the nineteenth and twentieth century. Carnival was clearly an expression of civic pride and a central force for the production of regional German identity, even as the holiday's role in that identity changed over time. As will be shown, Carnival before World War I functioned much like the *Heimat* movement in regions like the Rhenish Palatinate (Pfalz) explored by Celia Applegate, namely by seeing Germanness as a modern initiative that was frequently the production of bourgeois narratives in public life.⁵ The efforts of Cologne's influential bourgeoisie who worked together with municipal officials led to Carnival as a modern holiday with a codified public repertoire that was good for city commerce but also bolstered regional identity within a unified Germany. This work sees Carnival as a project often of elites, contributing to histories of Germany during this period that emphasize Germany's

⁵ Celia Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials: the German Idea of Heimat* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

growing influential bourgeoisie.⁶ It thus reads with scholarship on Carnival that depicts it as both a force for the propping up of middle-class values and for select political expressions from the 1840s onward.⁷ One of the clearest expressions of the latter is seen

⁶ A sizable literature exists on the growth and nature of the German middle-class during the nineteenth and twentieth century. See among others Gisela Mettele, *Bürgertum in Köln 1775-1870. Gemeinsinn und freie Association* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1998). Richard van Dülmen, *The Society of the Enlightenment: the Rise of the Middle Class and Enlightenment Culture in Germany* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992). Harmut Kaelbe, *Industrielle Interessenpolitik in der Wilhelminische Gesellschaft. Centralverband deutscher Industrieller 1895-1914* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1967). David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley, *The Peculiarities of German History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984). David Blackbourn and Richard Evans, eds., *The German Bourgeoisie: Essays on the Social History of the German Middle Class from the Late Eighteenth Century to the Early Twentieth Century* (London: Routledge, 1991). James Brophy, *Capitalism, Politics, and Railroads in Prussia, 1830-1870* (Columbia: Ohio University Press, 1998). Jürgen Kocka, *Industrial Culture and Bourgeois Society: Business, Labor, and Bureaucracy in Modern Germany* (New York: Berghahn, 1999). Jürgen Kocka and Ute Frevert, *Bürgertum im 19. Jahrhundert: Deutschland im europäischen Vergleich* (Munich: DTV, 1988). Marion Kaplan, *The Making of the Jewish Middle Class: Women, Family, Identity in Imperial Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991). On the lower-middle class see also Geoffrey Crossick and Heinz-Gerhard Haupt, *The Petite Bourgeoisie in Europe, 1780-1914: Enterprise, Family, and Independence* (London: Routledge, 1995). David Blackbourn, *Class, Religion, and Local Politics in Wilhelmine Germany: the Centre Party in Württemberg before 1914* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980). David Blackbourn, *Marpingen: Apparitions of the Virgin Mary in Bismarckian Germany* (New York: Knopf, 1993). Robert Moeller, *German Peasants and Agrarian Politics, 1914-1924: the Rhineland and Westphalia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986).

⁷ Elaine Glovka Spencer, "Regimenting Revelry: Rhenish Carnival in the Early Nineteenth Century," *Central European History* 28, Nr. 4 (1995): 457-481. Elaine Glovka Spencer, "Custom, Commerce, and Contention: Rhenish Carnival Celebrations, 1890-1914," *German Studies Review* 20, Nr. 3 (Oct 1997): 323-341. James Brophy, "Carnival and Citizenship: The Politics of Carnival Culture in the Prussian Rhineland, 1823-1848," *Journal of Social History* 30, Nr. 4 (Summer 1997): 873-904. Hildegard Brog, *Was auch passiert, D'r Zoch kütt!: die Geschichte des rheinischen Karnevals* (Frankfurt: Campus: 2000). Indeed the class politics of Carnival were part of larger projects for the regulation of leisure and the politics of popular culture in nineteenth-century Germany taking place at the same time. On this see for instance James Brophy, *Popular Culture and the Public Sphere in the Rhineland, 1800-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). Elaine Glovka Spencer, "Policing Popular Amusements in German Cities. The Case of Prussia's Rhine Province 1815-1914," *Journal of Urban History* 16 (1990): 366-385. Lynn Abrams, *Worker's Culture in*

in the manifestation of anti-Prussian sentiment on the part of bourgeois Carnivalists in the Rhineland, which scholars have taken up within early-nineteenth-century popular culture,⁸ even as this dissertation points to the yet unexplored ways that such tensions continued to be an issue within German Carnival well into the twentieth century.

Much scholarship has proliferated on the history and nature of nationalism and nationalist movements in Germany and Central Europe as well, with a frequent focus on whether such projects were imposed from the top or were the result of bottom-up stirrings. Through Carnival in the early twentieth century one can see that it's both, as regional Carnival traditions developed as a frequent bulwark against the Prussian and Reich government at the same time that the local elite structured and imposed interpretations locally on the populace, through the regulation of Carnival rituals with

Imperial Germany: Leisure and Recreation in the Rhineland and Westphalia (New York: Routledge, 1992).

⁸ See for instance the occasions for anti-Prussian sentiment in public festival culture in the Rhineland during the first half of the nineteenth century in: Michael Müller, "Karneval als Politikum. Zum Verhältnis zwischen Preußen und dem Rheinland im 19. Jahrhundert." In *Von der Entstehung der Provinzen bis zur Reichsgründung*, edited by Kurt Düwell (Wuppertel: Hammer, 1983): 207-223. James Brophy, *Popular Culture and the Public Sphere in the Rhineland, 1800-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). James Brophy, "The Rhine Crisis of 1840 and German Nationalism: Chauvinism, Skepticism, and Regional Reception," *Journal of Modern History* 85, Nr. 1 (March 2013): 1-35. Attempts to reform Prussian police practice in favor of less violence and state militarism in the context of such tensions are taken up in: Alf Lüdtke, *Police and State in Prussia, 1815-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989). References to nineteenth-century Carnivalists taking up Rhenish nationalism to mock Prussia are likewise found in: Anton Keim, *11mal politischer Karneval: Weltgeschichte aus der Bütt; Geschichte der demokratischen Narrentradition vom Rhein* (Mainz: Von Hase & Koehler, 1966): 53. Christina Frohn, *Der organisierte Narr: Karneval in Aachen, Düsseldorf und Köln von 1823 bis 1914* (Marburg: Jonas, 2000). The complex relationship between Prussia and regions like the Rhineland and Bavaria, in particular during the years of the *Kulturkampf* and in campaigns of German nationalism from above, is likewise explored in David Blackbourn, *Marpingen: Apparitions of the Virgin Mary in Bismarckian Germany* (New York: Knopf, 1993).

underlying Rhenish nationalist ideologies and historical myths.⁹ At the same time, discourses examined here and throughout the dissertation point to notions of *Heimat*, the “hometown” (*Vaterstadt*), the *Volk*, etc. as amorphous terms that relate in different ways to the German nation through competing and overlapping visions of an imagined community with invented traditions.¹⁰ Limited recent scholarship on modern Carnival in Cologne, like the work of historian Jeremy DeWaal, has therefore rightly pointed to the holiday as a rich example of invented traditions of local nationalism through cultural studies of its shifting meaning, even as DeWaal’s work follows the trend of Carnival

⁹ On the nature of Central European and German nationalism see Helmut Smith, *German Nationalism and Religious Conflict: Culture, Ideology, Politics, 1870-1914* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995). Hagen Schulze, *Nation-Building in Central Europe* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1987). Mack Walter, *German Home Towns: Community, State, and the General Estate 1648-1871* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971). Wolfgang Altgeld, “Religion, Denomination, and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Germany,” in Helmut Smith ed., *Protestants, Catholics and Jews in Germany, 1800-1914* (New York: Berg, 2001): 49-65. George Mosse, *The Nationalization of the Masses: Political Symbolism and Mass Movements in Germany from the Napoleonic Wars through the Third Reich* (New York: H. Fertig, 1975). Pieter Judson and Marsha Rozenblit eds., *Constructing Nationalities in East Central Europe* (New York: Berghahn, 2005). Dieter Langewiesche, *Nation, Nationalismus, Nationalstaat in Deutschland und Europa* (Munich: Beck, 2000). Keely Stauter-Halsted, *Nation in the Village: the Genesis of Peasant National Identity in Austrian Poland, 1848-1914* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001). Pieter Judson, *Guardians of the Nation: Activists on the Language Frontier of Imperial Austria* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006). On memory and the production of national myths see Charlotte Tacke, *Denkmal im sozialen Raum: nationale Symbole in Deutschland und Frankreich im 19. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995). Johannes Burckhardt, Stephanie Haberer, and Theresia Hörmann eds., *Das Friedenfest. Augsburg und die Entwicklung einer neuzeitlichen Toleranz-, Friedens- und Festkultur* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2000). Joe Perry, *Christmas in Germany: A Cultural History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

¹⁰ Celia Applegate, “A Europe of Regions: Reflections on the Historiography of Sub-National Places in Modern Times,” *American Historical Review* 104, Nr. 4 (Oct 1999): 1157-1182. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991). Eric Hobsbawm, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

scholarship more generally of skipping over World War I and the Weimar Republic.¹¹ Moreover, as historian Alon Confino has persuasively argued, post-1871 nationalist projects folded German diversity broadly conceived into a national imaginary in order to reconcile the distinct regional differences of Germany's confederated states.¹² While this appears to have broadly succeeded in the decades leading up to the war—Carnival's history demonstrates this well—this national imaginary seemed to break down under the strains of Weimar society. Carnival points then as well to how the National Socialists recovered this approach to German nationalism and succeeded at this project, by integrating Germanic diversity into its ideological project, arguably more successfully than in the Kaiserreich, whereas the Weimar Republic by contrast struggled tremendously, failing to assimilate constant regional tension and general social fragmentation.

Secondly, one of the central themes taken up in this study deals with the real and perceived disorder of the Weimar era, which stimulated backlash in an attempt to prevent further upheaval within the national, economic, political, social, cultural, gender, or sex order. Beyond depictions of the decade from 1914 to 1923 in general as the “decade of unrest,”¹³ historians themselves have frequently taken up an understanding of the Weimar

¹¹ Jeremy DeWaal, “The Reinvention of Tradition: Form, Meaning, and Local Identity in Modern Cologne Carnival,” *Central European History* 46, no. 3 (Sept 2013): 495-532.

¹² Alon Confino, *The Nation as a Local Metaphor: Württemberg, Imperial Germany, and National Memory, 1871-1918* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

¹³ For works that take up the whole of the period rather than a singular focus on the period after the war see Belinda Davis, *Home Fires Burning: Food, Politics, and Everyday Life in World War I Berlin* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000). Robert Scholz, *Ein unruhiges Jahrzehnt: Lebensmittelunruhen, Massenstreiks und Arbeitslosenkrawalle in Berlin 1914-1923* (Berlin: Verlag Europ. Perspektiven, 1980). Karl-Ludwig Ay, *Die Entstehung einer Revolution. Die Volkstimmung in Bayern während des 1. Weltkrieges* (Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 1968). Klaus-Dieter

Republic as disorder in analysis for instance of the German economy.¹⁴ Such analysis stems from the economy's obvious ordering function¹⁵ as much as from the dramatic and severe economic experiences and resulting attitudes that precipitated across Germany during the republic.¹⁶ But Weimar was also associated in many contemporaries' minds with disorder, and there was a backlash against this disorder that has also been taken up in extant scholarship as it is in this study. The experience of Weimar as disorder has been found within German history spanning histories of labor and class, politics, and culture

Schwarz, *Weltkrieg und Revolution in Nürnberg; ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung* (Stuttgart: E. Klett, 1971).

¹⁴ For instance, Martin Geyer's analysis of Munich and the effects of the war as a "world turned upside down" homed in on this new disorder found within and as a result of the Weimar culture of economics. Similarly, Gerald Feldman also identified the experience of runaway inflation in Germany after the war, the worst case of which in global history, as "the great disorder" of Weimar society. Pamela Swett's work on street violence in the Weimar district of Kreuzberg pointed to similar insights but on another social level; working-class residents in Berlin demonstrated how order disintegrated in Berlin as an effect of economic stress. Martin Geyer, *Verkehrte Welt: Revolution, Inflation und Moderne, München 1914-1924* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998). Gerald Feldman, *The Great Disorder: Politics, Economics, and Society in the German Inflation, 1914-1924* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993). Pamela Swett, *Neighbors and Enemies: the Culture of Radicalism in Berlin, 1929-1933* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

¹⁵ Keith Tribe, *Strategies of Economic Order: German Economic Discourse, 1750-1950* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

¹⁶ Of the numerous works on Germany's economic crisis and unrest after the war, beyond those mentioned above, see Harold James, *The German Slump: Politics and Economics, 1924-1936* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986). Carl-Ludwig Holtfrerich, *Die deutsche Inflation 1914-1923. Ursachen und Folgen in internationaler Perspektive* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1980). Klaus-Dieter Schwarz, *Weltkrieg und Revolution in Nürnberg; ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung* (Stuttgart: E. Klett, 1971). A sizable literature on the Weimar economy also has proliferated in the service of a variety of questions from economic strategy to the collapse of the republic and rise of Nazism. See among others: Mary Nolan, *Visions of Modernity: American Business and the Modernization of Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994). David Abraham, *The Collapse of the Weimar Republic: Political Economy and Crisis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981). Harold James, *The Reichsbank and Public Finance in Germany, 1924-1933: a Study of the Politics of Economics during the Great Depression* (Frankfurt am Main: F. Knapp, 1985). Henry Turner, *German Big Business and the Rise of Hitler* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

after the war. For instance, Martin Geyer's work on the "world turned upside down" of Weimar Munich points then not just to a materialistic notion of disorder—the actual war and resulting maelstrom that wreaked havoc on society—but also importantly to a perception of disorder and crisis within society that informed debate and backlash within politics and culture. The idea of such a perception and ensuing backlash is not new, but rather has informed perennial discussion of the Weimar Republic, the nature of its conservatism, and the origins of National Socialism since the postwar years. Consider then Fritz Stern's 1961 analysis of "cultural despair" as case studies of "Germanic ideology" that revealed a sense of alienation and bitter criticism about contemporary German society after the war, a belief about German disorder that it could be healed through a "conservative revolution."¹⁷ Other literature has pointed to new populist actions during the Weimar era for the expression of public discontent and new political languages on the right,¹⁸ as well as new peasant radicalization and conservative separatist action in rural regions far from the Prussian Weimar capital that resulted from economic concern.¹⁹

Examples from analysis of the German right can likewise be met with analysis of Weimar's cultural outpouring and liberal changes within society. Indeed it was the new roles taken up by Wilhelmine "outsiders" now as "insiders" within Weimar culture that often provided ripe fodder for perceived danger and resulting criticism.²⁰ A sizable literature now exists then on this disorder and resulting backlash within understandings of

¹⁷ Fritz Stern, *The Politics of Cultural Despair: a Study in the Rise of the Germanic Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961).

¹⁸ Peter Fritzsche, *Germans into Nazis* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).

¹⁹ Jonathan Osmond, *Rural Protest in the Weimar Republic: the Free Peasantry in the Rhineland and Bavaria* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993).

²⁰ Peter Gay, *Weimar Culture: the Outsider as Insider* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968).

Weimar culture as well. Weimar became a new landscape of “danger and design” permeated with disabled and traumatized war veterans, a proliferation of male and female sex workers, increased women in the workplace, expressionist art and avant-garde film experimentation, emancipated women and queer visibility, mass consumer society and a postwar nouveau riche, urban metropolises of vice, criminality, and an infamous black market. All of these elements have been taken up within German history as rich and contested elements of Weimar culture that were nevertheless connected to disorder and crisis within the German nation,²¹ and importantly tied up in national debates over consumption and consumer society in the midst of the “golden age” of the Weimar Republic. In other words, the “golden age” of the Weimar Republic from 1924 to 1929 ushered in the most intense language of moral peril, which corresponded to broader

²¹ See among others Peter Fritzsche, “Landscape of Danger, Landscape of Design: Crisis and Modernism in Weimar Germany,” in Thomas Kniesche and Stephan Brockemann, eds., *Danger on the Volcano: Essays on the Culture of the Weimar Republic* (Columbia: Camden House, 1994). Florian Berg, *Die Bekämpfung des Verbrechers als Sicherung des Volkes: Die ‘Monatschrift für Kriminalpsychologie und Strafrechtsreform’ im Dritten Reich* (Wiesbaden: Springer, 2018). Deborah Cohen, *The War Come Home: Disabled Veterans in Britain and Germany, 1914-1939* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001). Paul Lerner, *Hysterical Men: War, Psychiatry, and the Politics of Trauma in Germany, 1880-1930* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003). Julia Sneeringer, *Winning Women’s Votes: Propaganda and Politics in Weimar Germany* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002). Atina Grossmann, *Reforming Sex: the German Movement for Birth Control and Abortion Reform, 1920-1950* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995). Katharina von Ankum, ed. *Women in the Metropolis: Gender and Modernity in Weimar Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997). Janet Ward, *Weimar Surfaces: Urban Visual Culture in 1920s Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001). Richard McCormick, *Gender and Sexuality in Weimar Modernity: Film, Literature, and “New Objectivity”* (New York: Palgrave, 2001). Mila Ganeva, *Women in Weimar Fashion: Discourses and Displays in German Culture, 1918- 1933* (Rochester: Camden House, 2008). Patrice Petro, *Joyless Streets: Women and Melodramatic Representation in Weimar Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989). Stefan Andriopoulos, *Possessed: Hypnotic Crimes, Corporate Fiction, and the Invention of Cinema* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2008). Andreas Killen, *Berlin Electropolis: Shock, Nerves, and German Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

cultural anxieties over consumption, gender, sexuality, and the German nation at the time.²² Much of this literature then, instead of using perceptions of disorder to analyze for instance the road to Nazism, has taken up these contested cultural experiences as examples of the particular version of cultural outpouring and liberalism that Weimar enabled in spite of its paradoxes and limitations. This dissertation takes up the perceived crisis around order within Weimar society as both a closing down and an opening up at once—showcasing the paradoxes and at times surprising ironies of Weimar liberalism. Likewise, Carnival’s history in these years brings out tensions inherent in on the one hand the drive to manage disorder and on the other hand the reliance on mass consumerism, the merits of which were widely debated in these years, to recover the German economy.²³

²² Indeed the period is heralded for its transformations in gender and mass culture, which informs broad scholarship on fashion, advertising, and interwar “crises” over gender and consumption not just in Germany but elsewhere. See Eric Jensen, *Body by Weimar: Athletes, Gender, and German Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). Nancy Ruth Reagin, *Sweeping the German Nation: Domesticity and National Identity in Modern Germany, 1870-1945* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007). Nina Sylvester, “Before *Cosmopolitan*: The Girl in German Women’s Magazines in the 1920s,” *Journalism Studies* 8, no 4 (2007): 550-554; 552. Annelie Ramsbrock, *The Science of Beauty: Culture and Cosmetics in Modern Germany, 1750-1930* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan: 2015). Lynda King, *Best-Sellers by Design: Vicki Baum and the House of Ullstein* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1988). For similar scholarship outside of Germany see Mary Louise Roberts, *Civilization without Sexes: Reconstructing Gender in Postwar France, 1917-1927* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994). Angela Latham, *Posing a Threat: Flappers, Chorus Girls, and Other Brazen Figures of the American 1920s* (Hanover: University Press of New England for Wesleyan University Press, 2000). Modern Girl Around the World Research Group, *The Modern Girl Around the World: Consumption, Modernity, and Globalization* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008). Birgitte Søland, *Becoming Modern: Young Women and the Reconstruction of Womanhood in the 1920s* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000). Whitney Chadwick and Tirza True Latimer, *The Modern Woman Revisited: Paris Between the Wars* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2003).

²³ For a discussion of this relationship between consumer society and the fragile interwar economy in Germany, see among others: Julia Sneeringer, “The Shopper as Voter:

Carnival became at the center of much of this perceived disorder and crisis during the Weimar years even as extant scholarship hasn't taken it up as a site of such analysis. Even as numerous historians liken historical contexts and political displays to Carnival, including Geyer, Padraic Kenney, and Katie Sutton, the holiday is not the subject of their studies, rather an argument that histories are at times carnivalesque.²⁴ But Carnival itself became a contemporary debate during Weimar, over disorder, crisis, and identity. This study posits that Carnival itself, as a set of practices as well as a cultural framework, is a powerful tool for explaining the evolution of Germany during these tumultuous decades. Indeed society may well have been carnivalesque, but broad audiences connected Carnival to foreign occupation, economic catastrophe, immorality and vice, the threat of war profiteers and separatist revolution, gender and sex crisis, mass commercialization and consumption, an alternative more tolerable world, and broad social and political unrest. It was favored within Nazism and the Weimar cultural outpouring at once. Carnival in crisis then becomes a site of analyzing multiple and simultaneous

Women, Advertising, and Politics in Post-Inflation Germany," *German Studies Review* 27, no 3 (2004). Much scholarship has been done also on the consolidation of a mass consumer society in Weimar Germany. See among others Pamela E. Swett, S. Jonathan Wiesen, and Jonathan R. Zatlin, eds., *Selling Modernity: Advertising in Twentieth-Century Germany* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007). Victoria de Grazia, *Irresistible Empire: America's Advance Through 20th Century Europe* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2005). Mary Nolan, *Visions of Modernity: American Business and the Modernization of Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

²⁴ Padraic Kenney used Mikhail Bakhtin's formulation of the carnival as a literary mode to analyze opposition movements in Central Europe between 1986 and 1989, namely because, he argues, the opposition movements of this era possessed variety, joy, and the breakdown of all rules. Carnival serves for him then both as metaphor and political practice. Katie Sutton by contrast used the "politics of Carnival" as an analytical framework to analyze subversive gender displays like cross-dressing and drag in Weimar culture. Katie Sutton, *The Masculine Woman in Weimar Society* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011): 129. Padraic Kenney, *A Carnival of Revolution: Central Europe 1989* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).

possibilities, imaginations, contingencies, and contestations over the form and survival of the republic. Such analysis of crisis here then is not in the explicit service of anticipating the fall of the republic; it rather explores these shifting possibilities to diverse actors and communities—which people sought to deploy Carnival and why—instead of simply bolstering a linear road to Nazism that reads its destination into its beginnings.²⁵

Although the German far right and the Nazi party took up Carnival to a great degree in their navigation of Weimar disorder and crisis, as discussion will show, they did so in drastically different ways.

One intervention in this literature about Weimar crisis and backlash against it though deals with Weimar consensus surrounding Carnival issues, which presents a challenge to much of the above scholarship that treats the failure of Weimar in terms of increasing social and political fragmentation and polarization, the weight of which eventually broke the republic. Analysis of Weimar disorder within national Carnival debates do not point to a general consensus. On the contrary Carnival debates demonstrate the deepening social and political fissures of German society. At the same time, debates over Carnival displayed numerous surprises, including that they didn't necessarily follow the lines established by formal political parties. But how consensus traversed these lines dealt with a larger consensus about the serious state of Germany, that its people were imperiled and suffering from illness if not moral collapse, and that

²⁵ For another such contestation over the use of the idea of crisis in Weimar historiography see, Rüdiger Graf, *Die Zukunft der Weimarer Republik. Krisen und Zukunftsaneignungen in Deutschland 1918-1933* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2008). On the crisis narrative that has so shaped history of the Weimar Republic, see Detlev J. K. Peukert, *The Weimar Republic: The Crisis of Classical Modernity*, trans. Richard Deveson (New York: Hill and Wang, 1989. Moritz Föllmer and Rüdiger Graf, eds., *Die Krise der Weimarer Republik. Zur Kritik eines Deutungsmusters* (Frankfurt and New York: Campus, 2005).

purported enemies within the country were the bulwark to Germany's successful reconstruction and survival. This constituted a dramatic consensus within demographics across the nation as across social and political divides often seen at odds with each other within these Weimar histories. Indeed this consensus about German society displayed within Carnival debates created a powerful potential for the unification of the populous, a ripe potential only taken up by the Nazis, which explains the tremendous success of Carnival during the Third Reich even before official party intervention took up the holiday as part of its project to raise living standards for all "true" Germans.²⁶ Such an effect then raises a second area of scholarship, namely to do with the symbolic political culture of celebration and festivity in modern Germany.

This dissertation also bolsters the significant literature that points to the power of public ritual and festivity to influence politics or create culture within German history, even as this literature has not taken up Carnival as a typical example of this.²⁷ However,

²⁶ For a discussion of this popular consent of National Socialism through the Strength through Joy organization, even as analysis does not take up Carnival explicitly, see Shelley Baranowski, *Strength through Joy: Consumerism and Mass Tourism in the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). Carnival as a part of mass tourism in Nazi Germany is briefly taken up in Kristin Semmens, *Seeing Hitler's Germany: Tourism in the Third Reich* (New York: Palgrave, 2005). For other scholarship more generally on consensus and consent for National Socialism see among others Ian Kershaw, *The "Hitler Myth": Image and Reality in the Third Reich* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987). Robert Gellately, *Backing Hitler: Consent and Coercion in Nazi Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). Martin Broszat, *The Hitler State: the Foundation and Development of the Internal Structure of the Third Reich* (London: Londman, 1981). Thomas Childers, *The Nazi Voter: the Social Foundations of Fascism in Germany, 1919-1933* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983). Thomas Childers, *The Nazi Party: a Social Profile of Members and Leaders, 1919-1945* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983). Raul Hilberg, *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders: the Jewish Catastrophe, 1933-1945* (New York: Aaron Asher Books, 1992).

²⁷ See for instance Manfred Hettling and Paul Nolte, eds., *Bürgerliche Feste: symbolische Formen politischen Handelns im 19. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993). Dieter Düding, Peter Friedemann, and Paul Münch, eds., *Öffentliche Festkultur:*

these divisive Carnival politics during times when it was relegated to the private sphere or taken up in only unofficial capacities challenges the broader trend within this scholarship of seeing private or domestic celebration as not bearing the same power as public ritual or festivity.²⁸ Indeed the time during which Carnival was most problematic to broad audiences was when it did not occur in public space, between 1915 and 1927. Moreover, analysis also confronts the trend within such scholarship of analyzing exclusively masculine national celebrations that elide family festivity or the broad involvement of women and children.²⁹ As discussion will show, it was precisely the

politische Feste in Deutschland von der Aufklärung bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1988). Rudy Koshar, *Germany's Transient Pasts: Preservation and National Memory in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998). Charlotte Tacke, *Denkmal im sozialen Raum: nationale Symbole in Deutschland und Frankreich im 19. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995). Alan Confino, *The Nation as a Local Metaphor: Württemberg, Imperial Germany, and National Memory, 1871-1918* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997). Pamela Swett, "Celebrating the Republic without the Republicans. The Reichsverfassungsfeiern in Berlin 1929-32," in Karin Friedrich ed., *Festival Culture in Germany and Europe from the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Century* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2000): 281-302. Sabine Behrenbeck, "The Nation Honours the Dead: Remembrance Day for the Fallen in the Weimar Republic and Third Reich," in Karin Friedrich ed., *Festival Culture in Germany and Europe from the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Century* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2000): 306-312.

²⁸ As historian of German Christmas during this period Joe Perry has persuasively demonstrated, in opposition to the trend within German history to "[obscure] the vibrancy and political content of domestic celebration," specific German holidays offer the unique opportunity to fulfill the call of ethnologist Hermann Bausinger, namely to find in them the "porosity of the boundaries between public and private celebration." Joe Perry, *Christmas in Germany: A Cultural History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010): 7. Hermann Bausinger, "Anmerkungen zum Verhältnis von öffentlicher und privater Festkultur," in Dieter Düding, Peter Friedemann, and Paul Münch, eds., *Öffentliche Festkultur: politische Feste in Deutschland von der Aufklärung bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1988), 390-404.

²⁹ For discussion of this trend see Joe Perry, *Christmas in Germany: A Cultural History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010): 7. See also a discussion of this trend within scholarship on public national celebration in: Victoria De Grazia and Ellen Furlough eds., *The Sex of Things: Gender and Consumption in Historical Perspective*

involvement of these groups that often compelled debate about Carnival and its risks to the nation, which contrasts then a broad interpretation of the politics of public ritual and celebration in modern Germany as a top-down influence from public national celebration to the private sphere. This study points to Carnival's unique status within German celebration and festival culture as an all-encompassing event that touches intimate domestic and private life as well as every facet of the public sphere where it is celebrated. The reach of modern Carnival even extended well beyond its traditional regional sites during these decades as well, one effect of mass commercialization and broader modernization processes in Germany in these years. As a holiday that takes over entire cities for a time, as Carnival infuses every facet of life with its symbols and rituals, the holiday is perhaps the most important of these holidays that carry political influence both in the formal political sense as well as within the sense of the personal as political.³⁰ Due to the holiday's traditions of mockery as well as political persiflage, Carnival uniquely captured politics from the individual to the national level. The history of Carnival reveals broad civil engagement then—in particular in Cologne, the city with a Carnival meant to encompass all social backgrounds as opposed to that of Bochum, which favored working-class Carnival celebration, or Düsseldorf, which favored primarily events of the middle and upper-classes. While evidence suggests this broad engagement in Cologne, one effect

(Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996): 1–10. One exception to this trend however is Nancy Ruth Reagin, *Sweeping the German Nation: Domesticity and National Identity in Modern Germany, 1870-1945* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

³⁰ Historian Lynn Abrams' treatment of working-class leisure and festival culture in imperial Germany briefly takes up carnival for this quality, as she emphasizes its inclusion of all sectors of society but also underscores the safety valve function of the holiday in the years preceding the First World War. Because of her focus on workers' festivals, however, Carnival hardly features in her consideration. Lynn Abrams, *Workers' Culture in Imperial Germany: Leisure and Recreation in the Rhineland and Westphalia* (London: New York, 1992).

of Carnival's promise to be inclusive and all encompassing there, this study often takes up the views of elites—Cologne's mayor, the leadership of Carnival societies, military or occupation authorities, government officials, political party leadership—because one can demonstrate well their attempts to mobilize Carnival to their ends. This was also an effect of historical developments at this time, including after World War I the occupation of the Rhineland, a site of tense diplomatic relations, social unrest that bordered on the outbreak of civil war, multiple foreign garrisons, international negotiations over reparations and management of industry there, as well as most of the cities that had large Carnival celebrations, all of which heightened the political stakes of Carnival debates tremendously as well.

This dissertation also contributes to the rich and burgeoning scholarship on queer subcultures in Berlin, the most important recent works of which have come from Laurie Marhoefer, Robert Beachy, and Stefan Micheler. In her work on Weimar sexual politics, historian Laurie Marhoefer looks at the homosexual emancipation movement as a vehicle for collective German discourses on “immorality” and the production of what she terms the “Weimar settlement on sexual politics.” The construction of non-normative sexuality, contrary to other studies, resulted from the collective management of immorality that in Weimar society extended beyond a single issue to rather male and female sex work, transvestitism, as well as lesbian and gay emancipation. This management and the terms of this “Weimar settlement” occurred for Marhoefer through class, respectability, health (in particular mental health), and the public sphere. This dissertation is clearly guided by national discourses about Carnival immorality that are likewise concerned with class, respectability, health, and public space. Yet it encompasses a much greater and much

smaller scope than Marhoefer's study at the same time. This work absolutely takes up the capaciousness of German rhetoric about "immorality" but within much broader configurations within Weimar society that extended to every facet of life. At the same time, in its analysis of queer and trans culture in Berlin, it homes in on a much smaller context than in Marhoefer's work. On the one hand, sexual immorality has is shown in this dissertation through Carnival to extend well beyond either so-called sexual abnormals or the analytic categories taken up by Marhoefer, to expressions of longstanding regional and international tensions in Germany, and to anxieties about racial others, vulnerable populations like women, children, and the working class, to even Cologne's bourgeois elite. This departure stems from significant differences in subject matter and the setting of frame in this and Marhoefer's work. On the other hand, Chapter 5 looks closely at subcultural practices that are referenced by Marhoefer—indeed they are universally anecdotally cited by scholars working on the history of LGBTQ life in Weimar Germany³¹—yet aren't the subject of Marhoefer's or other scholars' work.

³¹ Most works on queer life in Berlin reference the rich club scene of the queer nightlife in these years but do not analyze it at length. For works that reference the queer club scene and their queer masquerade balls events in Berlin see: Laurie Marhoefer, *Sex and the Weimar Republic: German Homosexual Emancipation and the Rise of the Nazis* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015). Marti Lybeck, *Desiring Emancipation: New Women and Homosexuality in Germany, 1890-1933* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2014). Katie Sutton, *The Masculine Woman in Weimar Society* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011). Stefan Micheler, *Selbstbilder und Fremdbilder der "Anderen": Eine Geschichte Männer begehrender Männer in der Weimar Republik und der NS-Zeit* (Konstanz: UVK Gesellschaft: 2005). Mel Gordon, *Voluptuous Panic: the Erotic World of Weimar Berlin* (Los Angeles: Feral House, 2006). For those that also include references to queer Carnival events in Weimar Berlin see: Heike Schader, *Virile, Vamps und wilde Veilchen: Sexualität, Begehren und Erotik in den Zeitschriften homosexueller Frauen in Berlin der 1920er Jahre* (Königstein: Helmer, 2004). Jens Dobler, *Von anderen Ufer: Geschichte der Berliner Lesben und Schwulen in Kreuzberg und Friedrichshain* (Berlin: Gmünder, 2003). Barbara Ulrich, *The Hot Girls of Weimar Berlin* (Los Angeles: Feral House, 2002). For scholarship that includes reference to the

Instead, the actors and subcultures taken up here are the problematic subcultures Marhoefer's protagonists sought to distance themselves from, the groups and practices jettisoned in exchange for the "Weimar settlement." With the Nazi revolution then they would likewise be the first targets in the Nazi campaigns against purported immorality that had plagued the republic.

Beachy and Micheler by contrast are concerned with queer life in Berlin as a means of historicizing subjectivity, the former focusing on Berlin as a rich environment for the production of a gay identity as subjectivity and sexual orientation, and the latter taking up contemporary discourse across legislative, medical, and political language in order to reconstruct the understandings and self-understandings of men who desired other men.³² Although the scattered evidence on queer Carnival point to rich and profound insights on the construction of queer subjectivities in these years, the diffuse nature of such sources present real challenges to an historical analysis of queer subjectivity through the scene as such. As a result, this work turns to Carnival as a powerful force for community formation and coming together in these years. Still other important recent research has focused on the persecution of queer populations in Wilhelmine, Weimar, and Nazi Berlin, which has led to scholarship on the experience of Nazism as the "days of masquerade," and the annual Carnival during National Socialism as the singular

club scene developing in Berlin even before the war see: Jens Dobler, *Zwischen Duldungspolitik und Verbrechensbekämpfung: Homosexuellenverfolgung durch die Berliner Polizei von 1848 bis 1933* (Frankfurt: Verlag für Polizeiwissenschaft Dr. Clemens Lorei, 2008). Robert Beachy, *Gay Berlin: Birthplace of a Modern Identity* (New York: Knopf, 2014).

³² Robert Beachy, *Gay Berlin: Birth of a Modern Identity* (New York: Knopf, 2014). Stefan Micheler, *Selbstbilder und Fremdbilder der "Anderen": eine Geschichte Männer begehrender Männer in der Weimarer Republik und der NS-Zeit* (Konstanz: UVK Verlagsgesellschaft, 2005).

opportunity for queer play and coming together each year.³³ This dissertation turns to similar source bases, but in order to take up contexts that have frequently either been taken up in passing or served as provocative content for works on sex and emancipated women within scholarship from outside of history.³⁴ Although some queer populations who lived through the Weimar and Nazi eras later criticized these Carnival masquerading scenes in Berlin as superficial or lacking in serious politics, an idea that might further be inferred from the queer Carnival scene's absence from other scholarly accounts of queer life in Berlin, rigorous historical consideration of these subcultures reveals that they were vital to queer community formation, self-understanding, and the perception of disorder and resulting backlash of these years.³⁵

Finally, this dissertation is deeply concerned with extant theories and histories of Carnival across its long history in Europe. Studies of Carnival in the early modern period in Europe have centered on creative cultural and political power. Did the liberation and

³³ Jens Dobler, *Zwischen Duldungspolitik und Verbrechensbekämpfung: Homosexuellenverfolgung durch die Berliner Polizei von 1848 bis 1933* (Frankfurt: Verlag für Polizeiwissenschaft Dr. Clemens Lorei, 2008). Claudia Schoppmann, *Days of Masquerade: Life Stories of Lesbians during the Third Reich* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996). Cornelia Limpricht, "Für eine Nacht voll Seligkeit": Homosexuelle im Kölner Karneval," in Cornelia Limpricht and Jürgen Müller eds., *"Verführte" Männer: das Leben der Kölner Homosexuellen im Dritten Reich* (Cologne: Volksblatt, 1991).

³⁴ Mel Gordon, *Voluptuous Panic: the Erotic World of Weimar Berlin* (New York: Feral House, 2006). Barbara Ulrich, *Hot Girls of Weimar Berlin* (Los Angeles: Feral House, 2002).

³⁵ Postwar lesbian Gertrude Sandmann made exactly this point about the how the "subculture" was "maligned" in the postwar decades by lesbians, but that the scene was a first critical step as coming-together and feeling "at home" with one's self and orientation. Gertrude Sandmann, "Anfang des lesbischen Zusammenschlusses: die Clubs der Zwanziger Jahre" (*Unsere Kleine Zeitung* 7/8/1976): 6. Translated and quoted in the Lesbian life histories project *Lesbengeschichte.de*. From a letter to Ilse Kokula from Gertrude Sandmann from July 30, 1976 quoted in: Ilse Kokula, *Jahre des Glücks, Jahre des Leids: Gespräche mit älteren lesbischen Frauen* (Kiel: Frühlings Erwachen, 1990, first edition 1986): 10-11.

right to misrule during Carnival in Europe ever have teeth? For Mikhail Bakhtin, one of the first prominent theorists of the custom, carnival freedoms and activity were part of a separate reality that carried the creative potential to liberate, renew, and remake society.³⁶ Generations of scholars that followed then, among them anthropologists Max Gluckman and Victor Turner, and historians Peter Burke, Robert Scribner, and Roger Sales turned by contrast to theories of Carnival as a “safety valve,” arguing instead that carnival did not open up cleavages and the potential for real cultural and political change, even when carnivals precipitated actual rebellions, but rather reinforced a closing down of such potential.³⁷ The contained and temporary allowing of Carnival misbehaving permitted a letting off of steam, the airing of social grievances that offset revolutionary action therein strengthening regimes—indeed ensuring their survival. This position remained a popular stance on Carnival festival culture, as indeed it continues to be, informing broad disciplinary applications. But in the wake of new scholarship on women and gender within European societies, new works painted the nature of power and politics in less

³⁶ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984).

³⁷ Max Gluckman, *Essays on the Ritual of Social Relations* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1962). Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Chicago: Aldine, 1969). Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978). Robert Scribner, “Reformation, Karneval, and the World Upside-Down,” *Social History* 3 (1978): 303-329. Roger Sales, *English Literature in History 1780-1830* (London: Hutchinson, 1983). See also Norbert Schindler, “Karneval, Kirche und die Verkehrte Welt. Zur Funktion der Lachkultur im 16. Jahrhundert,” *Jahrbuch für Volkskunde* 7 (1984): 9-57. Still other more recent scholarship, like Chris Humphrey’s chapter on “Social Protest or Safety Valve? Critical Approaches to Misrule,” has attempted in the face of the consistent popularity of the safety valve approach within History and across other disciplines to examine the extent to which the question can be answered for early-modern European society on the basis of evidence and how it has been considered in extant scholarship. Christ Humphrey, “Social protest or safety valve? Critical Approaches to Festive Misrule,” *The Politics of Carnival: Festive Misrule in Medieval England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001): 11-37.

monolithic terms, preferring to consider how power and politics came down to much more detailed qualities than whether or not Carnival incited formal political revolutions.³⁸ Indeed in historian Natalie Zemon Davis' 1975 essay "The Reasons of Misrule," she pointed to an important consensus in the approach both of Bakhtin and Turner, in seeing "carnival and Misrule" as a critical phenomenon "present in all cultures."³⁹ She argued furthermore that in seeing the "structure of the Carnival form" in all societies, Carnival had the power both "to reinforce order and to suggest alternatives to the existing order."⁴⁰ As Zemon Davis persuasively argued through extensive examples from the early-modern period, Carnival or structures of it contained both the power to shut down alternative social visions, "to perpetuate certain values of the community" in her words, as well as to open up unique creative cleavages in society with real social and political potential.⁴¹

³⁸ A driving reality of such scholarship deals with the fact that actual revolutions did not result from carnivals and festive misrule. Importantly though, scholarship exists on revolts and rebellions that resulted from carnivals. See for instance: Natalie Zemon Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France: Eight Essays* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975): 97-123. Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Carnival in Romans*, trans. Mary Feeney (New York: George Braziller, 1979): 229-263. David Unterdown, *Revel, Riot, and Rebellion: Popular Politics and Culture in England, 1603-1660* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985): 44-72. Edward Muir, *Mad Blood Stirring: Vendetta in Renaissance Italy* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1998). Still other scholarship takes up analysis of the revolutionary potential of carnival through a parsing out of the subversiveness of carnivals, as in Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (London: Methuen, 1986). On the Carnival revolutionary cultures of the mid-nineteenth century in Cologne see Klaus Schmidt, *Klaus Raveaux: Karnevalist und Pionier des demokratischen Aufbruchs in Deutschland* (Cologne: Greven, 2001). Jonathan Sperber, *Rhineland Radicals: The Democratic Movement and the Revolution of 1848* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991): 98.

³⁹ Natalie Zemon Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France: Eight Essays* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975): 122-123.

⁴⁰ Natalie Zemon Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France: Eight Essays* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975): 123. Here she cites Eric Hobsbawm's *Primitive Rebels* as a good example of this.

⁴¹ Natalie Zemon Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France: Eight Essays* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975): 97.

This dissertation will bring such questions of Carnival's power to the fore, taking up Carnival's manifold structures in German society, and asking in the modern period how Carnival at once challenged, reinforced, and indeed manifested values and order.

The above-mentioned scholarship took up Carnival in the medieval and early-modern period in Europe, seeing the ubiquitous practices of carnival, the carnivalesque, and misrule as important cultural practices of medieval and early-modern state and society. The significance of Carnival and other forms of festival and popular culture to feudal society has been greatly emphasized in comparison to the importance of such practices to modern Western European culture and society, in which such potential for social and political power hasn't played the same role. Indeed later scholarship on Carnival activity in modern Germany has taken up different questions, instead looking to Carnival as a regional cultural practice, an invented tradition, a means of studying the German middle class as well as processes of modernization like urban growth.⁴² This is to say, Carnival's formal political clout has taken a back seat to the mechanisms of modern German culture and modernization in the transition from early-modern to modern German society. Instead of a mechanism of social control or space for creative challenges to the social and political order, Carnival emerged in histories of modern Germany as a way of studying the production of German culture and how it worked within a

⁴² See for instance the following: James Brophy, "Carnival and Citizenship: The Politics of Carnival Culture in the Prussian Rhineland, 1823-1848," *Journal of Social History* 30, No. 4 (Summer 1997): 873-904. Jeremy DeWaal, "The Reinvention of Tradition: Form, Meaning, and Local Identity in Modern Cologne Carnival," *Central European History* 46, No. 3 (September 2013): 495-532. Elaine Glovka Spencer, "Regimenting Revelry: Rhenish Carnival in the Early Nineteenth Century," *Central European History* 28, No. 4 (1995): 457-481. Elaine Glovka Spencer, "Custom, Commerce, and Contention: Rhenish Carnival Celebrations, 1890-1914," *German Studies Review* 20, No. 3 (October 1997): 323-341.

consolidated German nation. The transition also brought with it the making of Carnival into a more concrete phenomenon, namely a formal holiday as opposed to a custom. This transition logically emerged from the actual historical codification of the practice within specific German regions during the nineteenth century; Carnival went from a folk practice to a formal regional holiday with specific organized rituals. However, one effect of this transition in German history was to see Carnival as a specific event, not connected as broadly to other forms of “misrule” and political performance like *charivaris*, even though, as will be shown, national debates surrounding Carnival became connected to broad phenomena seen as misbehaving, immorality, subversiveness, or dangerous to the nation in the Weimar years.

This dissertation is concerned with injecting questions from the scholarship on medieval and early-modern carnivals in Europe into the recent cultural histories of modern Carnival in Germany, precisely because from the former to the latter, the stakes involved have shifted significantly in terms of what Carnival is capable of explaining. A much larger literature exists in the early modern period over questions with high stakes—over whether or not states and regimes can survive, rather than over whether something is an insightful site for the analysis of what a nation is and what a nation does. The Carnival scholarship on the nineteenth and twentieth century has highlighted many important things that are drawn on here, but the element of danger has fallen away and is nevertheless integral to the story presented here. In attempting to bring what has fallen away back in, this dissertation turns back towards materialistic notions of the social with the textual-linguistic insights that have been garnered from the cultural. After all, much of the substantial scholarship on Carnival in the medieval and early-modern period

occurred from the 1950s to 1980s amidst great social and political scholarship, whereas the turn to culture in modern Carnival took place in the wake of the cultural turn. Modern Carnival in Germany was a reflection of important changes within German society, including its invention as an “ancient” folk holiday of the people—the appeal of Carnival discourses here takes seriously the mentalities and understandings of Carnival that are simultaneous and create Carnival’s meanings and effects. At the same time, Carnival influenced critical historical transformations in modern Germany in no small way. Therefore, Carnival during this period was an invented tradition of regional nationalisms and a mechanism of German bourgeois associational culture; at the same time, in the eyes of its critics, it also contained the potential to incite actual civil war or the collapse of the German nation. Carnival is seen then reflecting and informing many of the most critical historical transformations in Germany during this period: regime change and state formation; modernization; urbanization, nationalism, war and revolution; foreign occupation and geopolitical fragility; social plight and unrest; political turbulence; mass consumer society; cultural outpouring; queer advocacy and visibility; and political and racial ideology.

III. Sources

This study is written on the basis of a diverse set of sources from a series of libraries and archives in Germany, as well as an array of published sources. German newspapers from across the country inform every chapter except Chapter 5, with a focus on those of Cologne and Berlin. They were accessed through the Cologne University and City Library (Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek Köln), the Bonn University and State

Library (Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Bonn), and the Berlin State Library (Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin Preußischer Kulturbesitz). Chapter 5 instead takes up articles from published gay and lesbian magazines accessed respectively at The Schwules Museum of Berlin and Spinnboden Lesbian Archive and Library in Berlin (Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv und Bibliothek Berlin). Chapter 3 also includes sourcing from the newspapers of the British occupation forces in Cologne accessed through the British Newspaper Archive. Newspapers of the Nazi party and the National Socialist organization “Strength through Joy” are taken up in Chapter 6 to this end. Sourcing on the broad nationalization of Carnival discourse came from the archival holdings on Carnival, Carnival bans, and masquerade balls within the Secret State Archives Prussian Cultural Heritage (Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz) and the German Federal Archives in Berlin-Lichterfelde (Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde). These files contained both internal political missives, primarily within the Reich Interior Ministry and the Prussian Interior Ministry but also between officials of the borough, city, county, state, and federal governments, including parliamentary representatives and police authorities, regarding Carnival bans during the whole period, as well as collections of incoming correspondence from across the country from pro-Carnival and anti-Carnival groups about the bans. They also contained select Nazi missives from officials to Carnival organizations.

All the chapters are further written on the basis of smaller bodies of sources. Numerous Weimar and Nazi films from the German Federal Film Archive (Filmarchiv des Bundesarchivs), Schwules Museum, and the British Pathé collection are taken up. Other sources include Carnival paraphernalia, posters, and print material from the

German History Museum (Deutsches Historisches Museum), published magazines, poster art, art, and advertisements from the Lipperheidesche Costume Library of the Berlin State Art Library of the (Lipperheidesche Kostümbibliothek, Kunstbibliothek Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz), and literary magazines and Carnival literary works including poems and songs from the German Literature Archive in Marbach (Deutsches Literaturarchiv Marbach). Moreover, diverse holdings of the Berlin State Library have been taken up, including sexological works, historical novels, Weimar magazines, and National Socialist reports. Other magazines and select publications from the period were accessed at the French National Library in Paris (Bibliothèque nationale de France).

Chapter 5 benefits from numerous published first-person accounts of Carnival and masquerade balls collected on the basis of interviews conducted in East and West Germany about queer male, female, and trans subcultures and the communities' experiences of Nazism. The chapter also takes up published accounts of interviewees in the works of turn-of-the-century sexologists and psychologists, as well as published city guides to the Berlin nightlife, published criminological studies and police announcements, journalistic exposés, and queer literary works like memoirs, creative nonfiction, and novels. The discussion of homophobic discourse in Chapter 6 is derived from news reports of the Scientific Humanitarian Committee (*Wissenschaftlich-humanitäres Komitee*). Finally, photographic evidence is taken up in this chapter as well as in the conclusion to the dissertation, accessed through the following public and private archives in Germany: the Historical Archive of the City of Cologne (Historisches Archiv der Stadt Köln); the Cologne City Museum (Kölnisches Stadtmuseum); the Photo Archive Prussian Cultural Heritage in Berlin (Bildarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz); the

State Photographic Service in Berlin (Landesbildstelle); the National Socialism Documentation Center in Cologne (NS-Dokumentationszentrum); the Press Archive in Hamburg (Pressearchiv); the City Archive of Nuremberg (Stadtarchiv Nürnberg); the City Archive of Singen (Stadtarchiv Singen); the Hirsmüller Photo Museum in Emmendingen (Fotomuseum Hirsmüller), the Robert Filmore Berger Archiv in Cologne; Walter Dick Archiv Cologne; Archiv Gerhard Küpper Cologne; Archiv Marcus Leifeld Cologne; and Archiv Marianne Bechhaus-Gerst Cologne. Each chapter draws from a critical body of published secondary works.

IV. Chapters

This dissertation is comprised of six chapters on modern Carnival in Germany: Carnival in Cologne around the turn of the century; Cologne Carnival and the First World War; the politics of Carnival during the Rhineland occupation; the nationalization of Carnival discourse during the era of Weimar national Carnival prohibition; the queer Carnival subcultures in Weimar Berlin; and national Carnival during the Third Reich. Chapter 1 presents an historical anthropology of modern Carnival in Cologne leading up to the outbreak of war. It explains the development of a modern Carnival in Cologne amidst forces of change within German communities at the time like urban growth, demographic changes, modern tourism, and the bolstering of an influential bourgeoisie that controlled Carnival celebration in public during a prosperous moment in Cologne's and indeed Germany's history. It serves to both explain what modern Carnival in Cologne was and how it worked, as well as to show how the holiday posed new issues even before the war that were ultimately offset by select changes made to the holiday by

Cologne's municipal and Carnival leadership. Chapter 2 turns to the experience of World War I in Cologne, locating restrictions to and new opportunities for Carnival within the general changes within society created by the war and its immediate aftermath in Cologne. This chapter demonstrates how the war initiated both sharp restrictions on Carnival as well as a dramatic shift in the history and meanings of the holiday in Cologne. This shift was only exacerbated by the results of the war, including an occupation of Cologne and the Rhineland, which shaped a new politics of Carnival during occupation, the subject of Chapter 3. Despite Carnival's restriction by the German government, the occupation together with tense politics in the Rhineland produced new Carnival cultures on the part of Cologne's British occupation forces and their families as well as private Carnival celebrations by Carnival supporters in Cologne. But Carnival cultures during occupation also extended to conservatives, monarchists, and other Rhenish nationalists who used Carnival to stimulate violent separatist uprisings for an independent Rhineland and in opposition to Weimar republicanism.

Due to this new politics of Carnival in Cologne and in the Rhineland, including this social unrest that bordered on the threat of civil war, from December 1921 on Carnival was banned across the country, which together with an ensuing national crisis after the war stimulated a nationalization of Carnival discourse across Germany, the subject of Chapter 4. With this lengthy chapter, discussion pivots to the national level as critical geopolitical changes and the general postwar crisis within the fledgling republic after the war compelled Carnival into a national issue with high stakes, the perception of broad audiences across the country. This chapter thematically reconstructs the diverse Carnival debates and narratives that precipitated across the country and became

consolidated in the years of Weimar crisis in Germany, as the holiday became linked to the nation's most burning issues and ongoing discussions over how to heal, strengthen, and ultimately save the German nation and *Volks* after the war. One particularly strong set of discourses examined in the chapter, broadly bought into by Carnival critics on all sides of debate, of all social and political backgrounds, dealt with the perception of new forms of excessive and unofficial Carnival in Berlin, organized and taken up by morally-suspect groups believed to have caused Germany's serious problems.

Chapter 5 then turns to new Carnival subcultures in Berlin during the Weimar years, particularly popular among Berlin's burgeoning queer male, female, and "transvestite" communities. Again the dissertation turns then to cleavages created by Carnival but by nontraditional stewards of Carnival, non-mainstream creative Carnival play that formed an opposition to constant attempts to restrict Carnival during these tumultuous years. Through an examination respectively of queer men's and queer women's Carnival subcultures in Berlin, the chapter analyzes the broad appropriation and adaptation of Carnival themes and rituals in Weimar Berlin by emergent queer communities in Germany, in particular through an embrace of its masquerade ball culture and under the expressed rubric of "Carnival." The contemporaneous Nazi demonization of homosexuals and these Carnival masquerading scenes, linked to the same morally-suspect groups discussed within the national discourses of Carnival in Chapter 4, together with the simultaneous Nazi celebration of traditional Carnival, form the subject of Chapter 6. It takes up the clampdown on unofficial or immoral Carnival forms—as part of the general attack on queer people that was party policy—and the subsequent revival of a robust Carnival culture by the Nazis for the first time since before the war. In Nazi

Germany Carnival became a national *Volk* holiday, not just for residents of Cologne but rather all peoples belonging to the *Volk*, as a family friendly holiday stripped of its regionalism and to an extent religious affiliation as well. In this chapter, the project of Carnival to create an alternative world in which political and social mockery are permissible is also revealed as a powerful tool for the realization of Nazi ideology as well as the creation of therapeutic processing of the community traumas of the last decades in a tumultuous modern Germany—as family fun went hand-in-hand with fantasies of violence.

Chapter 1

The Birth of a Modern Carnival in Cologne

So Carnival is just around the corner, the days of general madness, of jokes and of disguises! And to these peculiar ancient folk celebrations that have their home sites (*Heimatstätte*) in the especially cheerful Rhineland and wine country, today's chapter for today shall be dedicated. The poets and philosophers already called the world since time immemorial a great house of fools (*Narrenhaus*), and not unjustly, because at every turn one encounters foolish things, and arguably one has to seek with a lantern the person who not once at all in his/her/their life would have been a fool, conscious or unconscious. Where there are people, there passions rule, shiny and ugly.... Carnival is the counterweight to doctor's prescriptions, tax bills and curmudgeon, and the lever from out of the mud of mundane drudgeries and the enormous barrel of frustrations. What in spring [is] the flowers, in summer the travel, in autumn the fruit, that is in winter the Carnival. It is to the Cologner, to the Rhineland, to the Viennese, and also some other people who otherwise don a truly serious face, so necessary.... [T]o the cheerful Carnival is [so necessary]—[without which] they wither and pass away.... Life is in many ways a bleak Sahara, aglow from the simoom of political clashes of opinion and the philistinism of desiccated hearts; Carnival is a sparkling glass of champagne, the electric shock machine for haggard nerves, the balancing pole that sees us through the bow-taut tightrope of existence, the boring monotony, the daily work and tribulations, and [Carnival is] the invigorating salty washing waves of the ocean, on whose whitecaps, the purposeful pilot "fool" (*Narr*) rocks in the four-colored little boat, the white face of the curmudgeon spraying around him.⁴³

Such a passage about the holiday of Carnival could be found in many of Cologne's manifold newspapers at the turn of the century. Yet, it beautifully captures the rich significance of the holiday around 1900. The "ancient" folk custom was a deeply cherished birthright in Cologne, a time for humor and cheer that celebrated the "fool" in us all—*Narr* or "fool" being a term for a Carnival reveler, a reference to a medieval fool. The holiday formed a counter to human suffering and smoothed the tensions over those

⁴³ "Etwas über den Karneval," *Rheinischer Merkur*, Nr. 41, 20 February 1897. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

“passions shiny and ugly.” To people in the Carnival *Heimat*, in the Rhineland, a year without Carnival was unthinkable, as here a metaphor of a plant drying up from lack of water captures the sentiment. And Carnival created—briefly at least—a unique liminal space and time, a jump to the side of the realities of life, which renewed an entire community no matter one’s politics or tribulations. This was an old message about Carnival, that through communal cheer and the airing of grievances society was revived and order restored. This message of Carnival’s heritage was a powerful one in its potential to unite communities, wash away grievances, and undermine the demands of modern society through a temporary restructuring of time and order.

At the same time the passage also points to all sorts of potential danger at, through, or as an effect of Carnival. It was a time of “general madness,” at which plenty of alcohol abounded, a celebration of disorder and inversion at which people ignored the recommendations of doctors and city administrators. The holiday smacked of excessive escapism and aloof folly in times of great political struggle and problems that were, in the author’s words, indeed “enormous.” The dual meaning of the fool (*Narr*) is perhaps appropriate here then, either as a happy Carnival bacchant or a person who lacked judgment or sense. Such a vision of the holiday in Cologne at the turn of the century was accurate as well and reflected central tensions in the holiday and its relationship to order and morality. The author surely meant to celebrate this deeply revered holiday, as numerous people did writing from Cologne about Carnival at this time. But the passage also underscored the invariably delicate relationship of the rituals and meaning of the Carnival to this real world that was a “house of fools,” especially at a time of great change to state and society not just in Cologne but Germany as a whole. As is seen in the

above passage, modern Carnival maintained a tension between civic pride and moral danger.

This chapter explores this tension through a history of Carnival in Cologne leading up to World War I. It takes up Carnival's history in Cologne as communities, in particular city elites, worked to constitute an official moral holiday and to combat the danger and manifold tensions within the holiday at the same time. It begins with a cultural anthropology of Carnival that takes up Carnival's development and forms in Cologne, a thick description within which the politics and morality of Carnival are clearly seen. Not only are the central symbols and institutions of Carnival explained but so too is the development of a Carnival bureaucracy, particularly steered by Cologne's influential bourgeoisie that was growing and working closely with municipal authorities. Over time but especially after the turn of the century, Cologne Carnival reflected divisive tensions and growing issues within the rapidly industrializing and urbanizing large cities of a newly unified German nation. These tensions eventually came to a head around 1904, when Carnival's critics circulated emphatic cries for measures to combat Carnival's "excesses" and "immorality," the first time in Carnival's modern history that the holiday as a whole faced broad attack in Cologne as indeed elsewhere in Germany.

While Carnival immorality had been connected in German cities to working-class excesses, around 1900 Carnival became connected to lasciviousness and vice among Cologne's elites. The second section then takes up competing Carnival discourses about the meaning of Carnival and this turn-of-the-century morality, as social and moral issues of Carnival produced a perceived crisis over the holiday and its potential dangers. In the midst of divergent opinions about these problems, Carnival's central leadership that had

formed leading up to the turn of the century pulled off a largely successful internal reform of the holiday, taken up in the third section, through close work with city leaders and municipal administrators. Against the backdrop of unprecedented prosperity in German cities, a top-down Carnival reform managed to contain the Carnival pressure cooker and in the place of a moral scourge bolster instead a commercially viable safe holiday that secured Cologne's national prominence. What resulted in Cologne then, on the eve of the First World War, were the largest Carnivals in German history that were also the most successful in Cologne, commercially and for the production of civic pride and regional national identity.

I. Modern Carnival in Cologne

Carnival was an assemblage of popular theatric and costuming customs native to regions with sizable Catholic populations. During a distinct annual time, the so-called "fifth season" of the year, the world was turned on its head: men dressed like women, women left their children and domestic duties behind, the working-class took on the roles of the aristocracy, and revelers ridiculed the state and its representatives. Carnival was a site both of local pranks and humor, as well as incisive social and political critique. Beyond embrace of social inversion, the holiday also brought about a celebration of bounty and exuberance in the days and hours that immediately preceded Lent—*Fastnacht*, one term for Carnival in Germany literally means "the fasting night." During this time before a period of restriction and self-control then, excess in food, drink, and sex topped the list of favored liberties. Carnivalists frequently used the word

Ausgelassenheit to describe the free exuberance at Carnival in Cologne, a word that might literally also translate to a happy act of “letting loose.” Indeed as many Germans around the turn of the century believed, during Carnival time “all freedom was permitted.”⁴⁴

The “season” of Carnival was actually surprisingly long for a single holiday. The official Carnival season began at 11 PM on the 11th of November each year, and ended with Carnival Tuesday (*Karnevaldienstag*),⁴⁵ sometime in February or early March. The season began at 11 AM on November 11th as the number eleven was particularly important: the number of the *Narr*. Numerous myths predominated over the origin of its importance. Some Carnivalists believed the number referred to madness during the medieval period. Other Carnivalists held that the number eleven or *elf* in German was an acronym for the French revolutionary ideals of *égalité*, *liberté*, and *fraternité*, an expression of mockery toward French authorities that was common in Rhineland Carnival, where the holiday had become important as a political opposition to French and Prussian power. Carnival jokes pointed to eleven as one more than ten fingers and one less than the twelve apostles. Still others suggested November 11th derived its importance from St. Martin’s Day, a feast day in Germany on that day that initiated the period of fasting leading up to Christmas. Finally some Carnivalists suggested a more pagan origin, that November 11th is exactly 40 days before the winter solstice. Despite these disparate explanations through, what occurred on this day was clear: it kicked off a period of cultural events including Carnival concerts and parties, and was the official start to the

⁴⁴ “Nach den Tollen Tagen. Ein geborener Kölner und alter Karnevalfreund schreibt aus,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, 28 February 1906. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

⁴⁵ In the American custom of mardi gras, derived from the same origins as Carnival in Europe, this day is referred to as “Fat Tuesday.”

Carnival season. Then on New Years Day each year, Carnival associations held Carnival assemblies, variety acts with diverse performances, which marked an intensification of the Carnival season, in particular within the associational culture of Carnival in Cologne. The most concentrated period of activity occurred during Carnival week itself, which was derived from the Catholic liturgical calendar. Carnival week immediately proceeded the penitential season initiated by Ash Wednesday and leading up to Easter. The day after Carnival Tuesday, religious Catholics attended the early masses to begin Lent, whereas the membership of some Carnival societies met out of costume to eat a traditional fish meal, the feature at many of the pubs and restaurants that had taken part in Carnival as well, to begin the fasting period. The ordering of Carnival time thus came by the nineteenth century from the liturgical calendar but not entirely, and the season in truth was quite long. According to an article in the socialist daily newspaper *Rheinische Zeitung* from 1904, “[t]he year has 12 months. Four of them belong... in Cologne to Carnival.”⁴⁶ These months though included general activity as well as periods of more concentrated practices.

While the week of Carnival Tuesday, known as “the crazy days,” entailed the greatest density and significance of events—when the actual total freedoms of Carnival took place, as all normal city life screeched to a halt—organizations and clubs hosted

⁴⁶ The paper became the SPD daily newspaper of Cologne in 1892, and took its name from the previously published socialist paper of the same name, which reemerged under the name of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, at which Karl Marx had been a contributor and editor earlier in the century. Importantly, although the paper represented the SPD position, membership in the SPD or a trade union on the part of the working-class was only approximately 25% before 1914, which mostly counted from skilled workers. “Plauderei,” *Rheinische Zeitung*, Nr. 46, 16 November 1904. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969. Lynn Abrams, *Worker’s Culture in Imperial Germany: Leisure and Recreation in the Rhineland and Westphalia* (New York: Routledge, 1992): 5.

Carnival assemblies, sessions, parties, concerts, and masquerade events throughout the season with a peak around New Years Day and a temporary suspension of the season for Advent and Christmas. The week of Carnival Tuesday, when the “street Carnival” (*Straßenkarneval*) took place, was a multiple-day festival on open streets and in public and private venues, and included a veritable mass of theatrical displays and events. The street Carnival was a spatial designation, referring to the less regulated carousal and participatory theatrics that unfolded on open streets, literally masses of people all over the city streets in costumes playing pranks on each other, delivering impromptu Carnival speeches or *Büttenreden*, leading small processions with Carnival songs, or simply getting drunk. By the late nineteenth century, one of the strongest vestiges of the holiday’s medieval and early-modern roots, the Street Carnival involved no official organization and entailed rather the free and often impromptu participation of the public. This sometimes meant masses on the streets whose bawdy carousing led to riots. This potential wasn’t lost by the nineteenth century either; the 1848 revolution had broken out in the Rhineland during the Carnival days. Less violent street Carnival activity often took the form of small costumed processions, the throwing of confetti, streamers and confections, as well as the recitation of verse or traditional songs. Revelers paraded the streets tickling bystanders with feathers, or playing pranks on city and government authorities. By the turn of the century these carnivals meant a roaring chaos of thousands of people on open streets and squares carousing freely for three days straight.

Carnival week in Cologne unofficially began with the Women’s Carnival (*Weiberfastnacht*), a specialty of Cologne Carnival, which occurred every year on

Carnival Thursday. A tradition that stretched back to the medieval period,⁴⁷ the Women's Carnival created the "world turned upside down" (*verkehrte Welt*) itself. Women and girls in Cologne, and in particular the market women of the city, stormed the Cologne city hall, ceremoniously enacting the inversion of power characteristic of Carnival's topsy-turvy world by cutting off the neckties of the men at work there. The market women would paraded through the streets throughout the day in what in the Rhineland was referred to as a "Gecken-Bähnchen" or "little train of Carnival revelers," a term stretching back to at least the early-modern period to refer to revelers in procession on open streets during Carnival. The term *Gecken* had also led over time to the usage of *Jecken* (or the singular *Jeck*) to refer to Carnival revelers, the corollary to *Narren* (fools) in Cologne. These terms referred to revelers in general Carnival activities, whereas activity in an official organization made one a "Carnivalist" (*Karnevalist*), as opportunity denied to women for most of the nineteenth century. According to a 1903 essay which took up the diversity of variations on this practice in different cities in the *Kölnische Volkszeitung*, the daily paper for Rhenish Catholics that would be aligned with the Center (*Zentrum*) party by the Weimar years, the "Women's Carnival belongs to the most peculiar festivities of the Carnival time that is so rich in pranks and joyful mood."⁴⁸

Around the turn of the century then such activities—of women leaving their children and domestic duties behind in order to carouse in the pubs and take up bawdy antics on the streets—could be understood during Carnival as permissible merriment and fun, despite

⁴⁷ See for instance a lengthy discussion of the history and development of the *Weiberfastnacht* in: Helene Klauser, *Kölner Karneval zwischen Uniform und Lebensform* (Münster: Waxmann, 2007).

⁴⁸ Gottfried Keßler, "Weiberfastnacht," *Kölnische Volkszeitung*, No 146, 15 February 1903. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

the broad involvement of Cologne's working-class women. The events of Carnival week that began with the rituals of virago women then led after six days of community bedlam and mirth to the eve of Ash Wednesday, when all order was restored and the observance of Lent began.

Empowered women may have initiated Carnival celebrations, but the Triumvirate (*Dreigestirn*) ruled over the dominion of the *verkehrte Welt* in Cologne. The sacrosanct Triumvirate of Cologne Carnival was made up of three figures usually played by prominent members of the Cologne elite: Prince Carnival, the peasant/farmer (*Bauer*), and the virgin maiden (*Jungfrau*). They constituted the aristocracy of the Carnival world, meant to represent Carnival's folk connection to feudal society, who throughout the festivities presided over the week of events in Cologne. Not only would these people feature prominently in the Rose Monday parade, the heart of the Cologne Carnival, but the mark of a sanctioned prestigious Carnival event was the presence or involvement of one of these figures in its happenings. Prince Carnival was the most important of them. In the midst of an emergent industrial bourgeoisie in Cologne, these roles were exclusively the privilege of a fledgling affluent elite, our "upper ten thousand" according to an article in the liberal Catholic *Stadtanzeiger*.⁴⁹ Carnival's jokes of inversion, already seen in the Women's Carnival, likewise carried over into the nature of the Triumvirate as well. As an example of the Rhenish humor at Cologne Carnival, elite Cologne men played all three of these roles, including the role of the young virgin maiden. As part of the jokes of Rhenish Carnival then, a prominent man from Cologne society traditionally played the virgin dressed as a woman. Indeed cross-dressing was quite common at Carnival in Cologne,

⁴⁹ "Zur Hebung des Karnevals," *Stadtanzeiger*, Nr. 131, 23 March 1905. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

and made the holiday particularly favored by queer men and women as well as so-called transvestites for this unique opportunity alongside the prevalence too at Carnival of select homoerotic displays or also anonymous costumed sex.⁵⁰

Carnival floats in the Rose Monday parade in Cologne reflected the old traditions of satire and mockery, and not without some friction at times. Carnivalists who oversaw the parade's organization took up authority figures, prominent Cologne individuals, or contemporary political issues as frequent targets of Carnival humor. Around the turn of the century, for instance the Prussian Councilor of Commerce (*Kommerzienrat*) Peter Josef Stollwerck was greatly offended by a float that depicted him as the "Shah of Persia" according to an article on "Police and Carnival" in the *Frankfurter Zeitung*.⁵¹ When Stollwerck complained, the Festival Committee replied that it was yet unclear if, upon the complainant's return, there wouldn't be "a Prussian Carnival and Prussian Carnival parade on the spot of the old-Cologne (*altkölnischen*), pardon old-Cologne (*altcölnischen*)" one. The latter slippage referred to the failed attempt in 1857 for Prussian monarch Kaiser Wilhelm IV to set the dominant naming for the city as Cöln instead of Köln, the two versions having been widely used simultaneously since before the turn of the nineteenth century. The city administration rejected the Kaiser's writ and used official means to contest it, eventually through a successful decree of the district presidents (*Regierungspräsidenten*) on 30 October 1900. Given tensions between Prussia and the Rhineland in a newly unified Germany, anti-Prussian persiflage was a favorite

⁵⁰ Richard von Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia sexualis: eine klinisch-forensische Studie* (Stuttgart: Enke, 1886). *Die Transvestiten: ein Untersuchung über den erotischen Verkleidungstrieb mit umfangreichem casuistischen und historischen Material*, 1910.

⁵¹ "Die Polizei und der Karneval," *Frankfurter Zeitung*, Nr 23, 23 January 1901. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

theme in Rose Monday floats, especially among the Funken-Artillerie (*Rote Funken*) group. The *Rote Funken* wore the military uniforms of the old Cologne imperial city militia, giving symbolic expression to fantasies of Cologne as a “Free Imperial City.”⁵² Indeed political or community enemies were always targeted in the “folksy” humor of Carnival displays.

Cologne Carnival displays took up the politics surrounding gender as well, including over women’s rights and women’s roles in Cologne Carnival associational culture. The allowance for women’s participation in Carnival, in particular in the street Carnivals and the masquerade balls frequently seen by critics as the most dangerous sites of the holiday, slowly increased, an effect both of legislative changes and growing social acceptance. One result of the greater involvement of the bourgeoisie in growing city Carnival celebrations in the Rhineland had been growing social and gender division,⁵³ the latter of which women contested around the turn of the century. Carnival gave the pretense to communal harmony and glee but in practice its modern iteration entailed a reinforcement of privilege directed to exclude women and the working class. Nevertheless, the first decades of the twentieth century saw a growth in women’s participation in and leadership of Carnival events, including permission to take part in Carnival societies’ events, the most prestigious and closed-off. Women’s participation in associations (*Vereine*) in general was first permitted in 1908 on account of the

⁵² For a brief discussion of nineteenth-century anti-Prussian sentiment at Carnival and these debates surrounding them, see: Jeremy DeWaal, “The Reinvention of Tradition: Form, Meaning, and Local Identity in Modern Cologne Carnival,” *Central European History* 46, no. 3 (Sept 2013): 495-532.

⁵³ Historian of workers’ leisure culture Lynn Abrams refers to this trend as “the segregation of festival culture in Imperial Germany.” Lynn Abrams, *Worker’s Culture in Imperial Germany: Leisure and Recreation in the Rhineland and Westphalia* (New York: Routledge, 1992): 49.

Reichvereingesetz. Likewise a Cologne Carnival society for women, the “Löstige Weechter” was founded in 1913.⁵⁴ Displays at Carnival events then frequently put contested gender politics on display. One prescient float in the 1901 Rose Monday parade entitled “What the new century will bring” featured a float of emancipated women who had taken on the careers of men, including female doctors, scientists, lawyers, students, and telephone operators.⁵⁵ Women’s rights were the subject of a parade float in Düsseldorf the same year as well, in a float that depicted “ideal women and weary husbands whipped by them, women’s work performed.”⁵⁶

Among hundreds of events organized by vastly different groups by the first decade of the century, four main types of organized events made up the holiday’s festivities in Cologne: the Rose Monday parade (*Rosenmontagszug*), the high point of Carnival week in Cologne; Carnival sessions, assemblies, or concerts; a vast array of masquerade balls; and the street Carnival, which in its official capacity was centered around the Neumarkt in Cologne, Cologne’s historic city center near the Severinsviertel where the Cologne cathedral is located. Although small street processions and theatrics on the street during Carnival time was a longstanding tradition of the holiday, the concentration of organized street amusements around the market square of the Neumarkt in Cologne only came much later, when it became the official starting and ending place of the Rose Monday parade.⁵⁷ Except for the Street Carnival, organizations or committees

⁵⁴ Hildegard Brog, *Was auch passiert, D’r Zoch kütt!: die Geschichte des rheinischen Karnevals* (Frankfurt: Campus: 2000): 160.

⁵⁵ Hildegard Brog, *Was auch passiert, D’r Zoch kütt!: die Geschichte des rheinischen Karnevals* (Frankfurt: Campus: 2000): 158.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ For general information about the structure of Carnival in the nineteenth century see Joseph Klersch, *Volkstum und Volksleben in Köln* (Cologne: Bachem, 1965): 119-128.

organized each type of Carnival activity, which often required official permits and state subsidies. They constituted Cologne Carnival's firmly established annual traditions by the turn of the twentieth century, which became codified in competition with other city Carnival cultures elsewhere in Germany. Distinct linguistic traditions also distinguished one city Carnival culture from another, with songs and slogans in dialects that remained foreign to visiting audiences even from neighboring towns and cities. In Cologne, not only was the terminology and dialect site-specific, as most speeches, sayings, float texts, and performances in Cologne were in Colognian dialect (*kölsch*), but so were the qualities of the people; to natives of Cologne, Carnival was an expression of the distinctive warmth or generosity of people in Cologne, shared qualities believed distinct to Rhenish people. Carnival was clearly an expression of civic pride and a central force for the production of regional German identity. As the narrative explored in this chapter will demonstrate, Carnival before the war functioned much like the *Heimat* movement in regions like the Rhenish Palatinate (Pfalz), namely by seeing Germanness as a modern initiative which was frequently the production of bourgeois narratives in public life.⁵⁸ At the same time, discourses examined here point to notions of *Heimat*, the "hometown" (*Vaterstadt*), the nation/people/race (*Volk*) etc. as amorphous terms that relate in different ways to the German nation through competing and overlapping visions of an imagined community with invented traditions.⁵⁹ Modern Carnival in Cologne is a rich example of

⁵⁸ Celia Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials: the German Idea of Heimat* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990). Celia Applegate, "A Europe of Regions: Reflections on the Historiography of Sub-National Places in Modern Times," *American Historical Review* 104, Nr. 4 (Oct 1999): 1157-1182.

⁵⁹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991). Eric Hobsbawm, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

invented traditions of regional nationalism through cultural studies of the holiday's shifting meaning.⁶⁰

Carnival events in Germany had different names in the dominant observant regions in Germany. The most prominent terms used to describe the holiday included *Karneval*, as in the case of Cologne, as well as *Fasching*, *Fastnacht*, and *Fastelovend*. In the traditional observant regions, foremost among them the Rhineland and North Rhine-Westphalia, Bavaria, Baden-Württemberg, and the Swiss Alps, these terms referred to city iterations of the holiday, all celebrated simultaneously but each with their own specific cultures.⁶¹ Concurrent inventions of modern Carnivals took place in the modernizing German cities within each of these regions through centralized and bureaucratic efforts by municipal governments and influential elites leading up to the turn of the twentieth century. Indeed broad consensus within scholarship exists over the codification of a "modern Carnival" through reforms that began in 1823 in Cologne. This resulted in both manufactured city heritage as well as incisive competition between and within regional German Carnivals over the primacy, quality, significance, and success of events. Cologne was always a contender for the most important Carnival in Germany in terms of its scale and profitability, the bureaucratic acumen of its organizers, its cultural significance with regards to humor and wit, its social inclusion including the draw of tourists as well as people from all social backgrounds. At the same time, most of these traditions became codified into city holidays at approximately the same time, not within

⁶⁰ See also Jeremy DeWaal, "The Reinvention of Tradition: Form, Meaning, and Local Identity in Modern Cologne Carnival," *Central European History* 46, no. 3 (Sept 2013): 495-532.

⁶¹ For general information on Carnival celebration in these areas see Dietz-Rüdiger Moser, *Fastnacht-Fasching-Karneval. Das Fest der verkehrten Welt* (Graz: Kaleidoskop, 1986).

the medieval towns of Germanic peoples as myths held, but rather beginning around 1823 alongside nationalist initiatives in Germany to instill regional and national identity within confederated groups of German people. So whereas modern Carnivals became a force for city heritage and regional identity during the nineteenth century, these holidays simultaneously underscored differences across a newly unified Germany. Through the efforts at bureaucratization by municipal leaders together with the middle- and upper-class Cologne residents who led the most prestigious Carnival societies, a city tradition perceived as ancient became a powerful tool for the grounding of identity and heritage in Cologne as it did in other cities and regions across Germany. Indeed a piece of social and cultural unification in the nineteenth century was this project to recover a lost “golden age” of folk Carnival merrymaking.⁶²

These nationalist and cultural initiatives of the nineteenth century set the sites and practices central to Cologne Carnival. The Gürzenich was a festival hall owned by the city in the center of Cologne’s old town that by the turn of the century was one of the most popular sites of official Carnival festivities. Already in 1822, the public venue was the site of popular annual masquerade balls during Carnival time.⁶³ Although elements of what became the Women’s Carnival were longstanding traditions for centuries in Cologne, at around the same time, the Women’s Carnival became the unofficial start to the holiday through women’s demands to take a greater part in the holiday’s celebration. Up until this time, men dominated public participation in the holiday. In 1824 in Bonn, a

⁶² Helene Klauser, *Kölner Karneval zwischen Uniform und Lebensform* (Münster: Waxmann, 2007). See also: Peter Fuchs, ed. *Kölner Karneval: seine Bräuche, seine Akteure, seine Geschichte: 175 Jahre Festkomitee des Kölner Karnevals von 1823 e.V.* (Köln: Greven, 1997).

⁶³ Helene Klauser, *Kölner Karneval zwischen Uniform und Lebensform* (Münster: Waxmann, 2007): 130.

collective of female washers organized a revolt on the Thursday before Carnival to demand greater participation in the male-dominated holiday. The effects of their labor protest and founding of an Old Women's Committee in 1824 (the *Alte Damenkommittee von 1824*) was that the Women's Carnival became a tradition across the Rhineland that officially commenced the formal Carnival week each year. The Rose Monday parade and its bureaucratic system of orchestration also originated in the early 1820s. The parade itself, the heart of the public Cologne Carnival, was born on 10 February 1823. A master of ceremonies (*Festordner*) under the direction of Heinrich von Wittgenstein pulled off the feat of a first general Carnival parade in 1823 despite particularly short preparation time.⁶⁴ Although there were bureaucratic difficulties to this first parade, difficulties that plagued organizational efforts together with the holiday's expanding scale and popularity, the motto that year—"[The] Carnival Heroes' Ascension to the Throne"—was a somewhat prescient description. The nineteenth-century growth of Carnival resulted from the efforts of people like von Wittgenstein, a prominent businessman and politician, the son of a banker and lawyer who worked within the office of the Cologne mayor; not only was he a hero of Carnival, but the heroes the motto refer to were the Triumvirate characters, who throughout the nineteenth century would be played by these prominent and influential people from Cologne as well. While parades during Carnival and especially on Carnival Monday were a widespread practice in observant regions across Germany, Rose Monday parades held an especially strong significance in Cologne, where they were regarded as the highpoint of celebrations. By contrast, in other cities like Düsseldorf, masquerade balls carried the most renown. New organizations of the

⁶⁴ On the organization of the parade, see: Helene Klauser, *Kölner Karneval zwischen Uniform und Lebensform* (Münster: Waxmann, 2007): 196.

nineteenth century worked to codify and in some cases invent most of the holiday's core elements in Cologne.⁶⁵ They oversaw their orchestration and approval by city governments, and attempted to make them broadly consumable and permissible while accommodating their accelerating scale. The Great Carnival Society (*Große Karnevalgesellschaft*), the oldest and one of the most important Carnival societies of the early twentieth century, was founded in that year. The society experienced a schism in the 1840s, instigated by the democrat Franz Raveaux, which led to the founding of the General Carnival Society (*Allgemeine Karnevalgesellschaft*), which was more politically critical and boasted a more revolutionary membership.⁶⁶ The management board of the Great Carnival Society eventually became the central members of the Festival Committee (*Festkommittee*), also founded in 1823, the principal purpose of which to “represent the official Cologne Carnival, in particular the Rose Monday parade,” a task that along presented cumbersome challenges each year.⁶⁷ What this eventually meant by the last decades of the century was adherence to a set of Cologne Carnival with recognizable insignia perceived as traditional. This meant the requirement of folk humor, the right selection of the Triumvirate roles, the setting of an annual motto, and the approval and ordering of wagons in the annual parade. Such influence continued to produce conflicts

⁶⁵ On a similar development in Mainz and the centrality of Carnival organization recruiting from the prominent professionals, officials, bourgeoisie, and sometimes lower-middle-class (*Mittelstand*) see Franz Josef Grosshennrich, *Die Mainzer Fastnachtsvereine: Geschichte, Funktion, Organisation u. Mitgliederstruktur* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1980).

⁶⁶ Klaus Schmidt, *Klaus Raveaux: Karnevalist und Pionier des demokratischen Aufbruchs in Deutschland* (Cologne: Greven, 2001); Jonathan Sperber, *Rhineland Radicals: The Democratic Movement and the Revolution of 1848* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991): 98.

⁶⁷ “Städtische Nachrichten,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, Samstag, Nr. 119, 2. Februar 1907, 1-2. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

over power within approaches to the holiday, which in turn resulted in growing numbers of Carnival associations and societies by the end of the century as a result of schisms.

Another crucial Carnival society of Cologne then, the Great Cologne Carnival Society (*Große Kölner Karnevalsgesellschaft*) was founded in 1882 and took its place alongside the Great Carnival Society, as the two societies maintained their elite status in the Festival Committee through the nineteenth century. The right to regulate Carnival meant great prestige and influence in Cologne. While this power remained in the hands of bourgeois elites, the membership of the two great Carnival societies drawn from Cologne's largely industrial bourgeoisie, pressure mounted over the sharing of power as Carnival's prominence rose, which threatened the future of Carnival overall, not just in Cologne but in other cities whose Carnival organization faced similar issues.⁶⁸ By 1907 many of the ballooning numbers of Carnival associations and clubs demanded greater rights to shape Carnival's public events from the three elite Carnival societies: the Great Carnival Society, the Great Cologne Carnival Society, and the General Carnival Society.⁶⁹ Each of these prestigious societies boasted over one thousand members, but over 20 additional Carnival associations rivaled their influence by 1911.⁷⁰ In spite of the resulting discord over Carnival's annual events, which after all were officially structured and permitted by these organizing bodies, Cologne always eked out the orchestration of

⁶⁸ On the organization of the Rose Monday parade and its challenges in Cologne see "Städtische Nachrichten," *Kölnische Zeitung*, Nr. 119, 2. Februar 1907, 1-2. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

⁶⁹ "Städtische Nachrichten," *Kölnische Zeitung*, 2 February 1907. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

⁷⁰ "Vom Kölner Karneval," *Kölnische Zeitung*, 25 February 1911. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

its public festivities despite the bubbling crisis over Carnival's problems.⁷¹ Other cities were not so lucky. In Rhenish cities outside of Cologne, with their own younger Carnivals and associations, the demands of scale and disunity between groups of invested parties thwarted attempts to organize the celebrations. One report on "News from West Germany" in the *Kölnische Zeitung* recounted how in the western German city of Bonn, particularly known for its more elite prestigious Carnival events, "the disunity among the Carnival societies foiled a large Rose Monday parade again" in 1908.⁷² Instead the "Great Carnival Society (*Große Karnevalgesellschaft*), the city soldier corps (*Stadtsoldatenkorps*), the men's choir club (*Männergesangverein*), and a few companies (*Geschäftsfirmen*)" organized their own small processions instead. In other cities with nascent Carnival traditions, populations did not even try for a central parade, and instead contented themselves with new raging masquerade ball traditions as well as sporadic small processions. Before individual German cities could establish single city parades for Carnival, individual associations continued to organize their own smaller processions. In some cities, the failure of organizations to work together in the early twentieth century actually thwarted attempts to agree upon the form of a single city parade.⁷³

The centrality of these Carnival societies in Cologne emerged from class shifts there. To begin, the development of a hearty bourgeoisie in Germany's new *Großstädte* like Cologne alongside rapid Wilhelmine industrialization initiatives led to greater

⁷¹ "Städtische Nachrichten," *Kölnische Zeitung*, 2 February 1907. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

⁷² "Nachrichten aus Westdeutschland," *Kölnische Zeitung*, Nr. 224, 29 February 1908. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

⁷³ One example of this could be seen in Bonn in 1908 detailed in: "Nachrichten aus Westdeutschland," on "Bonn, 28. Febr.," *Kölnische Zeitung*, Nr. 224, Samstag, 29. Februar 1908, 2. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

participation of the German *Bürgerschaft* in Cologne Carnival.⁷⁴ The emergence of an influential German middle-class and its dominance of Cologne Carnival disrupted the classic social symbolism of the medieval and early-modern Carnival world, namely as the playacting of feudal society, a world of aristocracy and peasants. Bourgeois influence stimulated increasingly elaborate organized Carnival celebrations through centralized organizations even outside of Cologne. In the southwest German city of Aachen, the 1910 Rose Monday entailed a 21-section parade, which “found the financial support of the bourgeoisie in appreciable amounts.” according to a notice in the “News from West Germany” section of the national liberal Catholic paper the *Kölnische Zeitung*.⁷⁵ This national paper emerged in the 1830s as the Catholic political opposition to the Protestant Prussian government in Berlin. It generally printed Catholic liberal and centrist views and was a pro-Carnival paper that represented frequent opinions of the two great Carnival societies, which gave financial backing to the paper in the form of advertising revenue. Indeed Aachen would prove to be a site of tremendous Carnival enthusiasm before and after the war. The city bourgeoisie’s increased financial influence as well as disposable income and proclivities for conspicuous consumption translated to changes in the holiday and its customs, including calls for reform to maintain respectability as well as shifting customs at events like masquerade balls. One article in the *Kölnische Zeitung* detailed the effects of recent bourgeois influence, in an article on the Malkasten costume balls

⁷⁴ On changes to the holiday’s customs through greater participation of bourgeois society (the *Bürgergesellschaft*), see: “Nach den Tollen Tagen. Ein geborener Kölner und alter Karnevalsfreude schreibt aus,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, 28 February 1906. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin. On considerable financial backing of Carnival events by the bourgeoisie (*Bürgerschaft*), see “Nachrichten aus Westdeutschland,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, 9 February 1910. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

⁷⁵ “Nachrichten aus Westdeutschland,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, 9 February 1910. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

(*Malkasten Redouten*), famed masquerade balls in Düsseldorf that were among the most elite and significant Carnival practices there. The author detailed how such events no longer even maintained a costuming requirement, but rather permitted men to appear in white tie (*Frack*) and women in evening gowns and a small eye mask (*Domino*).⁷⁶ The free play these masquerades were renowned for gave way then to the politics of seeing and being seen—bourgeois politics of status and respectability. Greater economic power also translated to status in Carnival. As the holiday's events increased in scale and elaborateness, so too did their considerable costs, much of which came from not only city municipalities but also elite financial backing.⁷⁷ It should come as no surprise then that the people playing the roles of the Triumvirate—Prince Carnival, the virgin maiden, and peasant farmer—consistently came from an influential German middle-class that was growing. One can see this trend by reviewing the titles of individuals selected for the Triumvirate each year. People who had this honor during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century were primarily listed as factory owners, traders, merchants, architects, theater owners or actors, and hotel owners or managers. The culture of masquerade balls, which were increasingly popular as well as less regulated by the turn of the century, reflected these changes more in line with Cologne class dynamics than Carnival's ostensible origins as the ancient folkways of Rhenish peoples. Indeed on a level, the deployment of the myth of Carnival's customs in Cologne as ancient folkways by the middle-class served to naturalize their own current status as the gatekeepers of this custom so central to regional identity.

⁷⁶ “Die Düsseldorfer Malkasten-Redoute 1910,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, 7 February 1910. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

⁷⁷ “Nachrichten aus Westdeutschland,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, 9 February 1910. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

Elaborate themed masquerade balls around Carnival time were an old tradition, events originally organized exclusively for aristocratic enjoyment but increasingly taken up by bourgeois circles throughout the nineteenth century.⁷⁸ In the second year of its existence, the Great Carnival Society hosted a masquerade ball in the Gürzenich. Masquerade balls at the Gürzenich, like the Tuesday Balls (*Dienstagsballs*) held on Carnival Tuesday, became seen as one of the highpoints of elite Carnival celebration in Cologne from the mid-nineteenth century onward.⁷⁹ By the turn of the century Cologne's elites and their clubs and societies organized elaborate closed society gatherings at which hundreds of guests paraded the scale and expense of their attire. Middle-class tradesmen as well as bourgeois artistic circles began organizing exclusive masquerade balls specific to their industries and communities around Carnival time as well. Such balls played privileged roles in city Carnival culture, like in Düsseldorf where the Paintbox Masquerades (*Malkasten-Redouten*) boasted a similar prominence in the city's Carnival festivities as the Rose Monday parades did in Cologne. Artist circles organized the popular Paintbox Masquerades, which could resemble Carnival masquerade events,

⁷⁸ Although the importance of masquerade ball culture within aristocratic and bourgeois leisure cultures in Germany has attracted less attention, a select literature from diverse fields has developed on masquerade balls and the carnivalesque in sites elsewhere in Europe. See for instance Colleen McQuillen, *The Modernist Masquerade: Stylizing Life, Literature, and Costumes in Russia* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2013). Colleen McQuillen, "Artists' Balls and Conceptual Costumes at the Saint Petersburg Academy of Arts, 1885-1909," *Fashion Theory* 16, Nr. 1 (March 2012): 29-48. Terry Castle, *Masquerade and Civilization: the Carnavalesque in Eighteenth-Century English Culture and Fiction* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986). Efrat Tse'lon ed., *Masquerade and Identities: Essays on Gender, Sexuality, and Marginality* (London: Routledge, 2003).

⁷⁹ For a brief synthetic history of Carnival masquerade balls in Aachen, Düsseldorf, and Cologne, in particular during the nineteenth century, see: Christina Frohn, *Der organisierte Narr: Karneval in Aachen Düsseldorf und Köln von 1823 bis 1914* (Marburg: Jonas Verlag, 2000): 134-139.

especially as their forms changed by the early twentieth century. These events occurred year-round as well as during Carnival time and eventually became especially popular due to their policy of requiring costuming to gain entry.

By the first decade of the century then, distinct ball traditions had become the most important status leisure events of the year in Germany's large cities, especially those in which Carnival was celebrated. The Lichtmessball regularly organized at the Gürzenich was one of these, alongside the Paintbox Masquerades (*Malkasten-Redouten*) in Düsseldorf, the Artist Masked Balls (*Künstlermaskenfeste*) in Strasbourg, and in Cologne the Tuesday Balls (*Dienstagsballs*) and the costume balls of the Cologne Aquatics Club (*Kölner Klub für Wassersport*). Berlin also boasted its own hearty elite ball traditions by the late nineteenth century, including the emergent renown of the Press Ball. Carnival societies like the Aachen Carnival Association (*Aachener Karnevalsverein*) also organized not just masquerade balls during Carnival time, but other themed costumed balls like "gypsy balls" or a "folk festival in Aachen" at other times of year as well, which reflected the growing popularity of masquerade balls but also the at-times palpable ambiguity between Carnival balls and other masquerade balls during winter. Masquerade balls carried an ambiguity then as popular leisure event of the elite and important Carnival custom. Moreover, over time, the events came to resemble not so much Carnival character as the character of themed costume balls, at least according to their critics.

At the same time that Carnival's premier societies organized popular masquerade balls, other less prestigious Carnival organizations threw ones as well, as still others from Cologne's populace organized private masquerade balls, as both grew in popularity and

challenged the centrality and significance of the elite events. In this way, just as street Carnival events couldn't easily be regulated, private masquerade balls became part of less regulated or sanctioned Carnival cultures in Cologne even at the height of bureaucratization efforts surrounding the holiday. In 1890, despite the large-scale organization of official Carnival events, the income generated by visits to the Neumarkt and amusements at the Gürzenich, while a lucrative 4,300 Marks, disappointed organizers who had much greater expectations.⁸⁰ This was despite excellent weather as well as the considerable scale of citywide celebration. The reason for this, according to an article in *Kölnische Zeitung*, was the probable increase in masquerade balls organized outside of official Carnival committees. The paper represented the official Carnival authorities in most cases, drawing financial backing from the two Carnival societies who frequently ran their advertisements in the paper. The article's author was quick to point to another growing problem of Carnival events around this time as well: the possibility, especially at less official and regulated events, that unseemly, immoral, or inappropriate practices might emerge from the mentality that anything and everything was allowed at Carnival.⁸¹ Concern over morality at Carnival was actually growing in general, but the members of the most revered Carnival organizations largely blamed unofficial events like private masquerades and the happenings in the street Carnival for such problems. According to the article, it was clear that the masquerades organized by official Carnival committees possessed "much more decency and coziness" than the rival events. Nevertheless,

⁸⁰ "Städtische Nachrichten," *Kölnische Zeitung*, Nr. 51, 20. Feb 1890, 2. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

⁸¹ "Nach den Tollen Tagen. Ein geborener Kölner und alter Karnevalsfreude schreibt aus," *Kölnische Zeitung*, 28 February 1906. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

changes to Carnival's celebration continued despite increased attempts at regulation, as new events siphoned away public funds usually generated by official events. The new events also offered greater liberties. The article continued that unofficial masquerade events and amusements at the pubs detracted from official festivities. "Indeed it couldn't be absent that the visit of the balls in the city's dance halls must have sustained considerable loss due to the numerous masquerades in club houses and due to the Carnival life in the large public pubs." At least to a press backed by Carnival's old guard, some Carnival events were becoming a growing nuisance if not an outright moral issue for friends of true Cologne Carnival. Stated differently, at exactly the moment that elite organizations attempted to corral the holiday and its public articulation, forces already worked to undermine that initiative and presented real dangers to their conception of morality and public order.

Other emergent Carnival cultures across Germany pointed to the popularity of these less regulated Carnival forms as well, as new Carnival cultures based on these masquerade ball traditions emerged and became increasingly popular around 1900. Many German cities, even those lacking a substantial Catholic population, organized Carnival events for the first time during the last decades of the nineteenth century. Lacking any native Carnival tradition, populations in these cities favored masquerade balls over parades and other official events on public streets. Although Carnival was a holiday popular in territories with sizable Catholic populations as a prelude to Lent, Carnival elements also became popular in regions with Protestant majorities, including in towns in the northern and eastern territories of a newly-consolidated Prussian Germany. Masked balls during Carnival time first became popular in Hamburg around the turn of the

century for instance.⁸² Likewise, in the primarily Protestant northern city of Hannover, Carnival-season costume balls had become a popular trend around the same time.⁸³ According to an account in the *Hannoversche Anzeiger* from 1898 about “Carnival and Ash Wednesday,” the author reported how “[n]ot so long ago it was also initiated here to organize street masquerades in Hannover,” the only major difference from the great Carnival celebrations of “Cologne, Munster, [and] Mainz” purportedly being the time of day when such festivities took place.⁸⁴ In the eastern territory of Saxony, moreover, Carnival (*Fastnacht*) emerged as a nascent tradition shortly before the war, even including some parades as well as the popular masquerade ball traditions. While the processions on open streets had been comparatively small, masquerade and costume balls became a regular annual tradition of the population before World War I.⁸⁵ In smaller towns and cities across the observant regions as well, Carnival became a thriving regional industry and an expanding tradition. Beyond the cities that came to dominate the national Carnival industry with their expansive celebrations following German national unification in 1871—Cologne, Düsseldorf, Munich, Mainz, and Frankfurt—parades and

⁸² “Auf das Schreiben vom 2.d.Mts – W I 7681,” Letter Senatskommission für die Reichs- und auswärtigen Angelegenheiten in Hamburg to das Preußische Ministerium des Innern in Berlin, 24 December 1921, Document I. No. 20756, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

⁸³ “Aus der Stadt Hannover. Verbot sämtlicher Karnevalsveranstaltungen” *Hannoversche Landeszeitung*, 14 December 1921. Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

⁸⁴ “Karneval und Aschermittwoch,” *Hannoverscher Anzeiger*, Nr 41, 27 February 1898. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

⁸⁵ “Abschrift. 4527 II A. zu 2544 a 61. Dresden,” Letter to the Staatsministerium des Innern in Munich, 30 November 1921, Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

public celebration became increasingly popular even in smaller cities of the Rhineland and North Rhine-Westphalia. By the last years before the outbreak of the war, official Carnival celebrations could be found among other places in Aachen, Bochum, Bonn, Dortmund, and Koblenz.⁸⁶ Not just Carnival festivities but also parades were successfully organized in Munster, Beckum, Warendorf, Rheydt, Erkelenz, Krefeld, M. Gladbach, and Eupen.⁸⁷

According to French playwright and novelist Oscar Méténier a “Berlin Carnival” even emerged in the Prussian seat of the Wilhelmine government at this time, a claim backed up by published accounts by renowned sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld as well as prominent lawyer and early queer advocate Karl Heinrich Ulrichs.⁸⁸ According to Hirschfeld, same-sex Carnival balls became especially popular, a “Berlin specialty” in

⁸⁶ “Nachrichten aus Westdeutschland,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, 9 February 1910. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin. “Nachrichten aus Westdeutschland,” subheading “Karnevalfeier in Dortmund,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, 4 February 1913. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin. “Nachrichten aus Westdeutschland,” subheading “Karneval,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, 24 February 1914. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

⁸⁷ The city of Eupen on the Belgian border would be transferred to Belgium following the war in 1919 as part of the terms of the Versailles Treaty. “Nachrichten aus Westdeutschland,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, 4 February 1913. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin. “Nachrichten aus Westdeutschland,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, 5 February 1913. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin. “Vermischtes,” subheading “Vom Karneval,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, 24 February 1914. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin. “Nachrichten aus Westdeutschland,” subheading “Karneval,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, 5 February 1913. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin. “Nachrichten aus Westdeutschland,” subheading “Vom Karneval,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, 25 February 1914. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

⁸⁸ Hirschfeld, Magnus, *Berlins Drittes Geschlecht* (Subach: Kindle Edition): 48. Originally published in Berlin in 1904. Oscar Méténier, *Les Berlinois chez eux: vertus et vices allemands* (Paris: Michel, 1900). Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, *Memnon: Die Geschlechtsnatur des mannlieden Urnings, eine naturwissenschaftliche Darstellung* (Schleiz: C. Hübscher, 1868): 78.

the late nineteenth century.⁸⁹ At the same time that “Berlin Carnival” was gaining traction within queer communities Rhenish Carnivalists viewed Berliners’ embrace of select Carnival festivities with skepticism, associating the city instead with cheap amusements. An attempt to foster Cologne-like Carnival practices, such as the introduction of Carnival speeches, so-called *Büttenreden* that were a specialty of Cologne, took place in Berlin according to the Cologne press. But Berliners lacked appreciation and comprehension for these lofty practices. In 1911 the editors of the *Stadtanzeiger*, the local equivalent of the *Kölnische Zeitung* that was to serve as its regional advertising supplement, printed a response to a letter from a Berliner about this new Cologne custom taken up in the capital city. The Berliner complained about the exorbitant fees that were asked for in order to have prominent Carnivalist Josef Wingender, president of the Great Cologne Carnival Society, speak at a Carnival session in Berlin. The editor instead shot back about how, “[t]he cabaret and stage artists that selflessly feature in their own personal advertisements would have little success in Cologne Carnival and if the Berliners estimate the Rhenish gentlemen, the products of Cologne Carnival, of so little value then one must rather be surprised that prevalent Cologne Carnival speeches (*Büttenreden*) are being held” in Berlin at all. Indeed Cologne’s press was quick to ridicule any claims to Carnival comprehension outside of Cologne but especially by the Prussians.⁹⁰ Even before the war then, Carnival enthusiasts in the Rhineland equated amusements in Berlin with the enterprising pursuits of morally suspect performances at night, the counter to respectable Carnival “gentlemen” in the Rhineland.

⁸⁹ Hirschfeld, Magnus, *Berlins Drittes Geschlecht* (Subach: Kindle Edition): 48.

⁹⁰ “Offene Erwiderung auf den Berliner Brief,” *Stadtanzeiger*, Nr. 82, 20 Feb 1911. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

A similar tension could be seen in 1890, when residents introduced a Rhenish-style Carnival into the central German city of Frankfurt am Main in Hessen, a city with its own rich Carnival traditions. In that year, according to an article in the *Kölnische Zeitung*, “half of Frankfurt was brought around” to a Carnival (*Fasching*) parade.⁹¹ Although Frankfurt am Main became a site of one of the largest Carnival celebrations in Germany, it is uniquely the capital of a region, Hessen, that did not boast a Catholic majority. However, even in the public parade, according to the biased journalist, the event purportedly lacked what gave Cologne its “splendor”: “the comfort of the jokes and the harmlessness of the mood.”⁹² Not only did some of the parade floats “depict quite dubious figures,” but the Carnival festivities on open streets that year had led to a violent fights resulting in murder.⁹³ Indeed the press only covered working-class Carnival activity when crimes took place, as Carnival and its representation reflected social tension in the city.⁹⁴ Carnival’s popularity was spreading. One element of this growing popularity entailed the relationships between different Carnival cultures, seemingly out of competition with each other, which underscored tension more so than German unity. In other words, Carnival’s message of communal cheer did not extend beyond each Carnival culture. This seemed to be the case for different circles within each urban Carnival culture as well as between different German cities that took up Carnival practices to their ends. Changes within Carnival cultures also stemmed from the nature of their contexts, as

⁹¹ *Kölnische Zeitung*, Nr. 51, Zweites Blatt, Donnerstag 20. Feb 1890, Erste Abend-Ausgabe, Seite 3: in the “Vermischte Nachrichten Section,” “Frankfurt a.M. 19. Feb.”

⁹² “Vermischte Nachrichten,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, 20. Feb 1890. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

⁹³ “Vermischte Nachrichten,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, 20. Feb 1890. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

⁹⁴ Elaine Glovka Spencer, “Custom, Commerce, and Contention: Rhenish Carnival Celebrations, 1890-1914,” *German Studies Review* 20, no. 3 (Oct 1997): 323-341; 330.

they now took place in large cities. After all, Frankfurt was no medieval village, but the next largest city in Germany after Cologne, with a population of over 334,000 by 1905.⁹⁵

Other booming German cities with their own Carnival traditions saw the emergence of Cologne Carnival traditions, yet another occasion for lampooning on the part of the Cologne press. Residents of Munich founded their own Munich Carnival Society (*Münchener Carnevalgesellschaft*) in an alleged bid to carry out the “naturalization of Cologne Carnival.”⁹⁶ The Bavarian capital of Munich boasted its own medieval Carnival roots and was the fourth largest city in Germany by 1905 with a population of over 509,000.⁹⁷ “Originally,” in the words of the Cologne paper, the Munich Carnival had seemed different than Cologne’s, although the Munich artist festivals had allegedly resembled Düsseldorf’s customs.⁹⁸ However, in 1896, Munich’s residents had for a few years already experienced a Carnival following the Cologne model: “...a Carnival (*Fasching*) society with Jester Evenings (*Narrenabenden*) and Carnival (*Fasching*) masquerade balls (*Faschingsredouten*) as well as also a Carnival (*Fasching*) parade.”⁹⁹ Both the Jester Evenings as well as the *Fasching* masquerade balls were distinct costuming themed events specific to Cologne Carnival. Nevertheless, as in Cologne, in Munich certain amusements like masquerade balls and parties were the most popular. In 1896, the main role in Carnival was played by “the costume parties

⁹⁵ Volkszählung des Deutschen Kaiserreichs vom 1. Dezember 1905.

⁹⁶ “Kunst, Wissenschaft und Leben,” subheading “Der Münchener Carneval,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, 18 February 1896. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

⁹⁷ Volkszählung des Deutschen Kaiserreichs vom 1. Dezember 1905.

⁹⁸ “Kunst, Wissenschaft und Leben,” subheading “Der Münchener Carneval,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, 18 February 1896. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin. On the Malkasten-Redouten, see “Das Malkastenfest in Düsseldorf,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, 18 February 1896. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

⁹⁹ “Kunst, Wissenschaft und Leben,” subheading “Der Münchener Carneval,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, 18 February 1896. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

(*Costuemfeste*), the masquerade balls (*Redouten*), and the masked gentlemen pubs (*Herrenkneipen*) of the artists.”¹⁰⁰ The growth of Carnival in Germany thus reflected the appeal of these less regulated Carnival activities like masquerade balls and the street carnivals at a time of attempted regulation, and also pointed to Carnival’s potential to sow discord at a time of attempted national unification. The ridicule for less successful appropriations of Cologne’s Carnival traditions could be seen across the Cologne’s presses. But such disdain reflected regional competitiveness over Carnivals rather than the reliable information about Cologne Carnival’s migration. Expressions in the liberal Catholic press in Cologne, against Carnival in Munich or Frankfurt, or against working-class play on the streets or the rival masquerade balls, put civic pride on display as much as it displayed regional and social tensions.

Such potential for tension could likewise be found in Carnival’s rhetoric. The holiday was meant to be one of festive unity characterized by carefree exuberance and generosity. The message behind the holiday was captured in an advertisement for the 1890 New Year’s assembly of the Great Carnival Society. Carnival entailed that “humor and glee ... guide me [from the] curmudgeon and sorrow.”¹⁰¹ And indeed, this was an old and persistent traditional element of the holiday: to enjoy a departure from the afflictions of one’s everyday life. The particularly Cologne iteration of it highlighted the generosity of *Rhenish* people within a rapidly growing and diversifying city.¹⁰² The same

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Advertisement, *Kölnische Zeitung*, Nr. 362, 31 December 1889. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

¹⁰² For a more in-depth analysis of this shift to seeing Cologne Carnival as a display of local qualities in generosity in the decades leading up to World War I, see: Jeremy DeWaal, “The Reinvention of Tradition: Form, Meaning, and Local Identity in Modern Cologne Carnival,” *Central European History* 46, no. 3 (Sept 2013): 495-532.

advertisement then proclaimed in bold letters that “strangers have admittance.”¹⁰³ The few words invoked a longstanding tradition of the Carnival season: a ritual of generosity toward strangers. One of the old historical customs of Carnival entailed inviting strangers into the home for an intimate family meal. This was a tradition that was carried out even after the turn of the century. In March of 1903, for instance, German-born Swiss author Hermann Hesse’s descriptions of Carnival celebrations in a modest old city of the Upper Rhine region foregrounded how even as a stranger and guest, participation was easy. “In a guest house... we took part without question in a dinner at a family table,” he recounted, before detailing the more raucous antics that seemed to dominate annual celebration by the early twentieth century.¹⁰⁴ Yet the question of whether Carnival’s gospel could withstand new pressures in Cologne remained. In the example of the aforementioned event of the Great Carnival Society, with a members’ entrance fee of 11 Marks, the strangers’ admittance fee much heftier meant that clearly not all social circles did or could afford to participate. This society was one of the two most elite societies in Cologne; the “strangers” or non-members who would attend likely came from the same social circles or at least class background, which raised social questions about Cologne Carnival’s ostensive communal mirth.

Those social issues were joined by further challenges to Carnival’s historical meaning that were posed by tourism and migration. How would Carnival accommodate a massive influx of diverse strangers and foreigners of diverse backgrounds in the context of mass tourism alongside dramatic demographic shifts in German cities like Cologne?

¹⁰³ Advertisement, *Kölnische Zeitung*, Nr. 362, 31 December 1889. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

¹⁰⁴ Hermann Hesse, “Karneval,” *Simplicissimus: Illustrierte Wochenschrift*, Number 44 (1902/1903). German Literature Archive in Marbach.

While there was social value in the Carnival approach, there were also growing limitations to such proclamations of festive unity and Rhenish generosity. The problem with “dislodging the dust of the everyday” or refusing to “speak of reason, sanity, of everyday stuff,” as the Great Cologne Carnival Society celebrated in an advertisement for their 1890 New Years assembly, was that actually achieving this in the same way as in previous decades proved increasingly challenging for a growing number of reasons.¹⁰⁵ As we have seen, Cologne Carnival was expanding in scale and popularity, not just in its native city of Cologne but also elsewhere. The complexity and breadth of Carnival events by the turn of the century was simply breathtaking, a testament to the passion and organizational acumen of Cologne’s friends of Carnival. Yet, whatever varied forms of participatory theatrics and mockery had previously predominated in the holiday’s town and small city celebration, Carnival had become a massive holiday industry by the turn of the twentieth century, which generated and underscored growing tensions and challenges in the growing city. Carnival became wrapped up in tensions between cities and regions just as the holiday was inflected with the class tensions of an urbanizing Cologne society, the latter taken up in greater detail in the next chapter.

Despite the messages of festive unity, necessary cheer, and departure from the worries of everyday life, as Carnival’s scale and cost grew, so too grew conflicts over power and influence within Carnival’s culture. From the turn of the century, these tensions over Carnival’s meanings were met by additional ones that stemmed from German urbanization. Carnival’s diffusion proceeded with mixed results: the holiday’s festivities were tremendously popular at the same time that they presented cumbersome

¹⁰⁵ Advertisement, *Kölnische Zeitung*, Nr. 362, 31 December 1889. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

logistical challenges to municipal governments, city infrastructures, organizing societies, and police forces. Dramatic territorial and demographic shifts coupled with mass tourism and migration also changed the makeup of communities involved in Carnival practices. It would remain to be seen whether generosity and warmth toward strangers could be a continued legacy then in sprawling cities. By the turn of the century Carnival was a large-scale centralized endeavor that involved entire cities, their governments and administrative forces, institutions and industries. This fact spoke to the success of bureaucratization efforts in Cologne as elsewhere. But Carnival's growth and codification was happening against a background of breakneck industrialization and urbanization that rapidly changed communities and cityscapes and pulled Carnival into new social and moral anxieties in the great city. Real organizational as well as moral issues faced Cologne's Carnival enthusiasts as the first decade of the twentieth century saw the first real threat to Carnival overall in Germany.

II. Modern Carnival & Moral Crisis

As alluded to above, the rapidly growing city challenged Carnival organization in numerous ways through the dramatically increased scale of public celebration. As one Cologne native and Carnival enthusiast argued in the *Kölnische Zeitung* in 1906, medieval Carnivals had occurred in smaller tight-knit communities in which disguises allowed one to achieve free play within well-known and safe communities.¹⁰⁶ Many

¹⁰⁶ "Nach den Tollen Tagen. Ein geborener Kölner und alter Karnevalsfreude schreibt aus," *Kölnische Zeitung*, 28 February 1906. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

Cologne residents took up a reference to some previous time, imagined as the original ancient and authentic Carnival of old, but in truth this myth was mostly a sign of how successful nineteenth-century initiatives around Carnival had been. At the same time, this nineteenth-century mobilization of Carnival by city elites and city administrations did occur within a city that was changing.¹⁰⁷ The population of the city of Cologne alone increased eight-fold during the nineteenth century, with a turn-of-the-century population that numbered over 372,000. This number climbed to over 472,000 by 1909 and continued to sharply grow. In 1905 Cologne had become the seventh largest city in Germany and the second largest, behind Munich, to have public Carnival celebrations.¹⁰⁸ The sheer volume of people in the city due to migration was equally matched by territorial growth in Cologne as well, as the late nineteenth century in particular was characterized by the absorption of surrounding municipalities. This breakneck growth and change can be captured by the first major incorporation negotiated over the course of several years by Cologne's City Council, which Kaiser Wilhelm I himself ended in February of 1888. On April 1, 1888, this incorporation of neighboring locales swelled Cologne's geographic parameters from 1,066 hectares, what largely encompassed just the old and new town, to 11,000 hectares.¹⁰⁹ In a single incorporation, the city of Cologne grew ten-fold in size.

¹⁰⁷ On the history of urbanization in Germany see for instance Jürgen Reulecke, *Geschichte der Urbanisierung in Deutschland* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1985).

¹⁰⁸ Volkszählung des Deutschen Kaiserreichs vom 1. Dezember 1905.

¹⁰⁹ Winifried Reinhardt, *Geschichte des Kölner Verkehrs: 3000 Jahre Mobilität im Rheinland* (Wiesbaden: Springer Vieweg, 2017): 248.

The effect that such a change had on Cologne's "hometown" holiday was dramatic. The full effect of these perceived changes is beautifully captured in the following caption from the aforementioned Cologne native:

The city has become too large, the influx of strangers in these days who indeed have a great economic value for Cologne, multiply each year, but the Cologners leave in always larger numbers alongside always wider circles during these days of the roar raging through the hometown. Fewer balls in the Gürzenich, the Lesegesellschaft, and Bürgergesellschaft maintain still a shadow of the old Carnival, they assume instead from year to year more the character of great costume balls, at which young women and men and also elderly people amuse themselves with dance and wine, at which from the old Carnival, from the intrigues and disguises (*Mummenschanz*), little else is to be perceived.¹¹⁰

In short, the native was right. The city's growth, the spike in both influx and retreat from the city around Carnival time, and the influence of Cologne's middle-class had changed Carnival's cultures there—and therein changed how Carnival worked. Growing commercialization brought tremendous sums of money to the Carnival societies and festival committee who orchestrated the events, these large sums changing the stakes of the holiday. This combined with the growing influence of Cologne's bourgeoisie changed the nature of Carnival events, which were grander, more extravagant and exclusive, and more emblematic of society events. Not only did these qualities threaten to exacerbate social tensions, but many aspects of modern Carnival posed new moral dangers as well. While significant concern developed over other issues like personal safety and disease, organization and logistical issues, only moral questions swept the entire spectrum of Cologne's communities into controversy and debate. This section demonstrates the new moral dangers posed by Carnival through an examination of the scandal over the elite

¹¹⁰ "Nach den Tollen Tagen. Ein geborener Kölner und alter Karnevalfreund schreibt aus," *Kölnische Zeitung*, 28 February 1906. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

Lichtmessball masquerade balls and the crisis over Carnival morality that resulted. This controversy forced an internal reform of Carnival in Cologne amidst resounding calls for a fight against immorality and excess in Cologne's Carnival culture. The following section then takes up this largely successful internal reform that enabled the grandest Carnivals in Cologne's history in the years immediately preceding World War I.

By the turn of the century, the infamous Lichtmessballs took place annually at the Gürzenich as one of the most prestigious Cologne Carnival events in the annual pantheon, organized together by the two great Carnival societies. The city even gave the venue to its elite guests for free. Entrance was highly coveted and hard-won. By around the turn of the century however the Lichtmessball stimulated growing controversy over immoral acts, not on the part of foreign tourists or rabbleroising workers on the streets, but by the bourgeoisie in their most sacrosanct institutions of class and respectability. Despite their elite status, such balls had become known as sites of vice, lasciviousness, and excessiveness earlier in the nineteenth century, which led to the frequent prohibition of women's entry and later their limited entry. Public figures often avoided the Lichtmessball for fear of damage to their reputations. This scandal was kicked off by concern for bourgeois vice and lasciviousness within official mainstream Carnival. Already in 1895, the rumors of sex workers' presence at the Lichtmessball stimulated controversy in the press over how to combat such "shameless activities at the organized masquerade balls [at the] city Gürzenich hall" according to an article in the socialist *Rheinische Zeitung*.¹¹¹ One "family father" from the readership of the Catholic centrist *Lokal-Anzeiger* in a letter to the press asked how at an event like the Lichtmessball,

¹¹¹ *Rheinische Zeitung*, Nr. 32, 7 February 1895. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

“which should be so strictly closed off,” the “brazen activities of hookers (*Dirnen*)” could “have been so numerous present again”? Clearly this wasn’t a new problem, and it didn’t go away either. According to an article in 1903 about the Lichtmessball in the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, rumors of the presence of sex workers at the event had circulated for years.¹¹² This proved especially offensive to the author writing in the *Rheinische Zeitung*, who invoked the city’s constant refusal to allow usage of the Gürzenich to “respectable workers” for their matters. “The city administration, which tenaciously denies the decent workers the city hall for the consultation of their most important matters, tolerates the ‘shameless activities’ of the ‘hookers’ (*Dirnen*), but indeed creates the opportunity through always renewed authorization for the hall.”¹¹³ Did the municipal government, the author asked, value sex workers so much more than respectable workers? The hypocrisy that Cologne’s circles so concerned with respectability used their influence to hobnob gleefully in city venues where their sexual indulgences and vices were allowed free reign—and while the same circles denounced the laboring classes as immoral or excessive in the street Carnival—certainly caused a stir.

The family father recommended in his letter to the editors that members of the vice squad (*Sittenpolizei*) combat this scourge by themselves masquerading as guests at the events, a unique sort of Carnival prank even for Cologne. Indeed the question of how to address these sexual depravities in Cologne’s public halls, this suggestion being to fool Carnival’s most important fools (*Narren*), loomed large. Of course regulating displays and reducing certain social elements remained nearly impossible during Carnival

¹¹² “Es bleibt alles beim Alten,” *Frankfurter Zeitung*, Nr 27, 27 Jan 1903. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

¹¹³ *Rheinische Zeitung*, Nr. 32, 7 February 1895. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

in general, which made the prevention of sex workers' entry to such events challenging, especially if they invited. Such invitations inspired further animosity since tickets to such events were among the hardest-won in the city each year. The event embroiled the city's elites in moral controversy over these exclusive events. What was worse than that the Lichtmessball took place in Cologne's most revered Carnival hall, the city-owned Gürzenich, though was that multiple government officials were in attendance. Press coverage of who attended was, after all, a key element of these elite events. In the face of ongoing pressure, the great Carnival societies agreed to have a registry at the event, which took down the names of guests and their female companions. But that didn't mean they had to comply with it. In 1903, the list ended up with only 60 names on it at the end of the night despite the tremendous scale of the event. According to the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, the message from the elites was clear: "to leave everything as it was."¹¹⁴ The author continued that apparently "at the Lichtmessball there's nothing to search for!"

In early 1904, however, the socialist press broke a story on that year's Lichtmessball happenings in lurid detail that bordered on the pornographic, as rumors gave way to reports. Not only did the SPD paper *Vorwärts* print the story of what the bourgeoisie were up to in Cologne's elite institutions; the socialist *Rheinische Zeitung* did as well. In an article on "Lichtmessball Studies" from 6 February 1904, the author recounted what went on at that year's Gürzenich—"we went to see then the equally very reviled as vaunted Lichtmessball"—and forewarned the report that followed was "not

¹¹⁴ "Es bleibt alles beim Alten," *Frankfurter Zeitung*, Nr 27, 27 Jan 1903. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

suitable for children's ears."¹¹⁵ At first the author described the crazed whirl of Carnival masquerades, packed rooms replete with puffs of smoke and loud music, theatrical costumes as well as a solid number of attendees in eveningwear, and a great deal of dancing. "And over the whole place the heavy whiff of brooding sensuality." The text already got at the immorality people were concerned with over these events: the perverse sexual appetites of Carnival's elites displayed in Cologne's great halls. What the author ostensibly then realized upon reviewing all the diverse women in attendance though was that

All of Cologne's sex workers (*Kölner Dirnentum*) were in the Gürzenich. From the most sordid street hooker (*Straßendirne*) upwards to the paramour (*Buhlerin*) of the most genteel variety, in all the nuances and a thousand specimens; near the coquettes still a number of grisettes, maybe also a few less who make a claim to the name of an upstanding girl.

This wasn't the select indulgence of typical Cologne *Ausgelassenheit* at Carnival but more of an elite bacchanalia. Indeed according to the exposé the women weren't exactly in costume either but were rather naked from the waist up, and to make matters worse, the women weren't guests but rather "the main attraction." Beyond the paraded nudity, the exposé detailed how, for a glass of sparkling wine, one particularly rotund woman threw her skirt over the head of an old bald Carnival reveler who had fallen in love. The author then implied that the wildest of orgies took place in the stairways of the Gürzenich—what simply couldn't even be recounted in detail in the press—as those select few in attendance with a bit of decency were rendered "powerless" to combat the immoral scourge. Petty crime took place at the event as well, landing one sex worker in prison, and the author reported leaving only one hour later with no idea how to shake his

¹¹⁵ "Lichtmessballstudien," *Rheinische Zeitung*, Nr. 31, 6 February 1904. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

“disgust.” Such licentious details of the ordinarily closed-off event not only pointed the finger at the most respectable within Carnival’s hierarchy, but they did so through a grotesque aesthetic that depicted in sordid details what *really* went on at those famed events about which only rumors usually disseminated. Numerous presses, including the socialist but also the national liberal and Cologne Catholic ones, reproduced the account as evidence that the events were indeed unconscionably scandalous.

This article initiated a firestorm of controversy and debate surrounding Carnival and its purported “immorality” and “excess,” as “morality” (*Sittlichkeit*) became the vague nomenclature persistent in debates over Carnival’s regulation. The exposé’s language about Carnival’s problems, including “shamelessness” (*Schamlosigkeit*), the “excesses of Carnival” (*Auswüchse des Karnevals*), “images of moral depravity” (*Bilder der sittlichen Verkommenheit*), and activities that were “disgraceful” (*schandbar*), became common in the debates about Carnival and reform that followed its publication. An article in the *Kölnische Volkszeitung*, for instance, denounced the “rudenesses” (*Ungezogenheiten*) of published Carnival materials posted or distributed around the city, like postcards, which spoke “scorn on cultivation.”¹¹⁶ Many residents feared in this context that the “old, good, pure, humorous Cologne Carnival” was being replaced by days of “sowing one’s wild oats.”¹¹⁷ Indeed a language of “morality” (*Sittlichkeit*) ensued about Carnival taken up on all sides in the years before the war connected mostly to the social-sexual dangers of Carnival inherent in this example of sexual indulgences between women of ill-repute and Cologne’s more respectable circles.

¹¹⁶ “Nach den Tollen Tagen. Ein geborener Kölner und alter Karnevalsfreund schreibt aus,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, 28 February 1906. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

There had already been some conversations about the social and sexual dangers of Carnival around the turn of the century, which informed debate about Carnival displays and their effects, in particular surrounding gender and the youth. The commonplace presence of cross-dressing in Carnival for men as well as women drew scrutiny, for instance. In Düsseldorf for instance, a police ordinance on 28 January 1901 banned cross-dressing on the part of both sexes in the street Carnival “on account of the injury to decency and shame.”¹¹⁸ 95 people were arrested in violation of the ordinance in 1905. According to the police reports, such displays were “truly disagreeable,” “repulsive,” with cross-dressing for men or women an “annoying habit” that constituted “the most despicable of all Carnival activities.”¹¹⁹ The balls and the street Carnivals were the major targets of critique, shadows of the ills of great cities cast on Carnival.

Such claims to immorality at masquerade balls alongside the generally excessive and unregulated nature of Carnival events across Cologne also could also be seen in new languages about youth morality in Carnival. Transformations during the first decade of the twentieth century also meant that no longer could one speak of Carnival in Cologne’s communities as the traditional family celebration it once was. Instead, among other changes, participation in the street carnivals by children dwindled. The idea of children at prolific masquerades, something children in previous years often did twice or even three times per year during Carnival time, “leaves a bitter taste in one’s mouth” according to an

¹¹⁸ Hildegard Brog, *Was auch passiert, D’r Zoch kütt!: die Geschichte des rheinischen Karnevals* (Frankfurt: Campus: 2000): 159.

¹¹⁹ Hildegard Brog, *Was auch passiert, D’r Zoch kütt!: die Geschichte des rheinischen Karnevals* (Frankfurt: Campus: 2000): 159.

article on “Reared for Carnival” in the *Kölnische Zeitung*.¹²⁰ The general concern for children’s wellbeing during the Carnival days that left children amidst bedlam until deep in the night led the elementary schools to continue having school days throughout Carnival week for the first time in 1905.¹²¹

The bad reputation of Carnival, in particular at masquerade balls like the Lichtmessball and the unregulated mass carousal in the street Carnivals—was further exacerbated by the publication in 1906 of the novel *Karneval* by Emil Kaiser,¹²² which through lurid examples detailed what historian of Carnival Joseph Klersch called “the demonstrated symptoms of decline attributable to the life of the city and the inner decomposition of ‘society.’”¹²³ The book described what went on at Carnival, as other religious moralists did, as the “excesses of evil spirits,” which only led to a further surge in reform debates around the holiday.¹²⁴ The book itself had a print run in the thousands. Although many contested the veracity of the account, which was told as a novel after all, the book led to numerous meetings of Cologne’s officials, Carnival associations, and

¹²⁰ “Kölner Skizzen,” subheading “Erziehung zum Karneval,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, 18 February 1909. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

¹²¹ *Stadtanzeiger*, Nr. 98, 1 March 1905. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

¹²² Emil Kaiser, *Karneval* (Cologne: P. Neubner, 1906). Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

¹²³ Josef Klersch, *Die kölnische Fastnacht von ihren Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* (Cologne: Bachem, 1961): 153. Although Klersch briefly describes the concern about Carnival on the part of Kaiser and others, his treatment skips over the scandal and resulting reform.

¹²⁴ “Nach den Tollen Tagen. Ein geborener Kölner und alter Karnevalfreund schreibt aus,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, 28 February 1906. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

religious leaders among others who agreed that concern over Carnival morality—as a site of sinful activity and the promotion of crime and sexual depravity—was merited.¹²⁵

In describing the first calls for reform, which unsurprisingly came from the churches, a Cologne native published in the Cologne national press maintained that “the local pious strive for and clamor against Carnival as the hotbed of vice.”¹²⁶ In a 1909 article about the problems concerning Cologne children and their now-awkward fit during Carnival time, the author, rather than advance the notion that children had no place at Carnival at all, insisted that more masquerade balls for children were needed for their upbringing.¹²⁷ The pedagogical and psychological value of taking part in masquerades where children could learn “communal joy” in contexts in which one beheld “strange awkwardness” near “unwitting or witting grace” was substantial. Rather than simply enabling some fun and leisure time, the “symbolic festival of the awakening spring” could teach children awareness of or even tolerance toward social difference. The question, not just for children, but for all audiences new to Carnival or deemed unfit to navigate its offers, would now be how to make them “*genußfähig*” as the author put it—fit to consume its pleasures.

Apparently the leadership of the two great Carnival societies knew the news of the Lichtmessball happenings was about to break, as on the same day as the controversial article the *Stadtanzeiger* reported, in an article “About the Untenable Conditions at the

¹²⁵ See for instance discussion of the book in a meeting of the People’s Association for a Catholic Germany (*Volksverein für das katholische Deutschlands*) in “Das Buch Karneval von Emil Kaiser,” *Stadtanzeiger*, Nr. 42, 13 February 1906. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

¹²⁶ “Bilder vom Kölner Karneval,” subheading “Einiges von der Reform,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, 9 February 1910. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

¹²⁷ “Kölner Skizzen,” subheading “Erziehung zum Karneval,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, 18 February 1909. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

Lichtmessball,” that the associations had asked the press to publish a statement on their continued efforts to combat the known “social evils of this ball.” Despite their failed efforts, including in that year the “introduction of a ballotage,” the societies expressed continued commitment “to create and preserve in our home town an absolutely impeccable Carnival.”¹²⁸ In the next days additional articles criticized the lasciviousness and vice on display in Carnival’s most important institution by Cologne’s prominent elite—but notably took aim at the critical political commentary the social democratic press directed at Carnival’s largely centrist and liberal Catholic leadership. In an article “Once again the Lichtmessball,” the *Localanzeiger*, a daily of Catholic political alignment with the Center (*Zentrum*) party by the Weimar years, followed up on initial published reports of the event, assuring the public that the lurid details printed in the exposé of the social democratic press had been corroborated on all sides. It constituted indeed “unbearable shamelessness.”¹²⁹ But the article took aim, in addition to at the excesses at Carnival, at socialist journalists for their politicking. In particular the author claimed that the socialists targeted liberals and centrists who headed the Roeren Verein, as opposed to forming a unified front in the press against not just these Carnival excesses but the spread of immorality in Cologne in general. “Will Cologne’s population for once finally pull itself together without difference between party and confession?” This was indeed a clever move, to offset the criticisms of Carnival’s particular elite societies though an appeal to unity, and by broadening the scope further to other excesses like immoral literature or indecent depictions in shop windows. To this the socialist press

¹²⁸ “Über unhaltbare Zustände auf dem ‘Lichtmessball,’” *Stadtanzeiger*, Nr. 58, 5 February 1904. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

¹²⁹ “Nochmals der Lichtmessball,” *Localanzeiger*, Nr. 40, 9 February 1904. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

responded the next day that “one combats the symptoms but one doesn’t wish to see the actual disease.”¹³⁰ Before the First World War the socialists, alongside some religious leaders, came the closest to condemning Carnival outright and suggesting it be banned entirely. “[A]s long as we have Carnival in its current form the public immorality in Cologne will celebrate its orgies, because Carnival even begets immorality out of itself.” This scandal and resulting debate would eventually force a reform of Carnival— spearheaded by the bourgeoisie who managed to maintain control of the holiday’s official forms and prevent a wholesale prohibition of the holiday. However the leadership of the most influential Carnival organizations only really did this after a bit of foot-dragging.

In October, the annual Conference of the German Morality Associations (*Konferenz der deutschen Sittlichkeitsvereine*) took sharp aim at Carnival, including an entire speech against Carnival delivered by Pastor Hötzel from the evangelical (Protestant) community in Cologne. This evoked ire on the part of Carnival’s leadership, who asked that the press publish their response to Hötzel’s claims that Carnival suffered from festive “excesses” and brought about “disgraceful activities” and immoral excessive enthusiasm due to indulgence in alcohol.¹³¹ The reply was published in the *Stadtanzeiger* and the *Kölnischer Tageblatt*. Cologne’s Carnival leadership underscored a number of key ideas, including that they had already worked to “make Carnival pure and impeccable” in recent years, and that it wasn’t alcohol that instilled enthusiasm but rather “Cologne humor,” “humor that we have drank up even with mother’s milk.” Such ideas

¹³⁰ “Nochmals der Lichtmessball,” *Rhenische Zeitung*, Nr. 34, 10 February 1904. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

¹³¹ “Von leitender Stelle des Kölner Karnevals,” *Stadtanzeiger*, Nr. 460, 7 October 1904. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969. “Protest der Leiter des Kölner Karnevals gegen die Angriffe des Pfarrer Hötzel,” *Kölnisches Tageblatt*, Nr 728, 7 October 1904. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

spoke of the sacrosanct nature of Carnival to Rhinelanders, a sort of heritage birthright of the people. The reply later spoke of Carnival enthusiasm as something in the “flesh and blood” of the Rhinelanders. Reform of Carnival had been and would continue to be a possibility, but a wholesale rejection of the holiday was not an option. “A complete reassessment of the public verdict about Carnival is even for such a long time not thinkable....” In the midst of Carnival’s controversy the holiday’s leadership even argued that Carnival was a holy practice, evidenced by the organization of activities even by religious orders. The holiday wasn’t “disgraceful,” but rather one that can stand the “certainly not minimal critical eyes of the Catholic clergy,” the author argued.

Actually, this point about the holy orders and the Catholic reaction to Carnival’s excesses was a big point of contention, as Carnival’s Protestant critics at the congress didn’t seem to understand Carnival and its history. Apparently Pastor Hötzel criticized the purported local Catholic fight against Carnival’s immorality, stating that “when rather among others the Marian Congregations (*Marianische Kongregationen*) refrain from their Divertissements etc.” only then could he “believe in the seriousness of this struggle” on the part of the “Catholic side.”¹³² Divertissements or “little distractions” were small variété-like performances that were sometimes a part of Carnival events. A response to this idea was printed in the *Localanzeiger*, in which a representative of the “decent citizens” and “true and sincere friends of Carnival” underscored support for the struggle against Carnival’s excesses, but only as long as “one combats most effectively the excesses themselves.” The author detailed a lack of understanding in Hötzel’s critique, namely that the Divertissements he took aim at were created in 1861 as an expressly pure

¹³² “Sittlichkeit und Karneval,” *Localanzeiger*, Nr 277, 7 October 1904. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

and moral Carnival practice outside of typical Carnival bedlam, something “absolutely morally pure and impeccable.” Not only was the Catholic clergy not soft on Carnival’s indulgences, but these Protestant critics didn’t even understand the holiday. Much disagreement persisted over Carnival’s problems, as Carnival debates exacerbated and underscored tensions between Cologne’s groups and their interests.

One critic then made light of the “stresses and strains” kicked off by the morality conference in the supplement to the *Stadtanzeiger*, poking fun at points in the Carnival leadership’s reply. The second point, about alcohol, brought up the language of the reply, namely of enjoying a “bottle of sparkling wine.” To the author, this language pointed to the clearly privileged social classes of Carnival’s leadership, who didn’t, like much of Cologne’s populace, enjoy the cheapest alcohol in the greatest quantity. “He who drinks sparkling wine has rather not just spirit, but rather, something that is worth more, namely in most cases dough (*Moneten*)...”¹³³ Indeed the financial and class dimensions of these indulgences at the Lichtmessball were neither lost on this author in the Catholic liberal *Stadtanzeiger* nor on the socialist press, both of which frequently criticized the Carnival associations’ leaders and the social implications of their Carnival cultures. The triumph of Cologne’s development, which after all enabled Cologne’s Carnival success, stemmed in large degree from its place in Germany’s industrial heart. The working-class presses were the persistent critics of the holiday, as financial, material, and moral excesses of the holiday seemed particularly offensive. Despite the fantasies of social union celebrated in the holiday’s rituals, locals were well aware that the most prolific Carnival clubs and

¹³³ Abolar, “Kölner Leben und Treiben,” *Beilage zur Stadtanzeiger*, Nr 41, 9 October 1904. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

associations counted their membership only from the affluent middle-class and Catholic elite.

Full membership was often denied to Cologne's Jews as well.¹³⁴ Populations subjected Jews in Germany, in particular the large numbers of East European Jewish émigrés in the years leading up to the war, to antisemitic policies in city and national governments. Within the Carnival milieu both before and after the war Cologne residents depicted Jews as foreigners or outsiders, the groups most commonly imagined to misunderstand Carnival or use it too iniquitous or immoral ends. This was in spite Jewish residents' engagement with Carnival traditions. In specific instances Jews could attain membership within Carnival organizations in Cologne as well as in other cities in the

¹³⁴ On policies toward the influx of Eastern European Jews see Jack Wertheimer, *Unwelcome Strangers: East European Jews in Imperial Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991). Steven Aschheim, *Brothers and Strangers: the East European Jew in German and German Jewish Consciousness, 1800-1923* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982). Stefan Scheil, *Die Entwicklung des politischen Antisemitismus in Deutschland zwischen 1881 und 1912: eine wahlgeschichtliche Untersuchung* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1999). On the effect of this influx on Jewish communities in Vienna, see many essays, including those by Armin Eidherr, Brigitte Dalinger, and Michaela Raggam-Blesch, in Frank Stern and Barbara Eichinger, eds., *Wien und die jüdische Erfahrung 1900-1938. Akkulturation – Antisemitismus – Zionismus* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2009). See also Panikos Panayi, *Ethnic Minorities in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Germany: Jews, Gypsies, Poles, Turks, and Others* (New York: Longman, 2000). The application by the Jewish community for a Carnival ball in March 1811 in the Rhineland is cited in James Brophy, *Popular Culture and the Public Sphere in the Rhineland, 1800-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007): 176. See the contemporaneous use of "Jewish Carnival" in Moritz Güdemann, *Geschichte des Erziehungswesens und der Cultur der abendländischen Juden während des Mittelalters und der neueren Zeit 3* (Vienna, 1888): 134-135. A discussion of Purim as a Jewish copy of medieval Carnival from the eighteenth century is likewise found in Elliot Horowitz, "The Rite to be Reckless: On the Perpetration and Interpretation of Purim Violence," *Poetics Today* 15, Nr. 1 (Spring 1994): 9-54. On the complex navigation of subjectivity and community politics by a Jewish Carnival association in Vienna, see Klaus Hödl, "Jüdisches Leben im Wiener Fin de Siècle. Performanz als methodischer Ansatz zur Erforschung jüdischer Geschichte," in Frank Stern and Barbara Eichinger, eds., *Wien und die jüdische Erfahrung 1900-1938. Akkulturation – Antisemitismus – Zionismus* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2009): 399-418.

Rhineland with large Carnival celebrations like Düsseldorf, although as historian Michael Wildt has pointed out such membership was often impossible in smaller towns and cities in the Rhineland.¹³⁵ The frequent exclusion of Jews from full membership in Carnival organizations in Cologne led to the attempted founding of Carnival organizations in Cologne. Jewish communities also attempted Carnival events for instance as part of annual Purim practices, referred to by some scholars as well as nineteenth-century Viennese rabbi Moritz Güdemann as the “Jewish Carnival” (*jüdische Fastnacht*). Still others were granted membership in the mainstream Carnival association membership.

The prominent involvement of Cologne’s bourgeois elite meant that symbols at Carnival could stoke social tensions. Cologne’s middle-class playacted membership in the aristocracy, as Prince Carnival in monarchical regalia threw bonbons to the children of the working-class in the Rose Monday parade, practices that invited scorn. Tremendous funds issued municipally and by factory-owners and other wealthy circles for Carnival in these years. That city governments could afford to invest substantial sums in such festivities but not meet material aid and labor reform demands proved likewise controversial. In the context of ongoing labor struggles and the refusal to extend social benefits to the working class, such experiences could underscore bitter social tensions in the industrial city. One article in the Socialist press *Rheinische Zeitung* mocked how Carnival’s enthusiasts in Bonn, mostly derived from the “better middle-classes,” made themselves important by having the best classes get together during Carnival time and

¹³⁵ Michael Wildt, *Hitler’s Volksgemeinschaft and the Dynamics of Racial Exclusion: Violence Against Jews in Provincial Germany, 1919-1939* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012): 59.

play the roles of feudal aristocracy.¹³⁶ Despite the success of many working-class Carnivals in the Rhineland and North Rhine-Westphalia, presses like the *Kölnische Zeitung* that printed the views of the Carnival societies persistently reported only on crimes committed by the working-class during Carnival time. Despite this pejorative representation of working-class carnivals, often in regards to labor hubs like Dortmund and Bochum, Wilhelmine working-class populations in the Rhineland enjoyed a rich spectrum of festivals including carnivals, which in addition to providing leisure activities could also serve to provide philanthropic aid to communities in need.¹³⁷ The socialist press in Cologne also criticized the holiday, which provided some sanctioned time off of work but was largely seen as squandering funds otherwise denied to labor demands. The ongoing tension over Carnival between the middle-class and socialist critics largely persisted, which not become a major question taken up during the internal Carnival reform.

Essentially the leaders of Carnival's most premier associations denied broad culpability about immorality in Carnival culture, but the controversy continued to grow. The following year the annual German Morality Conference, this year in Magdeburg,

¹³⁶ "Stadtverwaltung und Vergnügungssucht," *Rheinische Zeitung*, 26 February 1912.

¹³⁷ For some coverage of crimes by the working-class during Carnival time, see: "Vermischte Nachrichten," *Kölnische Zeitung*, 20 February 1890. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin. "Nachrichten aus Westdeutschland," *Kölnische Zeitung*, 9 February 1910. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin. "Nachrichten aus Westdeutschland," subheading "Karnevalfeier in Dortmund," *Kölnische Zeitung*, 4 February 1913. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin. On broader working-class festivals in Wilhelmine culture in the region, see: Lynn Abrams, *Worker's Culture in Imperial Germany: Leisure and Recreation in the Rhineland and Westphalia* (New York: Routledge, 1992). On the urban class relations and the history of social mobility and political protest among the working-class in the rapidly industrializing city of Bochum see David Crew, *Town in the Ruhr: a Social History of Bochum, 1860-1914* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979).

once again took aim at Cologne Carnival, which produced similar criticism about ignorance on the part of the speakers. In an article, “Against the Vilification of Cologne Carnival,” in the *Stadtanzeiger* the author drew attention to a statement published in the yearly report of the conference from the talk of a Pastor Weber, which suggested again that the speaker knew not even the basics of Carnival in Cologne. According to Pastor Weber, “Carnival begins now first with the 1st of January, while earlier in Cologne already from 11 November onward for four months [everything] stood on its head.”¹³⁸ Officially the Carnival season began at 11 PM on November 11th each year, and significant Carnival sessions occurred on New Years Day each year as well. While the season lasted four months, the topsy-turvy world proper was mostly isolated to a single week’s activities. The critic in the liberal Catholic press again supported the idea of “combatting” the “excesses,” which after all came with “every folk festival”—indeed in this goal he alongside the representatives of true traditional Cologne Carnival “are the most serious who offer a hand in [combatting those excesses].” But what the author wouldn’t stand for were outsiders who did not understand their traditions, labeling Carnival as “immoral pleasures” as the conference did by lumping the holiday itself together with the struggles against “music halls (*Tingeltangel*), bad varieties, and shameless theater depictions.”¹³⁹

¹³⁸ “Gegen die Verunglimpfung des Kölner Karnevals,” *Stadtanzeiger*, Nr 480, 19 October 1905. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

¹³⁹ Indeed the comparison to music hall controversy is ripe here as such controversy surrounding moral and sexual danger in music halls in London and attempts to craft a moral civic identity closely paralleled the moral debates and discourses over Carnival occurring in Cologne as elsewhere in Germany at this time. On this see Judith Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992). Barry Faulk, *Music Hall &*

Nevertheless, by around 1904 a general concern about Carnival and its immorality and excesses was widespread, linked mostly to excessive licentiousness, sinful indulgences, and the spread of criminal vice at activities, primarily at the masquerade balls and in the street Carnivals. General disagreement persisted over the source and solution. That Protestant clergy openly censured the holiday, using sloppy descriptions that betrayed their lack of participation in this culture, was unsurprising, as was the censure that Catholic communities directed at particular iniquities in Carnival, even as some religious orders selectively embraced certain festivities during Carnival as part of old traditions. Catholic liberals and centrists, who made up most of the bourgeoisie and Carnival leadership admitted there were problems but dragged their feet about their own culpability. One effect of the scandal, beyond the erasure of the Lichtmessball tradition at the venue, was that the bourgeois and elites themselves were finally the targets of discernible public criticism about morality and respectability—criticism that proved difficult to shake. Alongside claims about excesses at Carnival—violence and crime on the part of the working-class during the street Carnival, for instance—a general crisis over Carnival morality solidified from around 1904, which stimulated an internal reform of Carnival that lasted until around 1911. Yet, as one purported old Cologne native writing about Carnival reform in Germany later described in 1906, the initial response was denial. In the face of this controversy, “...the connoisseurs... kept quiet.”¹⁴⁰ Yet, even if Cologne Carnival’s leadership publically rejected culpability for these problems, they understood that they were there and even bought into—as indeed broad audiences

Modernity: The Late-Victorian Discovery of Popular Culture (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2004).

¹⁴⁰ “Bilder vom Kölner Karneval,” subheading “Einiges von der Reform,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, 9 February 1910. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

seemed to by 1904—the idea that Carnival suffered from issues of “excess” and “immorality” that needed to be addressed. Concern over social-sexual dangers at Carnival far exceeded the realms of the premier masquerade balls of the Carnival societies in Cologne. As this section has shown, there were various opinions about what these issues were and where they were coming from but not great consensus overall. As the next section will show, Carnival’s leadership in Cologne navigated this delicate issue of dissonance over Carnival’s problems through a generally successful top-down reform process that married a cultural socialization with investments in and from the city.

III. Crisis and Internal Reform from Above

Cries for a reform of Carnival in Cologne eventually produced numerous Carnival discourses within public Carnival debates. Public debate wasn’t exclusively an elite or official affair. On the contrary, this controversy during the first decade of the twentieth century in Cologne saw religious leaders, working-class critics, as well as municipal reformers embroiled in public debate. The holiday’s potential to exacerbate class tensions had already stimulated select critique before the turn of the century over how regulatory fiscal structures operated in Cologne’s municipal administration. For instance, in “On Regulation,” an 1894 article in the *Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, the author complained about the municipal regulations that apply taxes to city innkeepers despite the considerable burden of investment in Carnival each year. Small pubs or restaurants didn’t experience the same revenue intake as larger ones in the city, the author argued, but still had to pay the same levies for the poor in Cologne. One old tradition of Carnival was that

events at the holiday generated charity funds for the ailing populace, as social aid often provided a pretext for extravagant elite balls in Cologne. Indeed, altruism in Carnival, the notion that the Cologners in particular were generous, constituted a mark of civic pride. But the cost for these smaller establishments even during Carnival was already greater than for the larger institutions. Moreover, “[t]he citizenry of Cologne” had already voiced an “almost unanimous condemnation of the whole establishment of the regulation. It is only urgent to recommend that all the innkeepers make a forceful front against the regulation with the support of the citizens, because it is unjust and means moreover still the impairment of personal freedom.”¹⁴¹ But such select claims about official regulation of Carnival in Cologne and its economic effects were met by the first decade of the twentieth century with a dramatic spike in concern for the holiday’s modern iterations in Cologne and their moral and social effects.

In 1905, therefore, in an historic admission of the problems facing Carnival, the Festival Committee of Cologne Carnival submitted a grant request to use public funds for the “elevation of masked activities on the Carnival days”—in other words to curtail the egregious liberties taken on open streets during the street Carnival. The city administration rejected the application, prompting a statement on the part of the two premier Carnival societies that “to us the street Carnival is good enough.” Nevertheless a concession that measures against Carnival were necessary was imbedded in the original request. In response to these developments, the *Stadtanzeiger*, pointed to the numerous issues at Carnival that now extended well beyond the privileged indulgences of the city elite. Many of these issues were raised above in the statement of the Cologne native about

¹⁴¹ “Vom Regulativ,” *Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, Nr. 40, 12 February 1894. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

how urbanization was changing Carnival cultures in Cologne. An influx of “foreigners” into the city each year enjoyed the liberties of Carnival without understanding the tradition. The introduction of an electric street car system in Cologne enabled new tourism and city transit, but made the overcrowded areas around the stops into “playgrounds of the masses,” especially along the Rose Monday parade route. The “enormous” climb in traffic from year to year meant narrow streets during Carnival were packed with “such a monstrous mass of people together” that Carnival’s *Ausgelassenheit* gave the pretense for “jostling and loutishness.” Moreover, the unrelenting street partying that never stopped for days meant that city sanitation was rendered impossible. In times of dry weather, Carnival revelry produced an “unbearable dust cloud,” while during wet weather “an ugly muddy rot” would result.¹⁴² Among the “excesses” lamented at Carnival one author of an 1906 article in the *Localanzeiger* detailed growing anxiety about the approaching Carnival over memories of the revelers who on the streets well into Ash Wednesday continued their unrelenting carousal in the most egregious irreverent ways.¹⁴³ Within new sprawling urban landscapes, Carnival became part of anxieties that predominated about disease, criminality, and the wellbeing of Germany’s populations.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² “Zur Hebung des Karnevals,” *Stadtanzeiger*, Nr. 131, 23 March 1905. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

¹⁴³ “Auswüchse im Kölner Karneval,” *Localanzeiger*, Nr. 26, 28 January 1906. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

¹⁴⁴ Among a substantial literature on new moral dangers in urbanizing cities and their leisure forms, see Lynn Abrams, *Worker’s Culture in Imperial Germany: Leisure and Recreation in the Rhineland and Westphalia* (New York: Routledge, 1992). Peter Fritzsche, *Reading Berlin 1900* (Cambridge, Mass., 1996). Jürgen Reulecke, *Geschichte der Urbanisierung in Deutschland* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1985). Ann Taylor Allen, “Feminism, Diseases, and the State in Germany, 1890-1918,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 4 (1993): 27-50. Warren G. Breckman, “Disciplining Consumption: The Debate about Luxury in Wilhelmine Germany, 1890-1914,” *Journal of Social History* 24 (1991): 237-54. John Fout, “Sexual Politics in Wilhelmine Germany: The

In a resolution on the “fight against the excesses of Carnival and the reaction of the Christian woman” the Catholic clergy, represented by vicar Dr. Weertz, and the Cologne Affiliated Society of the Catholic Women’s Associations (*Zweigverein Köln des katholischen Frauenbundes*), detailed their stance on what Carnival had become: “Cologne Carnival is degenerate and leads to debaucheries, which leaves every Christian woman and mother in trepidation on these days.” The excerpt was printed in the socialist press, which, while contesting the invocation of exclusively *Christian* women, generally aligned with the more conservative stance against Carnival on the part of the Catholic clergy and Catholic women in Cologne. These groups alongside officials and organizations throughout the history of Carnival’s regulation took up a form of paternalism toward groups perceived under threat. But even amidst the worst controversy surrounding the holiday before the war, though, an outright prohibition was extremely unpopular, and instead the Catholic clergy and women demanded that the “beautiful old hometown (*vaterstädtische*) festival recapture its original harmless character... [and its] true Cologne humor and Rhenish mirth.”¹⁴⁵

In response to the city’s rejection of the application for funds to clean up the street Carnival, the two great Carnival societies stated that people could keep away from the street Carnival if they didn’t like it—indeed that was what most of the local elite seemed to do, preferring exclusive events in closed off rooms. But an author reporting on this, as well as growing circles in Cologne, demanded some means to contest the spreading

Male Gender Crisis, Moral Purity, and Homophobia," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 2 (1992): 388-421; Gary D. Stark, "Pornography, Society, and the Law in Imperial Germany *European History* 14 (September 1981): 200-229.

¹⁴⁵ “Die ‘Reform’ des Karnevals,” *Rheinische Zeitung*, Nr. 33, 9 February 1909. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

problems of Carnival. What was somehow necessary was “to steer the masked activities to that place that brings certainty to the Carnival-happy public: the right [Carnival] life and activity without the unenjoyable accompaniment....”¹⁴⁶ Everyone seemed to have suggestions as to how to realize this. The author of the article suggested then the development of a new Carnival procession (*Korso*). One letter from the readership of the *Localanzeiger* likewise suggested “the creation of an impeccable official Carnival song.”¹⁴⁷ Another letter from the readership raised a passage from Goethe suggesting that the Carnival season was too long: “Laudable is a terrific pursuit when it is short and with sense.”¹⁴⁸ Still others cited the calls for more Carnival speeches, or *Büttenreden*—apparently Carnival speakers would give one speech in a society for a hefty sum of money, and then proceed to turn a substantial profit by delivering the same speech many more times throughout the Carnival days.¹⁴⁹ Much debate persisted over the question of these speeches and payment for them.¹⁵⁰ In this case, an author writing about the improvement of Cologne Carnival in the *Stadtanzeiger* forwarded what would become in large part the official and most successful approach to Carnival’s reform: to clean it up from the top down. The author proposed to combat the enterprising and commercial self-

¹⁴⁶ “Zur Hebung des Karnevals,” *Stadtanzeiger*, Nr. 131, 23 March 1905. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

¹⁴⁷ “Stimmen aus dem Leserkreis. Zur Reform des Karneval,” *Localanzeiger*, Nr. 306, 7 November 1906. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

¹⁴⁸ “Stimmen aus dem Leserkreis. Zum Karneval des 20. Jahrhunderts,” *Localanzeiger*, Nr. 349, 21 December 1906. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

¹⁴⁹ “Zur Verbesserung des Kölner Karneval,” *Stadtanzeiger*, Nr. 513, 8 November 1906. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

¹⁵⁰ See for instance also “Vom Kölner Karneval. Zur Reform des Karnevals,” *Stadtanzeiger*, Nr. 26, 18 January 1909. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969. “Vom Kölner Karneval. Zur Reform des Karnevals,” *Stadtanzeiger*, Nr. 27, 19 January 1909. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

interest as well as the immoral displays and activities at Carnival through the commitment of the official Carnival societies themselves to the “altruism” and “honor” believed to be central to Carnival’s heritage in Cologne. Officially the societies already shared commitment to such values, but the article suggested they publicly recommit themselves to values the critics often claimed they had lost. Through new speeches and songs from Carnival’s groups, they would “enhance the beauty of Carnival.” Through the right orientation of “taste” in Carnival humor, the holiday would become cleaned up as well as distanced from other dangers of modern cities and their immoral displays.

It’s incumbent on the true friends of Carnival (*Fasching*) alone to render the proof of whether we Cologners are still capable of celebrating Carnival as a true ideal folk festival, or whether the music hall direction (*Tingeltangelrichtung*), which unfortunately for some years endeavors to be made widespread in Carnival and which in some societies is almost inclined to be obligatory

will ultimately win out. Internal reform in Cologne was a messy piecemeal process. Great disagreement persisted over the source of the problems and how to contest them. In the words of poet and author of Carnival literature Emil Jülich writing in the *Stadtanzeiger*, “[t]hat a reform is necessary is uncontested ... [b]ut how it should be and how it is to begin, about that the last word is still not spoken.”¹⁵¹

Much of the reform of Carnival during the first decade of the twentieth century occurred through top-down measures on the part of Cologne’s associational leadership, a case in point found in the career and efforts of Josef Wingender. Reform work on the part of the German bourgeoisie and aristocracy during the Kaiserreich has frequently been seen as politically conservative projects that were effectively bulwarks to German modernization. Here instead the reform of Carnival from above secures the success by

¹⁵¹ “Vom Kölner Karneval. Zur Reform des Karnevals,” *Stadtanzeiger*, Nr. 26, 18 January 1909. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

and large of modern Carnival in Cologne.¹⁵² Wingender was president of the Great Cologne Carnival Society from 1897 to 1902 and from 1908 to 1921, while Carnival became embroiled in tensions and demands for reform. Originally a member of the Carnival Society of the Carnival Parliament (*Karnevalgesellschaft Carnivalistischer Reichstag*) in the late nineteenth century, he had the honor of playing Prince Carnival—the most important figure in annual Carnival festivities—in 1894. In this year his affiliation was listed as “mat factory and bulk storage for carpets and curtains” (*Mattenfabrik und Grosslager für Teppiche und Vorhänge*), which positioned him among the burgeoning influential and enterprising elite of the bourgeoisie at exactly the moment of Germany’s top-down rapid industrialization and urbanization initiatives. In 1908, this bourgeois factory owner came to preside over one of the two Carnival societies dominated by the city’s elite liberal and centrist members like himself. He became one of many influential Cologne Carnivalists to address criticism of the holiday and spearhead reform efforts. Much of these tensions surrounding Carnival came to a head at exactly the time when Wingender took over the society. The period of 1903 to 1911 was a particularly sharp period of Carnival criticism, as reform initiatives in those years attempted to quell the first demands in the twentieth century to ban the holiday altogether. Success in these efforts, despite some continued criticism, led to a burgeoning swell of Carnival enthusiasm and scale in events during the final years leading up to the First World War. Amidst this controversy, Wingender chose the path of attempted

¹⁵² Jean Quataert, *Staging Philanthropy: Patriotic Women and the National Imagination in Dynastic Germany, 1813-1916* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001). Larry Jones and James Retallack eds., *Between Reform, Reaction, and Resistance: Studies in the History of German Conservatism from 1789-1945* (Providence: Berg, 1993).

codification of wholesome Carnival customs, respectability through top-down reform: an attempt to increase the influence of Carnival institutions to save Carnival and its structures from its many critics and pressures.

During the second year with Wingender at its helm, in 1909, when Carnival issues were particularly controversial, the Great Cologne Carnival Society boasted 1,121 members in its session book, purportedly the largest Carnival society in that year. As president of the increasingly confident society, Wingender was chair of the Festival Committee when it was embroiled in turmoil over shared power. These tensions had been brewing for some time. Already in 1907 eight major Carnival societies, including the Great General Carnival Society, the Fool's Guild (*Narrenzunft*), and the two Carnival guard units (*Funkenkorps*), had "sat in the Bürgergesellschaft," one of prestigious Cologne halls where elite Carnival events took place, and voted that at least the Great General Carnival Society and the Fool's Guild "should be represented in the Festival Committee by their presidents with equal voting rights."¹⁵³ Such divisions went deeper than Carnival influence to city and national politics that trumped Rhenish heritage and Cologne pride. Although the demographic makeup of the elite Carnival societies in Cologne was similar, their political affiliations often were not. The histories of such societies and their forms of Carnival celebrations occurred in conversation with regional and national politics. As the purported reconstruction and renaissance of modern German Carnival occurred in the West and South of the confederated German territories against the backdrop of top-down Prussian campaigns of national unification, Carnival invited expressions of nationalist as well as anti-Prussian sentiment seen in public Carnival life

¹⁵³ "Städtische Nachrichten," *Kölnische Zeitung*, 2 February 1907. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

in Cologne. Already in the 1840s, the schism of the Great Carnival Society reflected these political tensions.¹⁵⁴ A similar division could be observed within the “military units” of Carnival’s world, the *Funkencorps* who dressed in military uniforms with toy weapons. The late-nineteenth-century emergence of the *Blaue Funken* as a stronghold of pro-Prussian nationalist sentiment at Carnival provided a corollary to the great anti-Prussian nature of the *Rote Funken* who maintained allegiance to Cologne as separate from Prussian rule. In this way, while the societies were often derived from similar class backgrounds, the elite ones persisted with the forwarding of bourgeois values of respectability and pranks over chaos, whereas other societies used such occasions for social and political persiflage.

Despite the demands for the democratization of power by other prominent Carnival organizations in Cologne, demands already made for some years, in 1907 the members of the two original societies at the same time met “on the stock market exchange floors of the Gürzenich.” They rejected the proposal, and instead set and announced the wagons and order of the 54-unit Rose Monday parade of that year.¹⁵⁵ However, Wingender as president of one of the societies attempted to ease these simmering tensions, ultimately between more or less elite factions of a now-dominant Carnival bourgeois associational culture, by ushering in concessions. In 1909 other major Carnival organizations finally joined the Festival Committee. These included the Great General Carnival Society, the Funken-Infanterie (*Rote Funken*), the Funken-Artillerie

¹⁵⁴ Klaus Schmidt, *Klaus Raveaux: Karnevalist und Pionier des demokratischen Aufbruchs in Deutschland* (Cologne: Greven, 2001); Jonathan Sperber, *Rhineland Radicals: The Democratic Movement and the Revolution of 1848* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991): 98.

¹⁵⁵ “Städtische Nachrichten,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, 2 February 1907. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

(*Blaue Funken*), and the Cologne Fool's Guild (*Narrenzunft*). He likewise attempted to respond to critiques of the holiday's problems by using his influence to cultivate traditional and wholesome Carnival displays. Wingender attempted to answer calls for moral and cultural reform by calling together "authors of note and reputation" to forward "specifically Cologne humor."¹⁵⁶ This wasn't the first time that Carnivalists had attempted to use prominent literary figures to shape the effects of Carnival in Cologne. On the contrary, Goethe himself called for the holiday to be set as a national folk holiday. In the early nineteenth century, many Carnivalists were optimistic that the holiday could be used as a force for romantic nationalist sentiment prior to more concrete nationalist initiatives during the second half of the century. In 1839, Carnival organizers called for prominent German as well as international literary figures including Victor Hugo among others to generate new cultural capital for the holiday's national ideological mission.¹⁵⁷ In 1910 though, decency, folksy character, and good Cologne humor would be promoted as the bulwark against vice, lewd songs, unseemly displays, and the use of Carnival to carry out "special inclinations" (*Sonderneigungen*).¹⁵⁸ This latter point wasn't entirely unmerited either. Sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld's first case studies on so-called transvestites, for instance, featured numerous recollections of the exhilaration of

¹⁵⁶ "Der Fasching, Köln, Februar," *Morgenblatt für gebildete Leser*, 4 March 1839, 215-216.

¹⁵⁷ For a brief discussion of these trends, see: Jeremy DeWaal, "The Reinvention of Tradition: Form, Meaning, and Local Identity in Modern Cologne Carnival," *Central European History* 46, no. 3 (Sept 2013): 495-532: 517; "Bilder vom Kölner Karneval," subheading "Einiges von der Reform," *Kölnische Zeitung*, 9 February 1910. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

¹⁵⁸ "Bilder vom Kölner Karneval," subheading "Einiges von der Reform," *Kölnische Zeitung*, 9 February 1910. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

ordinarily impermissible sex acts for men cross-dressing at Carnival each year.¹⁵⁹

Already in 1886 as well Richard von Krafft-Ebing detailed in *Psychopathia Sexualis* how cross-dressed men at Carnival would seduce men into oral sex at masquerade balls and other Carnival events.¹⁶⁰ It was arguably an incisive strategic maneuver then for Wingender to set the motto of public festivities that year as “the world upside down” (*die verkehrte Welt*).¹⁶¹ Carnival was to be a folksy and festive *inversion* of reality characterized by unifying quirky Cologne humor as opposed to vice, lewdness, excessiveness, and perversion. Through Wingender’s story one sees clearly the way that the bourgeois old guard of Carnival could achieve rank within Carnival associational life that reflected and reinforced the public influence of their careers in Cologne, and that at least before the war, elite Carnival officers attempted to quell discord about order and morality through select reform efforts that were successful at least in terms of their ability to actually maintain the continuity of Carnival and its central practices.

By 1907 strategies and responses to the crisis surrounding Carnival in Cologne were discussed publically in the press, as journalists printed articles on the reform of Carnival and Cologne’s readership sent letters that were published in the papers in turn. An article in the *Stadtanzeiger* complained that that year critics were again vocal about Carnival even though the Carnival societies held open meetings in which planning for the Carnival attempted to shuttle festive enthusiasm and participation toward the less

¹⁵⁹ Magnus Hirschfeld, *Die Transvestiten: ein Untersuchung über den erotischen Verkleidungstrieb mit umfangreichem casuistischen und historischen Material*, 1910.

¹⁶⁰ Richard von Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia sexualis: eine klinisch-forensische Studie* (Stuttgart: Enke, 1886).

¹⁶¹ “Der Kölner Rosenmontagszug 1909,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, Nr. 182, 19 February 1909. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

controversial events like the Carnival sessions and assemblies.¹⁶² Moreover, an article in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* wrote in shock over the indeed true rumors that a “decline” in Carnival activities was taking place in the Rhineland in response to the issues, even in “Cologne, the professional ‘traditional’ Carnival city”.¹⁶³ Planned strategies for future years included a ban on the wearing of face masks on the streets and public squares, bans that would be seen during the war years as well, in addition to an attempted restriction of Carnival celebration to just the three days between Carnival Sunday and Ash Wednesday. This would mean another restriction of women’s participation in public Carnival, as the Women’s Carnival would be put to an end. One suggestion of an “old Carnivalist” in the *Stadtanzeiger* suggested that one path to get the indecent songs off the streets would be through the children. “In order to really oust these from the streets it is absolutely necessary to proceed on the commencing path to teach the children in the schools the songs for a time before Carnival.”¹⁶⁴ Such pulling back was likewise seen in other cities like Düsseldorf,¹⁶⁵ as indeed internal reforms seemed to take place around the same time not just in the Rhineland but elsewhere, including in Munich.¹⁶⁶ The following year as well, an inter-confessional “Committee in the Interest of the Hometown” developed a list of five demands for the police to enforce. These “excesses” to be combatted included

¹⁶² “Gegen den Karneval,” *Stadtanzeiger*, Nr. 147, 31 March 1907. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

¹⁶³ “Der Rückgang des rheinischen Karnevals,” *Frankfurter Zeitung*, Nr. 37, 6 February 1907. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

¹⁶⁴ “Vom Kölner Karneval. Zur Reform des Karnevals,” *Stadtanzeiger*, Nr. 45, 29 January 1909. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

¹⁶⁵ “Der Rückgang des rheinischen Karnevals,” *Frankfurter Zeitung*, Nr. 37, 6 February 1907. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

¹⁶⁶ “Die Münchener Polizeidirektion über eine Reform des Faschings,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, Nr. 169, 13 February 1913. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

provisions on noise as well as the “singing of suggestive songs” or doing anything else that “injures decency and good morals.”¹⁶⁷ It also brought actions against women’s freedoms at Carnival: “that the Women’s Carnival be suppressed; by all accounts regulations should already be aimed in that direction.”

According to the author, “[e]very year increases the complaints about the excesses at the ‘hometown festival’ about the ugly images, which offends the eye of each decent citizen, the truculence not at all to talk of, and gradually it seems that the Cologne authorities do not have the power to intervene and that the citizenry must search for protection from a higher authority.”¹⁶⁸ What was meant here was an appeal to the Berlin authorities in an attempt to persuade the Imperial government to intervene on behalf of the concerned citizenry in Cologne. Another article later in 1911 absolutely censured the opinions of Berlin’s population about how to deal with Carnival’s excesses in Cologne, by insisting that “in Carnival, Cologne indeed remains the city to adjudicate on these excesses.” Indeed, the question of who exactly could combat Carnival’s problems loomed large, but Cologne Carnival’s regulation should happen in Cologne, amongst those who best understood it. According to an article in the *Localanzeiger* the following year, numerous efforts on the part of the press had been taken against the excesses of Carnival in recent years. “A success of this reform work on Carnival could indeed be registered, but a radical improvement has hitherto still not been achieved.”¹⁶⁹ In 1909 the socialist press complained that despite the cries for Carnival reform, that what resulted seemed to

¹⁶⁷ “Nochmals Auswüchse im Karneval,” *Localanzeiger*, Nr. 46, 16 February 1908. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

¹⁶⁸ “Nochmals Auswüchse im Karneval,” *Localanzeiger*, Nr. 46, 16 February 1908. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

¹⁶⁹ “Betrachtungen über das Karneval,” *Localanzeiger*, Nr. 24, 24 January 1909. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

be a growing “cult of personality” and kowtowing (*Bauchrutscherei*) before the uniform, by which was meant the growing close partnerships between the leadership of Cologne Carnival, like president Wingender, and military and city officials. Indeed this seemed a key to the success of the internal reform of Carnival in Cologne that resulted. In a “humorous speech” by Cologne’s mayor, conservative Max Wallraf, he referred to Wingender as “my dear old Josef.” What Carnival reform was turning out to be, according to the socialist press, was that “‘Patriotism’ becomes always more Carnival-like and the Carnival always more patriotic. Cheers to both!”¹⁷⁰

Amidst diverse calls for Carnival reform, the dominant response of the influential bourgeoisie, embodied in the prolific Carnival societies and their growing influence within the city’s political and associational life, was to lean into Cologne humor. Moreover, Carnival’s leadership together with close work with city officials would improve organization through on-going bureaucratization and increased urban transit planning, especially spearheaded from around 1911 onward. Thus the reform of Carnival culture would be grounded in concrete material reforms that ensured Carnival’s commercial success. The latter meant that in every city that celebrated the holiday, more and more special trains were planned each year, even as demand continued to outstrip annual supply. The former, the internal top-down reform of Carnival culture itself, involved for instance attempts by critical Carnival representatives like Wingender, to restrict problematic elements by enabling the proliferation and popularity of local, folksy, Cologne humor. One of Wingender’s initiatives in this approach was to gather Cologne’s most significant authors and artists so that they could help engineer Cologne’s regional

¹⁷⁰ “Die ‘Reform’ des Karnevals,” *Rheinische Zeitung*, Nr. 33, 9 February 1909. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

traditions, by producing cultural content for safe consumption during Carnival time.¹⁷¹

This was a tradition being intentionally re-invented. As has already been seen, the ideal of generating or circulating new and moral funny songs and poems for Carnival's folksy culture was a popular area of overlap in suggestions for reform. Carnival's leadership was engineering Carnival order through the shaping of its culture—meeting Carnival's freedoms with regulation.

The promotion of Carnival as folk humor over the danger of the holiday's excessive freedoms was spearheaded from inside by the Carnival clubs and associations. According to reports on the Cologne Rose Monday parade in 1911, this program of “internal reform” led by figures like Wingender entailed two demands: more humor and more art.¹⁷² Committees attempted to socialize foreign or vulnerable populations to Carnival values—to Cologne folksy traditions as opposed to iniquitous acts. Humor was of utmost importance “because it is and should be the soul of Carnival life.” The critique was a shared belief that modern Carnival now possessed a diminished role of “pranks and mummery” (*Scherz und Mummenschanz*) than previously. In older traditions, many argued, Carnival entailed more play in jokes and pranks, more comically grotesque displays than invitations to perversions and excessive indulgences. Humor seemed more harmless before. The promotion of art should restrict these perversions. Societies promoted “artistic feeling so that the unaesthetic is eliminated and also artistic effects are achieved with simple means.” One effect of such reform according to the account of this year printed in the *Kölnische Zeitung* was that political depictions—a longstanding

¹⁷¹ “Bilder vom Kölner Karneval,” subheading “Einiges von der Reform,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, 9 February 1910. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

¹⁷² “Der Kölner Rosenmontagszug,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, 25 February 1911. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

tradition of Carnivals—became a “sacrifice” of the “censor” in the words of reports of Rose Monday parade in 1911. Such efforts would be necessary so that the “provincials” as the newspaper derogatorily labeled them, would have the right impressions once they had flocked to Cologne to see the sites with great enthusiasm. It was perhaps a strategic move then that Wingender set the motto for the parade that year as “embodied citations” (*verkörperte Zitate*), a theme that would likely stimulate all parade units to depict works of high culture like art and literature as opposed to political issues or social critiques. Such an approach to Carnival took after the German tradition of *Bildung*, specifically of educating all classes in the great aspects of high art and culture, another way that Carnival could take part in regional nationalism and Germanic patriotism, as opposed to Carnival being a pillar of urban vice and excessive indulgence.

Many presses continued to detail only the slow and select progress of reform, and the socialist press described only the continuing entwinement of patriotism and Carnival between elite Carnivalists and city and military officials in Cologne.¹⁷³ One representative of a Carnival society even described Carnivalists who supported the suppression of dirty jokes as “feminine or unmasculine men.”¹⁷⁴ The socialist press in the face of calls to return to a time of “harmless Carnival” protested that such a time never existed. The support on the party of the Catholic clergy for “...the good or harmless Carnival (which there never was and never will be!” only marked alignment in the eyes

¹⁷³ “Die ‘Reform’ des Karnevals,” *Rheinische Zeitung*, Nr. 33, 9 February 1909. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969. See also “Die ‘Reform des Karnevals,’” *Rheinische Zeitung*, Nr. 16, 20 January 1910. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

¹⁷⁴ “Betrachtungen über den Karneval,” *Localanzeiger*, Nr. 24, 24 January 1909. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

of the socialists with the “centrist reactionaries.”¹⁷⁵ Nevertheless, although diverse calls for continued reform persisted, and would until the outbreak of the First World War, talk of success through internal reform of Carnival culture could be seen around 1911 in discussions in the different Cologne presses. In order to really assure the successful “preservation” of Carnival as a “main attraction” in the words of a journalist in the *Stadtanzeiger*, the Carnival leadership would combine these efforts with city and municipal reform through Carnivalists’ close work with city and municipal authorities. Internal reform would be successful *enough* by the last pre-war years through top-down initiatives about Carnival culture, infrastructure, and fiscal strategy.

In the face of the ever-expanding popularity of Carnival, not just in regions of traditional celebration but ones with only nascent Carnival celebrations, another major way planners prepared for the events was through the organization of transit systems. In nearly all coverage of Carnival festivities leading up to the war, journalists detailed the scheduling of supplementary public transit forms like special chartered trains in and out as well as around the cities, the supply of which was increased each year but still outstripped by demand. In 1914, despite initial bad weather in Cologne, no fewer than 38 special chartered trains had been scheduled to accommodate the influx of visitors from outside of Cologne. In 1914, the last public Carnival festivities in Cologne before the war, in addition to the increased transit schedules across Cologne, the city had to organize

¹⁷⁵ “‘Reform’ des Karnevals,” *Rheinische Zeitung*, Nr. 17, 21 January 1909. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

an *additional* 21 special chartered trains on Rose Monday alone to accommodate the spike in traffic.¹⁷⁶

Another element, already alluded to above, secured the success of Carnival celebrations: financial backing. When successful, Carnival was good for the economy. It stimulated a boom in tourism, supporting flourishing new transit systems in the cities of Germany's industrial belt. It employed broad populations that worked in hospitality, art, literature, and entertainment. Moreover, Carnival culture entailed a host of wares specific to its merriment, including confetti, confections, toys, streamers, feathers, and the like. The annual production of these unique wares employed industries and factories for months of production for turnover during Carnival time. Finally, competition over decorations and costuming proved steep, as significant press attention and prestige went to those most successful ones. City administrations approved large subsidies for Carnival in a bid to draw this economic stimulus and attention to their streets. In 1904 in the midst of controversy over Carnival the Düsseldorf city coffers issued "a proportion of the 23,000 marks required to pay for the 1904 celebrations," as that year in the city as in Aachen and Cologne the mayor issues generous support through investment.¹⁷⁷ In 1912 the Bonn City Council Assembly issued 800 Marks to the Great Bonn Carnival Society (*Grosse Bonner Karnevalgesellschaft*) alone.¹⁷⁸ In 1914 the city granted 1500 Marks for

¹⁷⁶ "Städtische Nachrichten," subheading "Karneval in Köln," *Kölnische Zeitung*, 3 February 1913. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin. "Städtische Nachrichten," subheading "Der Rosenmontagszug," *Kölnische Zeitung*, 24 February 1914. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

¹⁷⁷ Lynn Abrams, *Worker's Culture in Imperial Germany: Leisure and Recreation in the Rhineland and Westphalia* (New York: Routledge, 1992): 49.

¹⁷⁸ "Stadtverwaltung und Vergnügungssucht," *Rheinische Zeitung*, 26 February 1912. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

the Rose Monday parade in M. Gladbach.¹⁷⁹ In Mainz, a seasoned Carnival city that had just the year before celebrated its 75th-anniversary Carnival, struggled with a shortage of means in the organization of the parade in spite of a 3000-Mark subsidy from the city.¹⁸⁰ On the eve of war, Carnival had become a big business and no expense was spared. Financial investment ensured the commercial potential of events.

In a way, then, Carnivalists, through their closer work with city officials and military authorities, as well as their efforts to clean Carnival up, were making the holiday part of a broadly consumable urban experience. The possible success of one city's Carnival reform over another involved great stakes in the general competition for city greatness occurring between German cities at a time when cities emulated each other and vied for prominence. Such interest is reflected in the greater attention to foreign opinions of Cologne Carnival in the press.¹⁸¹ It was likewise seen in the critical remarks about other Carnival celebrations outside of Cologne. In the words of a reader from the *Stadtanzeiger* from 1909 about Cologne's bid through Carnival to make their "hometown the capital of the world," Carnival became a source of tremendous civic pride uniquely on offer in Cologne. "Only the Cologner has humor, only he alone can tell a good joke and also stand one, only in Cologne are there the prettiest young women and only on the

¹⁷⁹ "Vermischtes," subheading "Vom Karneval," *Kölnische Zeitung*, 24 February 1914. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

¹⁸⁰ "Vermischtes," subheading "Vom Karneval," *Kölnische Zeitung*, 24 February 1914. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

¹⁸¹ "Der Karneval und die auswärtige Presse," *Stadtanzeiger*, Nr. 71, 17 February 1910. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969. "Eine englische Stimme über den Karneval 1903," *Kölnisches Tageblatt*, Nr. 147, 4 March 1903. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969. "Eine Auslandstimme über den Kölner Karneval," *Stadtanzeiger*, Nr. 104, 7 March 1911. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

Rhine the best wine.”¹⁸² Carnival and Cologne’s leadership may have seen wholesome and harmless Carnival humor as the basis of the “folk festival” element of Carnival, but such ideas were also marketable visions of Carnival conjured by elites in a bid to render “tradition” commercially successful as well as moral. Elites in Cologne operationalized Carnival practices in their initiatives to promote the city and their own coffers—and civic pride that reinforced both. After all, wild excesses in the street Carnivals actually *were* in large part the rituals of the older folk festival, what tied the modern holiday to its ancient roots. Carnivalists rather attempted to inoculate Carnival by defining disorder as harmless humor and connecting it to a perceived ancient past, suppressing instead the subversive protest and excessive freedoms that arguably constituted those historical connections.¹⁸³

The message of Carnival as traditional folk custom centered around the upside-down and harmless pranks remained the stance of the national liberal pro-Carnival press seen in the *Kölnische Zeitung*. As claims of moral turpitude had largely quieted by 1912, the newspaper reiterated the ideas of Carnival’s top-down reform in their coverage of that year’s Rose Monday parade. The renowned Carnival was one in which “the order of things was reversed.”¹⁸⁴ In the last years leading up to the outbreak of World War I, the

¹⁸² “Vom Kölner Karneval. Zur Reform des Karnevals,” *Stadtanzeiger*, Nr. 32, 21 January 1909. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

¹⁸³ Historian of workers’ leisure culture Lynn Abrams argued similarly that “[s]uch was the perversion of carnival by the nineteenth century, however, that early traditions had been turn on their head. In the early modern period the carnival prince would have been the local fool, or at least a member of the lower classes, and he would have been paraded around the streets sitting back-to-front on a donkey symbolizing the world turned upside down. This was a far cry from the elaborate forms of transportation arranged by the bourgeois carnival prince in nineteenth century Düsseldorf which only served to reinforce the status quo.” Lynn Abrams, *Worker’s Culture in Imperial Germany: Leisure and Recreation in the Rhineland and Westphalia* (New York: Routledge, 1992): 49.

¹⁸⁴ “Der Rosenmontag,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, 20 February 1912. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

scale of and enthusiasm for Carnival increasingly grew, as Carnival enthusiasts celebrated the holiday as traditional regional identity and pride. During Carnival in Cologne, as the reports from 1912 proclaimed, the holiday was “the world-famous, the native, and unspoiled (*urwüchsig*), the folksy (*volkstümlich*)” during which “the entire population is in a mutual, loud joy-unifying festival.” This “madness and exuberance” that Cologne’s elites and bureaucrats worked to secure continued to be described in the coming years in harmless and optimistic terms for the most part. It remained the ongoing goal of such interests to free Carnival from “scum” and to bring in more humor.¹⁸⁵ Few other than religious moralists and socialists spoke of moral excesses, but rather of simply ongoing logistical challenges. By 1913, the press proclaimed the success of continued efforts in the shaping of Carnival to counteract “the decay of the oldest and most folk-like world-famous festival.” As has already been shown, one element of the internal reform dealt with form, and focused on humor and art. The other ongoing challenge dealt with scale. In order to “give the Rose Monday parade its old luster again,” certain logistical progress had been achieved as well.

Maintenance of the modern Carnival industry continued by the same means that had initially secured its position, namely through greater involvement of community leaders and officials who worked alongside the societies and associations that made up the Festival Community. Such efforts weren’t exclusive to Wingender and his society but extended to other important Carnival associations in Cologne. The *Localanzeiger* in 1909 referenced actions taken on the part of the Cologne Fool’s Guild (*Kölner Narrenzunft*) “in their sessions” to “stay away from everything that could somehow be offensive,”

¹⁸⁵ “Städtische Nachrichten,” subheading “Rosenmontag in Köln,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, 4 February 1913. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

measures that had purportedly been “followed thankfully by other societies.”¹⁸⁶ Such actions included both discouraging “dirty jokes” and “suggestiveness” during Carnival, and elevating Carnival content like songs and poems, purportedly to lean into the idea of Carnival as a “folk festival.” In 1913 for the first time in 90 years in Cologne, a citizens committee (*Bürgerausschuss*) “made up of the upper ring of public authorities” worked with the Festival Committee to shape and secure the success of the Rose Monday parade.¹⁸⁷ Other cities with large Carnival celebrations did the same. In Bonn in 1913, a citizens committee “chaired by Assistant Dr. Foller” ensured that the parade was successfully “prepared.”¹⁸⁸ This venture proved a success in Cologne, where Wingender again set a timely motto for the year: “the ascension again of the sovereignty of the Carnival heroes.”¹⁸⁹ The “heroes” were of course meant to refer to the figures of the Triumvirate, those “tyrants worshipped by all, before whose sovereignty the whole world bows, [and] who all acclaim as the bringers of joy.”¹⁹⁰ But everybody also knew that the figures coordinating this Carnival reconstruction and those people playing the Triumvirate roles were one and the same. During the final years before the outbreak of war, as the popularity and press coverage of Carnival spiked, this general trend of on-going bureaucratization and increased involvement of authorities continued to shape the

¹⁸⁶ “Betrachtungen über den Karneval,” *Localanzeiger*, Nr. 24, 24 January 1909. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

¹⁸⁷ “Städtische Nachrichten,” subheading “Rosenmontag in Köln,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, 4 February 1913. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

¹⁸⁸ “Nachrichten aus Westdeutschland,” subheading “Rosenmontagszüge,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, 4 February 1913. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

¹⁸⁹ “Städtische Nachrichten,” subheading “Rosenmontag in Köln,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, 4 February 1913. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

¹⁹⁰ “Der Rosenmontag,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, 20 February 1912. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

culture of Carnival, as did ongoing involvement of an influential bourgeoisie in these top-down initiatives that saved Carnival.

Together with new expansions in infrastructure, what resulted in Cologne, as indeed across Germany, were the largest and most commercially successful Carnivals in history. Internal reform efforts successfully offset the first large-scale moral challenges to Carnival in the twentieth century. This experience of Carnival controversy and resulting reform was also shared by other German cities with large Carnivals like Munich, which reformed its Carnivals at this time as well.¹⁹¹ Heavy tourist traffic to Carnival celebrations occurred in Cologne but also elsewhere, as Cologne reigned as the site of the largest celebration in the Kaiserreich at that time. But processes of Carnival codification, expansion, and reform had also occurred with success in many cities. In 1913, Carnival in Munster enjoyed “a great deal of visitors,” and in M. Gladbach, “numerous rich visitors from elsewhere were drawn to the city.”¹⁹² Likewise, in 1914 on the eve of the war, in Koblenz, “the influx of foreigners was very strong,” while Bonn too boasted “a great deal of visitors,” and in Munster, “special chartered trains from every direction brought in numerous foreigners.”¹⁹³ Again in M. Gladbach, its parade, a huge success in no small measure from its city subsidizing that year, derived “multitudes of spectators from the vicinity.”¹⁹⁴ Also in Krefeld—where “good humor wasn’t lacking”—

¹⁹¹ “Die Mühener Polizeidirektion über eine Reform des Faschings,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, Nr. 169, 13 February 1913. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

¹⁹² “Nachrichten aus Westdeutschland,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, 5 February 1913. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

¹⁹³ “Nachrichten aus Westdeutschland,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, 24 February 1914. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

¹⁹⁴ “Vermischtes,” subheading “Vom Karneval,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, 24 February 1914. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

Carnival brought in “a very strong influx of foreigners.”¹⁹⁵ Moreover, in Eupen, southwest of Cologne on the Belgian border, there was “massive tourism” to its parade, especially since the neighboring observant city of Aachen had been unable to organize a parade that year.¹⁹⁶ Mass tourism to Carnival celebrations on the eve of the war thrived, not just in the cities with the largest festivities like Cologne, Munich, Mainz, Düsseldorf, Bonn, and Frankfurt, but also in these smaller cities, often with more nascent Carnival traditions. By 1913 a language of the “transformation” (*Umgestaltung*) of Cologne Carnival could be seen to describe this new Carnival.¹⁹⁷

As all this suggests, on the eve of the war there was a newfound profusion of Carnival activities and popularity, supported by expanding transit systems that were still barely able to accommodate the demands of the holiday. Tensions were present that continued to cause concern and controversy, in particular over moral questions. As late as 1914, for instance, the Munich government put forth a ban on the *Schiebetanz*, a suggestive imported dance craze, as other city governments turned to sweeping bans on dancing, the wearing of masks, and of course Carnival itself, once the war broke out.¹⁹⁸ But the resounding result on the eve of the war was that Carnival was a success, that it was good for the city and its people, and was an excellent vehicle for bourgeois values within a new modern German city: art, humor, regional culture and identity, tradition,

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ “Nachrichten aus Westdeutschland,” “Vom Karneval,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, 25 February 1914. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

¹⁹⁷ “Zur Umgestaltung des Kölner Karnevals,” *Stadtanzeiger*, Nr. 496, 25 October 1913. Discussed also in “Die ‘Reform’ des Karnevals,” *Rheinische Zeitung*, Nr. 274, 22 November 1913. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

¹⁹⁸ Peter Schlemihl (pseudonym for Ludwig Thoma, “Der neue Münchner Karneval,” *Simplicissimus: Illustrierte Wochenschrift* 18. Jahrgang, Nr. 48, München, 23. Feb 1914, Faschingnummer. Munich: Verlag von Albert Langen and Th. Th. Heine: 802. German Literature Archive in Marbach.

respectability, and good mood. The final years before the war entailed the greatest press coverage of Carnival celebrations not just in Cologne but in other observant territories as well, a trend that disappeared completely with the onset of the war and the sudden erasure of the holiday from public life.

IV. Conclusion

In the history of festival culture, a common perception is that of a lost utopian experience of the festival itself—this utopian festival experience in the words of historian Mona Ozouf being one of “beauty without display, abundance without waste, and everybody under the eye of everyone else.”¹⁹⁹ This perception of a lost ideal in Carnival precipitated strongly around the turn of the twentieth century, after most of the previous century saw efforts to create a centralized codified Carnival holiday in Cologne. Display, waste, and exclusivity came to characterize modern Carnival in Cologne around the turn of the century. When exactly Carnival functioned as an ideal festival is unclear; perhaps it never did. But by the turn of the century in the midst of unprecedented growth and centralized organization of the holiday, Carnival was seen for the first but not the last time in Germany as symptomatic of moral bankruptcy, a force threatening to unleash unbridled disorder and chaos on society, no longer a reflection of folksy heritage but rather foreign subversive and immoral excess and indulgence. The holiday was capable of unleashing social and sexual dangers in unprecedented ways, even in this flourishing

¹⁹⁹ Mona Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988): 6-7.

period of Carnival expansion in Cologne. And yet, the power of the holiday as a force for regional nationalism and local prominence was unprecedented as well.

On the one hand, Carnival became a codified city and regional holiday as it became entwined with city and regional politics, with middle-class associational life, and with a growing commercialization of public culture. In other words, Carnival was a tremendously successful force for civic identity and civic pride. On the other hand, when combined with dramatic transformations in Cologne society, Carnival's rituals and basic structure underscored, exacerbated, and created manifold social and sexual dangers that threatened every strata of life. Carnival's reach—to national politics and class dynamics, family, gender, sex, and the home, religious confession and party affiliation, city infrastructure and municipal administration—brought tremendous stakes into the regulation of Carnival order. Thus the holiday emerged as a modern tool as well as a modern problem within Germany's new sprawling cities like Cologne.

On account of this capaciousness in Carnival, amidst severe controversy about the holiday during the first decade of the twentieth century, Carnival discourses expressed varied and divergent visions over what Carnival was and meant, something that would only increase as the century wore on. Even in this golden age of modern Carnival the holiday's meanings were constantly changing in the context of transformations in society, something that would continue through and after the war years. Still, while the war experience would usher in a total prohibition of the holiday, broad claims of "excess" and "immorality" in Carnival before the war pointed to the need to reform not prohibit. In general, this reform of Carnival content, city infrastructure, fiscal policy, and bilateral cooperation in the Carnival leadership edged out the scandal in securing Carnival's place

within the public life of the city and region. Criticism didn't go away, but the reform was successful enough. Through reform a new culture of control and active structuring of the holiday occurred, beginning in the Kaiserreich, out of social and moral concerns. What resulted on the eve of the war were the grandest and most successful Carnivals in history.

This chapter has demonstrated the dynamics of Carnival in Cologne and the holiday's development in Cologne as elsewhere in Germany. It revealed the attempt to carve out an official mainstream regulated holiday that was basically safe but still contained a tremendous potential for danger and concern, especially within the less regulated Carnival activities that made the guaranteed freedoms of the holiday an outlet for popular indulgences. Noticeably, only the socialists really spoke of wasted resources, as indeed these were years of unprecedented prosperity and increasing quality of life in German cities, a fact that likely buoyed Carnival in the face of diverse criticisms. The "excesses" of Carnival then often referred to the extravagant carousing and the immoral acts and displays at the holiday, in particular on the streets and in the masquerade balls. In this way, Carnival contained within it constant overlapping and contesting inventions and reinventions in modern Cologne, a vehicle simultaneously for civic identity as well as national city prominence, a space for play and release, social and sexual subversion and national and political persiflage, the site of moral iniquities and social injustice, an expression of harmless merriment during a break from work and life's tribulations. As will be shown in the next chapter, this capaciousness in Carnival's uses and significations only grew as that prosperity faded, as Carnival became swept up beyond city concerns into regional and national ones in unprecedented ways—as again regulation of Carnival's

tense balancing act between danger and potential, the containment of Carnival, became a requirement for society to succeed.

Chapter 2

A World Turned Upside Down

...how could one even dare to speak of Carnival in the bitterest of times. For sure, the war and Carnival have nothing in common... the world war has brought the sacred seriousness of the emergency times over our nation (*Volk*) and Fatherland. Of those who one year ago still cheered and rejoiced together in the wine-cheery, flower-scented frenzy of the Carnival (*Fasching*) passion, thousands stand today in East and West before the enemy in the struggle for Germany's existence and honor, for which much virtuous lifeblood has already flowed.²⁰⁰

The First World War precipitated a striking shift in the history of Carnival in Cologne. Such an account displays how already early into the war, in 1915, Carnival had taken on new meanings and connections to Cologne's citizens. This chapter takes up this dramatic shift, from the massive Carnival celebrations of 1914, the days of "wine-cheery flowery-scented frenzy," to the erasure of Carnival from public life in Cologne, to those days of "virtuous lifeblood" shed, taking up indeed what the war and Carnival had in common, and who dared to speak of it in these "emergency times of our *Volk* and Fatherland."

On the eve of World War I the holiday of Carnival had become emblematic of Cologne's traditions and essential to prewar civic identity, even as the holiday's potential for social and moral dangers had grown together with the holiday's commercial and civic success. Within Carnival culture in 1914 in Cologne, patriotism trumped unseemliness. The outbreak of World War I initiated this shift away from public Carnival celebrations

²⁰⁰ "Der Karneval und der Krieg. Ein Vorschlag," *Stadtanzeiger*, 4 February 1915. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

in Cologne though, as the politics of the holiday changed in light of the dire conditions that burdened the population for years. The war years brought dramatic transformations, as Cologne itself became a mirror image of Carnival itself—of a world turned upside down. In 1914 Carnival had been a beneficial display of regional identity and pride, and disapproval for the holiday frequently dealt with bourgeois vice and lasciviousness together with the dangers of large metropolises. But after 1914 as Carnival became part of wartime restrictions, it became unpatriotic to waste resources as Carnival communities had in the prewar years—and it certainly became unpatriotic to authorize public celebrations when soldiers were dying. As a result, these dire wartime conditions and hardships sharpened prewar criticisms and reconfigured Carnival’s meanings. They rendered official public Carnival in Cologne and in the Rhineland anathema and immoral in the eyes of Cologne’s officials and much of the populace alike. Overnight, the whole massive hubbub of Carnival disappeared from public space in Cologne, not to be seen again until 1927.

This chapter begins with a discussion of the war itself, placing restrictions on Carnival and leisure culture within the broader hardships and dislocations in Cologne ushered in by the war and its results. The restriction of Carnival became one requirement of success in the war, as wartime arguments stressed the critical importance of austerity and moral probity in the war effort. But many of the impositions of the war years also followed the festival structure of Carnival traditions. As a result of these impositions and the effects of the war itself, the meaning of Carnival shifted in these years that were also characterized in Cologne by Carnival brought to life. The chapter then turns from the changes ushered in by the war to new Carnival debates during wartime in Cologne.

Writing about Carnival points to shifting understandings of Carnival as well as new ideas about the holiday's messages and its role in wartime society. Whereas 1914 saw an outpouring of writing and press coverage about Carnival, few journalists and authors wrote of Carnival already by 1915, evidence of the extent to which Carnival became inappropriate in general in public space once the war began. This select writing published during the war years in Cologne though displayed the dramatic reworking of the uses and meanings of Carnival already early into the war and presaged the ongoing shifts in the politics and morality surrounding the holiday that extended into the Weimar years. Before the war local elites used Carnival to promote civic pride and city prosperity within a national Germany, but immediately from the outbreak of war the same audiences mobilized Carnival for success in the war effort, if not through the holiday's restriction that through the promotion of its connection to charitable acts and patriotism of a new sort.

I. World War I & Carnival Prohibition

On the eve of the First World War, Carnival in Cologne was the most expansive and expensive it had ever been. It would not return to this scale until the Third Reich. Populations in Cologne had notions of the war to come, but, as with other European audiences, they had little idea of the looming scale, protracted nature, extreme attrition, or lasting effects that would face the city and country at large in the coming years. National enthusiasm and confidence in German supremacy were visible, among other sites, in displays at the 1914 Cologne Carnival. The Rose Monday parade that year, the

largest in history, was the last of Cologne's most cherished Carnival institutions to occur for over a decade. The theme of the Rose Monday parade—"Cologne World Exhibition"—was highly emblematic of city confidence and broadly-shared hypernationalism at the time in Germany as across Europe.²⁰¹ It also gave a nod to the German Werkbund World Exhibition, a glass dome landmark in Cologne's Rheinpark, to open that year.²⁰² What Cologne residents did not fathom at the time, however, was that neither Carnival nor the architectural wonder of the exhibit, would become the hyped world fair that put Cologne on the global stage. The landmark did enjoy relative success while it was open, with the local *Stadt-Anzeiger* newspaper reporting a total number of visitors at around a million. It was one of the only cultural events permitted to run from spring and summer of that year.²⁰³ The landmark opened in May 1914 only to be abruptly shut down in August in response to the war. Nevertheless, Cologne became part of a world exhibition of another nature, first, in the experience of the war itself, and subsequently, in the crisis of the city and its region in the immediate period that followed.

²⁰¹ On the causes of the war, including growing militarism and hypernationalism in Germany, see Isabel Hull, *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005). Volker Berghahn, *Germany and the Approach of War in 1914* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973). Wilhelm Deist, *Militär, Staat und Gesellschaft: Studien zur preussisch-deutschen Militärgeschichte* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1991). Michael Geyer, "The Militarization of Europe, 1914-1915" in John Gillis ed., *The Militarization of the Western World* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1989). Nicholas Stargardt, *The German Idea of Militarism: Radical and Socialist Critics, 1866-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

²⁰² For an illustration of the float of the German Werkbund showcasing the theme in the parade that year, see: Peter Fuchs, Max Leo Schwering, Klaus Zöller, Walter Dick eds., *Kölner Karneval: zur Kulturgeschichte der Fastnacht* (Köln: Greven, 1972): 143.

²⁰³ Cited in: Volker Standt, *Köln im Ersten Weltkrieg: Veränderungen in der Stadt und des Lebens der Bürger 1914-1918* (Göttingen: Niedersachs Optimus Mostafa Verlag, 2014): 20.

Although Cologne residents celebrated an historic Carnival early in 1914—the largest Rose Monday parade ever—the outbreak of war a few months later triggered a full-scale mobilization process in Cologne that affected the entire city and its culture and institutions. Much scholarship has taken up the nature of the First World War and diverse elements of wartime life including the domestic and global imperial dimensions of war front and home front during these years. This chapter takes up wartime Cologne, the home front of a city, in order to explore shifts to everyday life that took place and Carnival’s yet unexplored place within them.²⁰⁴ Carnival would be part of the dislocations of the war, which created in Cologne a world turned upside down of a different sort. Some scholars have used similar language to describe the political, social, and economic milieu in Germany after the First World War, as citizens grappled with a world in which none prewar rules of society applied. This chapter takes up in greater detail the material aspects of rupture in wartime and post-war Cologne more so than the perception of a world turned upside down by Cologne’s citizens.²⁰⁵ Government authorities introduced increasing numbers of ordinances and prohibitions, published in the local newspapers and printed on the city’s poster columns. A city council assembly

²⁰⁴ On the nature of German home fronts and the resulting dislocations and hardships of the war, see among others Benjamin Ziemann, *War Experiences in Rural Germany, 1914-1923* (Oxford: Berg, 2007). Ute Daniel, *The War from Within: German Working-Class Women in the First World War* (Oxford: Berg, 1997). J. M. Winter and Jean-Louis Roberts, *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin, 1914-1919* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). Roger Chickering, *The Great War and Urban Life in Germany: Freiburg, 1914-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). Belinda Davis, *Home Fires Burning: Food, Politics, and Everyday Life in World War I Berlin* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000). Volker Standt, *Köln im Ersten Weltkrieg: Veränderungen in der Stadt und des Lebens der Bürger 1914-1918* (Göttingen: Niedersachs Optimus Mostafa Verlag, 2014).

²⁰⁵ Martin Geyer, *Verkehrte Welt: Revolution, Inflation und Moderne, München 1914-1924* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998).

(*Stadtverordnetenversammlung*) of elected officials, foremost among them the conservative nationalist mayor of Cologne Max Wallraf, met in early August 1914 to consolidate the city's war mobilization with a particular focus on how to control the economy. In the final years of the war, Wallraf would serve as the undersecretary of the Imperial Office of the Interior (*Staatssekretär im Reichsamtes des Innern*), the central office that oversaw the Carnival ban, and would likewise help found the far-right nationalist conservative German National Peoples Party (*Deutschnationale Volkspartei*) in 1918, one of the most fervent parties in opposition to leisure amusements like Carnival during the Weimar years.²⁰⁶ This city council assembly produced an immense spectrum of ordinances as well as suggestions, from restrictions on coffee and tea, the “trade in sugar” and price-setting, to prohibitions on the slaughtering of livestock and the ingredients that could be used in the production of paint.²⁰⁷ New restrictions governed processes of cotton textile spinning, the importation of eggs and transit of cheese, and the “deceptive labeling of foodstuff in addition to drink and tobacco (*Genußmittel*).”²⁰⁸ As a holiday built on feasting and miscellaneous superfluous wares, a new politics of Carnival through the war was perhaps inevitable. Not only did common Carnival practices in Cologne include bands of military units in diverse regalia meant to defend either a unified Prussian Germany or a free imperial Rhineland, both expressing fervent patriotism and duty to the nation, but celebrations included excess in all manner of consumer good that

²⁰⁶ For a brief biography of Wallraf and his family see Josef Klersch, *Die Költnische Fastnacht von ihren Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* (J. P. Bachem, 1961): 230.

²⁰⁷ Büro der Preisprüfungsstelle Cöln-Stadt, *Cölner Kriegs-Bürgerbuch/Hauptbuch (August 1914 bis August 1916): kriegswirtschaftliche Verordnungen der Reichs- und Staatsbehörden und der Stadt Cöln* (Köln : Kölner Verlags-Anstalt und Druckerei, 1916). Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek Köln.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

officials regulated during the war. These restrictions were coupled with calls for volunteers from the local population. To give a sense of the breadth and scale of these guidelines, by 1917, the book of ordinances for economic management of Cologne alone made up 1063 pages of policies.²⁰⁹ These policies only included those passed at the city, state, and national level, and did not even cover the prohibitions and ordinances introduced at more local levels throughout the war. These included prohibitions on leisure activities, which military officials invested with new authority introduced in and around Cologne and other German cities throughout the war years.

Cologne's war economy altered the structure of all sectors of everyday life by the summer of 1914, "a mobilization rips deep holes in all of existence," mayor Wallraf proclaimed, "in the public and the private [life] all at once."²¹⁰ The changes were drastic and swift. The outbreak of war initiated immediate restrictions on mail, telegraph messages, and telephone communications out of concern for the protection of German military strategy. Military authorities detained nationals of enemy nations living in Cologne. Authorities introduced a new tariff system for public transit in the city. The courts could barely function both due to understaffing as well as the absence of parties in their cases. Municipal officials hatched plans for the systematic maintenance of food, with stores of flour, lentils, rice, lard, and peas gathered in the provisions camp at Rheinauhafen for the survival of Cologne's populace. Much of the policies introduced at the onset and throughout the war, as across all of Germany, concerned the maintenance of

²⁰⁹ Büro der Preisprüfungsstelle Cöln-Stadt, *Cölner Kriegs-Bürgerbuch: kriegswirtschaftliche Verordnungen der Reichs- und Staatsbehörden und der Stadt Cöln* (Köln : Kölner Verlags-Anstalt und Druckerei, 1917). Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek Köln.

²¹⁰ Volker Berghahn, *Germany and the Approach of War in 1914* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973): 58.

the economy, including the maintenance and distribution of crucial material resources like food.²¹¹ Such restrictions extended to alcohol as well, which authorities strictly regulated in these years.

Traffic in alcohol in particular was strictly regulated in Cologne as throughout Germany, with prohibitions on sales introduced for Cologne for the first time by the Federal Assembly (*Bundesrat*) on August 4, 1914, and again restricted by the Imperial Chancellor (*Reichskanzler*) and the Central State Authorities (*Landeszentralbehörden*) on April 15, 1916.²¹² For the administrative district (*Regierungsbezirk*) of Cologne, an ordinance published in the papers dictated the conditions in which both one could serve as well as sell alcoholic spirits. The county commissioners, or police administration in the case of independent cities in the administrative district, announced the ordinance, which forbade the serving of brandy and spirits, also in a mixed form, on “Saturdays, Sundays, Mondays, moreover on the legal holidays and the next work days that follow, as well as the days on which conscription to military service occurs.”²¹³ Of the remaining days, the serving of liquor was only permitted between 11 AM and 8 PM and only for immediate

²¹¹ For a comprehensive review of the social, institutional, and demographic shifts that occurred in Cologne during the First World War, see: Volker Standt, *Köln im Ersten Weltkrieg: Veränderungen in der Stadt und des Lebens der Bürger 1914-1918* (Göttingen: Niedersachs Optimus Mostafa Verlag, 2014). For more of the maintenance of the war economy and the role of food in particular in shaping politics and war policies in Berlin during the war, see: Belinda Davis, *Home Fires Burning: Food, Politics, and Everyday Life in World War I Berlin* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

²¹² Büro der Preisprüfungsstelle Cöln-Stadt, *Cölner Kriegs-Bürgerbuch / Hauptbuch (August 1914 bis August 1916): kriegswirtschaftliche Verordnungen der Reichs- und Staatsbehörden und der Stadt Cöln* (Köln : Kölner Verlags-Anstalt und Druckerei, 1916).

²¹³ “Betreffend Ausschank und Verkauf von Brandwein und Spiritus,” *Honnefer Volkszeitung*, 8 September 1915. Reproduced in: Thomas Napp, eds., *Ein Dorf im Grossen Krieg: Quellen zur Geschichte Rheinbreitbachs während des Ersten Weltkriegs* (Rheinbreitbach: Heimatverein Rheinbreitbach, 2014).

drinking. The effect of the remaining permissible sales of spirits was rather to restrict drinking outside of a bar or tavern entirely, by only permitting sales of fine spirits (more than 3 Marks per liter), wholesale sales for eligible retail trade, denatured spirits, i.e. for cooking, and gifts to be sent to participants on the war front, albeit only under specific conditions as well. As Carnival included drinking in taverns and on open streets late into the night in costumes, moreover on the holiday days between Saturday and Tuesday, such prohibitions even without a formal Carnival ban effectively halted traditional Carnival displays in public. As one element of Cologne's economy at the time, Carnival fell under the controls of the war economy.

The dislocation of peoples from Cologne alone was immensely disruptive. The conscription of men into the military generated a general work shortage. Personnel shortages affected all branches of employment and industry. This led to an increase in women's work as well as even the recruitment of children for labor. The encouragement of residents into freelance or voluntary work landed youth from the age of 15 onto the floors of the stock exchange in the Gürzenich, the city-owned hall once the venue of the most elite bourgeois Carnival events where youth as well as women's entrance was often prohibited. High school (*Oberstufe*) students took over the city cleaning. The Cologne council representatives, encouraged residents to fill the immense number of vacant positions, although wages could often not be guaranteed. Such vacancies led to the closing of companies and schools. Staffing deficits even led the General Public Health Insurance Company (*Allgemeine Ortskrankenkasse*) to close its entire Cologne branch, which served the Cologne boroughs of Nippes, Ehrenfeld, Lindenthal, Sülz, Bayenthal,

and Deutz.²¹⁴ Staffing police forces remained a challenge despite no significant reduction in crime rates at the war's start. Skilled labor in industrial work of all kinds dwindled.

With the war came significant effects on and restrictions to cultural practices and city institutions as well. Museums, libraries, and city collections were closed. State theaters like the Volkstheater Millowitsch ceased to put on performances. Sporting events were called off. Numerous bathhouses were shut down. The German Werkbund exhibition ran from May 1914 as planned but was closed two months early due to the demands of war mobilization. Despite the thriving patriotism in the city and broad pro-military sentiment, even events honoring military glory were called off. The anniversary celebration of the Companionable Association of Former Fusiliers (*Stiftungsfest der Kameradschaftlichen Vereinigung ehemaligen Füsiliere*) as well as the General Assembly of the Club of Former Hohenzollern Fusiliers (*Generalversammlung des Vereins ehemaliger Hohenzollern-Füsiliere*) were cancelled, events so significant that extra advertisements were run in the *Stadt-Anzeiger zur Kölnischen Zeitung* to announce their cancellation.²¹⁵ In this climate of mobilizing total war on the home front in Cologne, the beloved Cologne Carnival was banned as well, for the first time since the Franco-Prussian War in 1871.

Some Cologne residents who had long seen the holiday as a patriotic hometown celebration lamented a year without Carnival. Language about Carnival before the outbreak of war included appeals to nationalism, patriotism, pride in and loyalty to the

²¹⁴ Volker Berghahn, *Germany and the Approach of War in 1914* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973): 57.

²¹⁵ *Stadt-Anzeiger zur Kölnischen Zeitung*, Morgen-Ausgabe, 2 August 1914, p. 1. *Stadt-Anzeiger zur Kölnischen Zeitung*, Abend-Ausgabe, 3 August 1914, p. 1. Cited in: Volker Berghahn, *Germany and the Approach of War in 1914* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973): 56.

fatherland. Such narratives often took Carnival up as the “nationalistic” (*vaterländische*) or “home-town” (*vaterstädische*) festival. The prewar civic pride and patriotism surrounding Carnival is seen for instance in the 1906 proud invocation of the “home town” (*Vaterstadt*) in an article in the *Kölnische Zeitung* on “After the Fantastic Days: A Native Cologner and Old Friend of Carnival Writes It Out.”²¹⁶ Likewise a similar description of Carnival’s much-loved character, as the “home-town festival” persisted in 1910, as seen in another article in the newspaper on “Images from Cologne Carnival.”²¹⁷ In 1911 the motto of the Cologne Carnival artillery fleet (*Funken-Artillerie*), one of the aforementioned military units in regalia, captured this patriotism, set as “Practice Eye and Hand for the Fatherland (*Vaterland*)”.²¹⁸ Early on in the war as well, one journalist, writing in the *Stadtanzeiger* in an article on “Carnival and the War. A Suggestion,” suggested even that war mobilization and the requirements of the war economy could even be made into the celebration of “the nationalistic (*vaterländische*) festival” itself.²¹⁹ But Carnival’s politics, even in its connection to civic pride and national patriotism changed during the war.

The prewar connection to local patriotic nationalism fell away in the context of a world of severe dislocations—a world that itself turned upside down. The world created by Carnival turned everyday life on its head, as the disenfranchised became empowered,

²¹⁶ “Nach den Tollen Tagen. Ein geborener Kölner und alter Karnevalsfreund schreibt aus,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, 28 February 1906. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

²¹⁷ “Bilder vom Kölner Karneval,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, 9 February 1910. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

²¹⁸ “Der Kölner Rosenmontagszug,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, 2 February 1911. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

²¹⁹ *Stadtanzeiger*, 4 February 1915, “Karneval und der Krieg. Ein Vorschlag.” Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

men were emasculated, everyday citizens paraded about in diverse military regalia to make up imperial infantry units, and uninvited strangers dined at family meals. During Carnival everyday life screeched to a halt, as the entire city broke out in celebration and festive cheer. However, already by the summer of 1914, the requirements of total war demanded just this of the population in Cologne, except as a grotesque world absent of bounty and exuberance. Men went off to war, where they perished in brutal conditions by the thousands, an unprecedented theater of human suffering and loss. Women, children, youth, and the elderly took over labor and industry in greater numbers. Private persons did not just dine with strangers, they were required to, as private residents received soldiers into their homes. Much of everyday existence transformed with astonishing swiftness in ways that simply broke down most of what had constituted normal life in Cologne. Social Democrats in Cologne, among the most vocal groups in opposition to the war, denounced war enthusiasm, in particular among the youth, as “Carnival war frenzy.”²²⁰

There was some precedence for cancelling Carnival’s public observance in such circumstances. The history of the Rose Monday parade, the most significant enactment of Carnival in Cologne, bore this out. The parade had been cancelled eight times since its first official modern codification in 1823 with the last occurrence on account of war, in 1871 due to the Franco-Prussian War. The war initiated a costuming ban, which meant the cancellation of Carnival that year. That precedent—a total war, with a one year break

²²⁰ Heinrich Reuther, *Die Stadt Köln im Weltkriege*, 10. Im amtlichen Auftrage der Kölner Stadtverwaltung, Köln 1931, Manuskript: Historisches Archiv der Stadt Köln QuD 500, 1-6. Cited in: the online portal, The Information System of Rhenish History (*Das Informationssystem zur rheinische Geschichte*) of the Regional Association of the Rhineland (*Landschaftsverband Rheinland*).

from Carnival, that was nevertheless swift and led to a decisive German victory—meant that people in Cologne could not fathom how drastic this war would be or how long they would be required to eschew Carnival.²²¹ Other instances of Carnival’s cancellation also provided parallels for 1915. The themes of seriousness, sobriety, and mourning—to maintain home front impressions appropriate to the “seriousness of the time”—became dominant reasons during and following the war for Carnival’s cancellation. Such an idea, of going without Carnival due to public mourning had already been seen during the 1861 national mourning (*Landestrauer*) in response to the death of the King of Prussia, Kaiser Friedrich Wilhelm IV. Two other rationales for the cancellation of the holiday had been seen earlier in Cologne’s history as well and would increasingly align with what the ban on Carnival looked like in the years following the war. In 1851, the holiday was restricted on account of Prussian censorship, and in 1830, the government banned the holiday due to content and behavior perceived as immoral and a danger to the state. Carnival’s cancellations in 1833 and 1868 by contrast resulted from wholly different circumstances, namely bureaucratic failure due to differences of opinion in the former, and inclement weather in the latter. The 1830 example mirrored earlier bans of Carnival activity out of concern for rioting or state security, and would become the dominant experience of Carnival prohibition during the Weimar years again. In 1795 in the context of Cologne’s occupation by French revolutionary troops, the Cologne city commander prohibited Carnival out of concern that the holiday could too easily enable actions against “public

²²¹ For an historical treatment of the argument that the Franco-Prussian War indeed constituted an instance of total war, see: Stig Förster and Jörg Nagle eds., *On the Road to Total War: the American Civil Wars and the German Wars of Unification, 1861-1871* (Washington, D.C.: German Historical Institute, 1997). See also Isabel Hull, *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005).

peace and order” on the part of counter-revolutionaries. In the words of the prohibition itself, “The evil-minded who assume all colors of the chameleon in order to seize all opportunities to disturb public peace and order, will surely not lack that which Carnival gives them to use in order to cause a disturbance from which the aristocratic mob knows always to draw a few advantages.”²²² There was some precedence then for banning Carnival in such times. And Carnival’s restriction became a means of controlling public order if the holiday wasn’t rather a mere effect of rotten luck. What became suspect about Carnival prohibition was not its existence in light of the First World War but rather its stubborn tenacity over time.

Authorities introduced prohibitions on major holidays and forms of amusement in Cologne and other German cities from the onset of the war. For instance, authorities in Munich cancelled *Oktoberfest* as well as *Fasching*, the Bavarian term for the region’s Carnival. Other towns and cities in the Rhineland and elsewhere experienced similar restrictions on Carnival. Some authorities in towns and cities introduced general bans on the wearing of masks on open streets and squares. Military authorities across the country, invested with new emergency powers during the war, passed diverse restrictions on leisure activities, including among others the selling of alcoholic spirits, the wearing of costumes, disguises, and masks, including of a Carnival nature, and strictly enforced closing hours. The nation-wide setting of closing hours out of concern for electricity went into force on 11 December of 1916, a federal commercial curfew that would be extended following the war out of concern for coal shortages. After the war the wartime closing

²²² “Karnevalsverbot 1795,” Der Brigade-General und Stadtkommandant an den Magistrat, 12 February (*Hornung*), 1795. Printed in: Hildegard Brog, *Was auch passiert, D'r Zoch kütt! die Geschichte des rheinischen Karnevals* (Frankfurt: Campus: 2000): 35.

hours would be extended through reference to coal shortages but as part of a larger national Reich legislation campaign for the “fight against gluttony and alcohol misuse.”²²³ A possible adaptation of festive holidays of carousal, like Carnival and *Oktoberfest*, seemed less possible, whereas other German holidays more closely tied to family festivals and private celebrations could be adjusted a bit around wartime values. Whereas some Carnival enthusiasts attempted to argue that a central element of Carnival traditions involved charitable aid, discussed in greater detail in the next section, charity during wartime fit more successfully with Christmas celebrations. In one 1915 article on Christmas activities in Cologne, the author described a scene of women in “mourning dress” (*Trauerkleid*) and young girls distributing Christmas gifts to those in need.²²⁴ Similarly, *Silvester* or New Years Eve followed the trends around party holidays, *Silvester* had been one crucial night of partying, shared not just throughout the Rhineland but indeed across Germany, that led into a new phase of the official Carnival season. Before the war, *Silvester* had been a holiday of commercial excess and carousing that at least in Berlin newspapers likened to the Rhineland Carnival traditions of excessive waste and superfluous wares—due to the similar role of confetti, paper streamers, costuming practices, paper hats, etc.²²⁵ It involved raucous celebration and the initiation of club sessions and organization assemblies that ensued the following day. Already on *Silvester*

²²³ Series R 43-I/1199 Akten betreffend Branntweinhandel u. Maßnahmen geg. Alkoholismus 28 October 1920 to 31 December 1923, Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde.

²²⁴ “Weihnachtsbescherung Kölner Kriegswaisen,” *Stadtanzeiger* 594, 23 December 1915. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969. For more on Christmas celebrations in Germany during the First World War, see Joe Perry, *Christmas in Germany: A Cultural History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

²²⁵ See a brief discussion of *Silvester* in Berlin and its perceived indebtedness to Rhineland Carnival culture in: Thomas Lindenberger, *Straßenpolitik: zur Sozialgeschichte der öffentlichen Ordnung in Berlin 1900 bis 1914* (Bonn: Dietz Nachf., 1995): 95.

in 1914 though, journalists spoke rather of “New Years Eve quiet” as they did in the *Kölnische Zeitung*.²²⁶ The Chief Constable (*Polizeipräsident*) had passed a New Years Eve prohibition and urged the populace toward conduct that conformed to the times. According to one newspaper report, most of the population met these expectations and even did not wish to celebrate the holiday. Nevertheless, “a series of public pubs had scheduled evening amusements of a nationalistic (*vaterländischer*) nature... at which it was very quiet and grave though.”²²⁷

Despite what seemed like general public inclination toward more serious public decorum already from the start of the war toward holidays in Cologne, a general ban of Carnival did come. Authorities came to see the need for prohibition in the winter of 1914-1915. The General of the VIII Army Corps of Koblenz Julius Riemann learned of planned Carnival events in the region, which led to a formal ban drafted and introduced that winter. Despite the clearest indication that there was no place for prewar Carnival celebrations in current times, many residents simply couldn’t wrestle the spirit of the holiday from themselves. According to Riemann, as reported in the *Honnefer Volkszeitung*, the “urgent expectation [of a formal ban] became marked” in light of “roughly planned events of a Carnival nature.”²²⁸ The holiday times, “when many places cherish the putting on of Carnival recitals, assemblies, and miscellaneous events,” was simply not appropriate given current events, and unfortunately, authorities would have to

²²⁶ “Silvester Ruhe,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, 31 December 1914. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

²²⁷ “Städtische Nachrichten” *Kölnische Zeitung*, 2 January 1915. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

²²⁸ “Kein Karneval 1915,” *Honnefer Volkszeitung*, 28 December 1914. Reproduced in: Thomas Napp, eds., *Ein Dorf im Grossen Krieg: Quellen zur Geschichte Rheinbreitbachs während des Ersten Weltkriegs* (Rheinbreitbach: Heimatverein Rheinbreitbach, 2014).

compel the population to maintain wartime propriety. In contrast to the censorious reasons for a prohibition that proliferated following the war, questions of public safety, economizing, or foreign policy were not the publically cited rationales for such a ban. Rather, according to Riemann, “if there aren’t alone any objections to these folksy and traditional merriments then they still don’t fit to the seriousness of the current time of war.” Instead the ban represented a new politics of Carnival, connected to national morality as public sobriety, serious decorum on the home front—especially in public space—to match the seriousness of affairs on the war front. The appointed General Commando implied, as many said already before the war, that the events could be troublesome in and of themselves. But that wasn’t the central concern in 1914.

It was a decree of the General Commando of the 8th Army Corps that restricted Carnival activities for Cologne and other surrounding towns and cities like Koblenz and Rheinbreitbach, a decree that was still in place for 1916 as well. In Cologne, effectively all behaviors common to modern Carnival had been prohibited. The decree, which extended across the war years, included bans on the “selling of brandy,” “assemblies and sessions” of the clubs and associations, the “wearing of costumes and disguises,” “songs of a Carnival or silly content,” as well as the “sale of confetti and paper streamers.”²²⁹ Such prohibitions helped maintain a strong appearance in the war effort, a sober home front to match the war front. Moreover, they also encouraged certain economic conditions by restricting frivolous spending. If citizens did not drink or celebrate Carnival, they were more likely to volunteer labor or contribute to the Cologne war collection

²²⁹ “Bekanntmachund bezüglich des Karnevals,” *Rhein-Wied-Zeitung*, 12 December 1915. Reproduced in: Thomas Napp, eds., *Ein Dorf im Grossen Krieg: Quellen zur Geschichte Rheinbreitbachs während des Ersten Weltkriegs* (Rheinbreitbach: Heimatverein Rheinbreitbach, 2014).

(*Kriegssammlung*) or the Red Cross. Carnival's restriction constituted a new mobilization in the war, not just for civic pride but patriotic restraint to promote success in the war.

Thus already by the first year of the war, Carnival's fate in Cologne had changed dramatically as its restriction became part of the broader hardships and dislocations ushered in by the war. Whereas before the war Carnival immorality was connected with bourgeois vice and lasciviousness above all else, during the war disapproval of Carnival became connected to the need to express patriotism in the form of support for those fighting at the front, both economically and emotionally. Through new regulations on for instance alcohol, masks, clothing textiles, foodstuffs, and even public merriment, the politics of these elements of the holiday shifted as a result of the war experience, as the politics of these Carnival wares shifted from symbols of civic prosperity to symbols of turning one's back on the nation. To embrace Carnival now in Germany's time of need constituted an implicit act of solipsism, if not outright hedonism. And critics would take these views during the war as well. Wartime ushered in a time in Cologne that very much mirrored rituals of the Carnival world, and the effects of those shifts played out in regulation of Carnival and the practices associated with it. As the war years wore on, with the demands on the citizenry only increasing, Cologne's world-turned-upside-down only increased in scale and severity, as society in Cologne became connected to even more serious elements and risks associated with Carnival like riots, revolution, and factions of foreign parading troops. The final years of the war and post-war period in Cologne brought then an era for Cologne that would in turn play out in diverse Carnival cultures and discourses about Carnival after the war. The remainder of this section then will take up the second half of the war and what resulted in these serious times in Cologne.

Be it due to religious fervor or the indeed serious wartime years, after the first and second years of the war in Cologne, nobody really spoke of Carnival. In 1915 a formal prohibition restricted persistent enthusiastic Carnivalists. But in subsequent years the population remained focused on the question of food and survival. Starving for the Kaiser was quickly becoming the requirement of home front patriotism, and Cologne was among the cities to protest. Food riots and looting broke out in the city as they did in other cities like Koblenz, Düsseldorf, Aachen, and Mainz. Strikes to protest the lack of food were first seen in Hamburg in early 1917, and by April similar strikes broke out in Berlin and across other large German cities as well. Whatever expectations residents of Cologne had had about the war, the possibility of civilian hunger and endless sacrifice, a revolution and a shameful loss in the war, had definitely not been it. By the fall of 1918 a final failed German offensive punctuated the emerging clarity that Germany would likely lose the war. Together with catastrophic losses of life and disruptions to civilian life at home in Cologne as well, unrest was widespread and talk of revolution popular. As civilian unrest spread, met with low morale on the war front as well, attention for leisure activities like Carnival was minimal. During the war Cologne society was like Carnival brought to life.²³⁰ Carnival celebrations were based on the idea of a world that had turned topsy-turvy. Men's and women's roles were reversed, the powerless took on the role of the privileged, and the standards of behavior were briefly set aside. During the later years of the war, the world continued to turn upside down for Cologne's citizens as few celebrated

²³⁰ Historian Martin Geyer similarly took up attitudes within the Munich neighborhood of Schwabing to argue a similar point, namely that through the war experience and its effects, the "exceptional state" created by Munich Carnival appeared as the "lasting state of normality." Martin Geyer, *Verkehrte Welt: Revolution, Inflation und Moderne, München 1914-1924* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998): 63.

the jolly Carnival days of “general madness” as they had in Cologne in the years before the war.²³¹ On the contrary, the carnival atmosphere of summer 1914 had succumbed to years of only “Ash Wednesdays.”²³²

The war experience continued to usher in disruptions in the labor force that took on many of the historical themes of Carnival—empowered women and emasculated men, a bounty and absence of food, drink, and other material goods, the humiliation of the monarchy and rise to power of common people. Riots, violent protest, and the threat of revolution broke out. These transformations caused by the war continued to worsen social tension during and after the war and raised the question of whether Carnival could be appropriate in such serious times—as both the risks and rituals of inversion in Cologne Carnival practices became elements of a new everyday life in the city. This rife danger played out in contestations over employment and wages in Cologne. Although the onset of the war stimulated a rise in unemployment as Cologne’s men vacated their posts, the city was able to alleviate this condition by employing women in heavy industry, children in factories, and pensioners who were brought out of retirement. Nevertheless, wages continued to be a problem, as women struggled to care for their families in the harsh combination of a lost breadwinner with continuing wartime price inflation. The war only seemed to usher in higher and higher prices for food. This struggle led female laborers to strike, as the female streetcar workforce did, alongside numerous other reported labor strikes in Cologne during the war. At the war’s end, the male workforce took back their

²³¹ See for instance “Etwas über den Karneval,” *Rheinischer Merkur*, Nr. 41, 20 February 1897. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

²³² Elisabeth Domansky, “Der Erste Weltkrieg,” in Lutz Niethammer eds., *Bürgerliche Gesellschaft in Deutschland* (Frankfurt: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1990): 287, 290. Cited in: Peter Fritzsche, *Germans into Nazis* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998): 34.

prewar work, and in some cases as with the city train workers, demanded the suppression of women's work in turn. Some audiences in Cologne as across Germany after the war were eager to reestablish an imagined return to normal life, but the years of the new democracy that the revolution would create, the decade and a half of the Weimar Republic, would unfortunately not deliver it.

Resource shortages were a critical problem during the war. One precondition of Carnival was a bounty in resources that were used up ahead of the fasting ushered in by Lent. Cologne transitioned from a private market for foodstuff to a controlled economy during the war. But from year to year the problem of food supply and rationing only grew worse. Even the traditions of certain cakes and baked goods during Carnival became impossible due to the especially strict restrictions in Cologne on flour and "unity bread," as the mere existence of commodities like almond flour that went into Carnival baking took on an unprecedented political meaning. One article on Cologne during Carnival time in 1915 discussed how the city administration in Cologne had the strictest restrictions on flour, with its *Einheitsbrot* stipulations restricted to only dark rye bread and army bread. As a result the baking of "Muzen-Mandeln" as a traditional Carnival baked good for the family festivals of Carnival was prohibited.²³³ The city officials themselves were powerless to lighten the dire situation as imperial posts that orchestrated the distribution of food for the entire German empire had their main offices in Berlin. Deputy major of Cologne Konrad Adenauer, as well as his successor Bruno Matzerath, even attempted to find loopholes in the national system of ordinances and rationing distribution to bring some meager improvement to the suffering of Cologne's people. Adenauer would

²³³ "Kölner Fastenzeit," *Frankfurter Zeitung*, Nr. 39, 8 February 1915. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

become the mayor of Cologne following the war, and eventually the first Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany following World War II. Beyond food supply issues, there was also a coal shortage during the war, which led to proscribed temperatures for homes and establishments. The issue of coal supply continued following the war and formed an official basis for future curfew and closing-hour laws that restricted Carnival and other forms of leisure. The initial curfew put in place to restrict coal, electricity, and other resources (although in Cologne, electricity shortages never proved to be an issue) was established on 11 December 1916. Following the war, as with Carnival prohibitions, such restrictions were extended for many years.²³⁴ But the absence of general prosperity and bounty in materials meant that Carnival acts would be interpreted in fundamentally different ways due to acute social need, across the lines of the haves and have-nots.

Another notable effect of the war in Cologne that influenced perspectives toward Carnival during and following the war dealt with the question of secularism and official religious engagement. Before the onset of the war, church patrons of Protestant as well as Catholic denomination reported decreases in church attendance, which corresponded to the largest and most expansive Carnival celebrations in Cologne's history. To many, Carnival may have been an expression of cultural Catholicism much more than religious piety before the war. Indeed Carnival was such a hubbub in Cologne before the war that Catholic groups themselves organized events for Catholics that met rebuke as religious leaders in turn hosted special services following the Carnival days for the Cologne

²³⁴ Letter, from Reichskommissar für die Kohlenverteilung in R.K.A. 1252/1. 20. Z/H. an den Herrn Reichskanzler, aus dem Protokoll der Sitzung des Reichsministerium vom 30. Dezember 1920, on „Polizeistunde am 31. Dezember 1919.“ Series R43-I/2688, Reichskanzlei Akten betreffend Polizeiangelegenheiten Allgemeines 1919-1933, Fiche 1, Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde.

communities for the absolution of their sins.²³⁵ Unsurprisingly, with the onset of the war and disappearance of Carnival by contrast, this condition rapidly changed, as the demand for spiritual guidance was met with a stricter adherence to religious doctrine as well as a sharp increase in religious services. These well-attended offerings included war prayer meetings, war prayer services, supplementary masses and worship services, pastoral visits, supplementary offerings of confession, send-off celebrations, solemn masses, daily hours of prayers, and divine services for the departed.²³⁶ In opposition to times after the war, when both Christian churches of Germany embraced notions of pacifism, during the war, the churches as well as Cologne's Jewish communities broadly supported the war effort, nationalism, and the Kaiser, and in their aid to the ailing community actively supported a German success in the war. As religious authorities had been among the most critical of Carnival before the war, the increase in religious activity during and following the war entailed greater exposure to previously dismissed perspectives toward the purported sinful excesses associated with the holiday. Greater penance and concern for one's mortal soul no doubt cast a shadow over some activities that took place during it as well.

In addition to these transformations in Cologne society that would change the relationships to themes of Carnival, the coup de grâce was surely a revolution, what historically Carnival playacted and threatened but rarely realized. By the fall of 1918 German unity in the war effort was crumbling. In an act that incited rancor among the Rhenish populace, the government of the German Reich sent a ceasefire offer to US

²³⁵ Heinrich Weertz, "Ohne Karneval," *Kölnische Volkszeitung*, Nr. 190, 5 March 1916. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

²³⁶ Volker Standt, *Köln im Ersten Weltkrieg: Veränderungen in der Stadt und des Lebens der Bürger 1914-1918* (Göttingen: Niedersachs Optimus Mostafa Verlag, 2014): 692.

president Woodrow Wilson.²³⁷ On October 25, 1918 in the session of the Reichstag, representatives publically demanded the abdication of the monarch Kaiser Wilhelm II. In three mass rallies at the Gürzenich in Cologne on 23 October 1918—in the halls where Cologne’s bourgeois elite once exclusively celebrated their Carnival dominion—the resounding perspective of workers and the representatives of the Majority Social Democratic Party (*Mehrheitssozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*, MSDP) was that revolution was necessary for the improvement of the conditions of life for German people. It would not be a Bolshevik revolution, but a democratic one. Following the perspective of editor and municipal councilor (*Stadtverordnete*) of the MSDP in Cologne Wilhelm Sollmann, the necessary tasks included the struggle against pessimism, the dispersal of inaction and cowardice as well as the imparting of belief in a better future to come.²³⁸ Four days later in an assembly of the Center (*Zentrum*) party in Cologne, the party unfurled a plan for the realignment of the party along more democratic lines, but maintained support for the German monarchy. Amidst hunger, the constant pressing back of German forces in failed offensives on the front, and the devastating effects of the Spanish Influenza, parliamentary governance was introduced on 28 October 1918 through a change to the constitution. As was the experience in many locales in Germany as elsewhere, the greatest number of deaths by a single cause during a the war year in Cologne actually resulted from infectious illness, as 2567 people of Cologne died in

²³⁷ Volker Standt, *Köln im Ersten Weltkrieg: Veränderungen in der Stadt und des Lebens der Bürger 1914-1918* (Göttingen: Niedersachs Optimus Mostafa Verlag, 2014): 612.

²³⁸ Volker Standt, *Köln im Ersten Weltkrieg: Veränderungen in der Stadt und des Lebens der Bürger 1914-1918* (Göttingen: Niedersachs Optimus Mostafa Verlag, 2014): 613-614.

1918, over 50% more than died of any other cause in any other year.²³⁹ In mid-December Friedrich Ebert, first president of the Weimar Republic, declared New Years Day, the historical day of annual Carnival sessions, a day of carnival to celebrate the revolution.²⁴⁰ That day in Berlin, of the “wholesale carnival with masks, and public processions” and “concerts in the open” as it was described in the British press, also marked the founding of the Communist Party of Germany (*Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands*, KPD). Despite ongoing social unrest and political fracturing that would continue into the coming years, all parties remained opposed to the idea of a so-called “peace of shame” (*Schmachfrieden*), that the terms of establishing peace would put blame and disgrace on the German people.

The fallout of the Versailles Treaty added to the severe wartime restrictions for Cologne and the greater Rhineland region. The terms of the Versailles Treaty signed in November 1918 were humiliating, excessive by most accounts. The so-called war guilt clause cast a long shadow over the nation in the years to come. It required Germany to accept full responsibility for the war and its cost. Germany had to pay for the war, which resulted in an impossible reparations bill of 132 billion Marks. This bill threw Cologne – and so many other cities – into ongoing economic crisis.²⁴¹ Additionally, the country was compelled to give up its empire, including the colonies of Togo and Cameroon, which

²³⁹ Volker Standt, *Köln im Ersten Weltkrieg: Veränderungen in der Stadt und des Lebens der Bürger 1914-1918* (Göttingen: Niedersachs Optimus Mostafa Verlag, 2014): 747.

²⁴⁰ “New Year’s Day Carnival in Berlin,” *The Newcastle Daily Journal*, 13 December 1918, 4. The British Newspaper Archive.

²⁴¹ This amount translates to approximately \$442 billion in 2018 US Dollars.

were transferred to France.²⁴² Eager to demean the German nation further, the French in turn used black colonial soldiers from these colonies when it occupied the Rhineland following the treaty. The official reason for Allied occupation of Cologne and the Rhineland was to ensure the effective organization of reparations payments in some of the most important economic and industrial regions of Germany. British military forces occupied Cologne followed post-Armistice and Treaty by a more settled occupation community. Cologne as indeed the whole occupied Rhineland emerged as a result as the most politicized and contested region in Germany, a symbol of ongoing international negotiation of the legitimacy of the *Schmachfrieden* set by Allied forces. It took on crucial importance to both international audiences as well as local and federal authorities in Cologne and Germany.²⁴³

²⁴² On the experience and processing of decolonization in Germany see Jared Poley, *Decolonization in Germany: Weimar Narratives of Colonial Loss and Foreign Occupation* (Oxford: P. Lang, 2005).

²⁴³ A rich body of scholarship has taken up the question of the results and legacies of World War I in Germany, in particular surrounding questions of memory and mourning, and the effects of the Versailles Treaty. Some of the most important include Modris Eksteins, *Rites of Spring: the Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1989). Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker, *14-18, Understanding the Great War* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2002). Deborah Cohen, *The War Come Home: Disabled Veterans in Britain and Germany, 1914-1939* (Berkeley: University of Berkeley Press, 2001). George Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990). J.M. Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: the Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). Charles Maier, *Recasting Bourgeois Europe: Stabilization in France, Germany, and Italy in the Decade After World War I* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975). Benjamin Ziemann, *Perspektiven der historischen Friedensforschung* (Essen: Klartext, 2002). Gerd Krumeich, *Versailles 1919: Ziele – Wirkung – Wahrnehmung* (Essen: Klartext, 2001). Gerald Feldman, *The Great Disorder: Politics, Economics, and Society in the German Inflation, 1914-1924* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997). Martin Geyer, *Verkehrte Welt: Revolution, Inflation und Moderne, München 1914-1924* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998).

As this section demonstrated, the war and its fallout ushered in severe dislocations for Cologne's citizens that created a brutal world turned upside down of a different nature. Carnival was a part of these new restrictions brought in by the war, including on leisure, public assembly, opening hours, and food and drink. In the context of indeed serious times in Cologne, Carnival debates shifted drastically in Cologne with a sudden turn against the holiday's place in public life in Cologne, as reform gave way to prohibition. In the place of Carnival's prewar capacity for regional pride and identity was the demand for Carnival's restriction as a necessary patriotic act. Unsurprisingly, the unique conditions of the war leveraged space for new understandings and experiences of the holiday during wartime that altered German and Rhenish approaches to the holiday from the outbreak of the war onward. Yet, in the context of Carnival's official formal absence in the heart of Carnival enthusiasm, broad audiences expressed new discourses of Carnival that informed new Carnival cultures during and following the war. These new wartime Carnival debates, the subject of the next section, demonstrates then this shift in the politics of Carnival through the ways taken up in this section that so much of everyday life in the city changed as a result of the war.

II. Carnival Discourses in Wartime Cologne

During the war years many of Carnival's prewar outspoken critics again took up the topic of Carnival and its place within the hardships of wartime life in Cologne. Carnival's prohibition combined with the indeed serious times at hand led to a substantial decrease in public discourse about Carnival in the newspapers that once discussed the

holiday at length. But in the select articles about Carnival that were published in the outlets that used to regularly discuss Carnival issues—the *Kölnische Zeitung*, *Rheinische Zeitung*, *Stadtanzeiger*, *Kölnische Volkszeitung*, and *Frankfurter Zeitung*—discourses about Carnival either took up wholesale censuring of the holiday, especially on the part of the prewar Carnival critics, or presented creative reworkings of Carnival ideas in order to accommodate new needs and the state of Cologne society. In this way select continuities persisted into the war years within Carnival debates at the same time that the war ushered in intensifications within as well as dramatic ruptures from prewar meanings of the holiday. This section demonstrates through these select wartime articles on Carnival how understandings of Carnival shifted, even before the worst years of hardship by around 1917.

Religious officials had been among the sharpest critics of prewar Carnival, and, alongside socialist critics, began to vocally support the permanent end to the holiday in public life. When World War I ushered in a total prohibition on the holiday out of concern for austerity and moral probity, these same demographics homed in on the opportunity to perhaps permanently wipe the scourge of Carnival from public life. The two demographics were indeed the most vehement critics of Carnival, together with the Protestant clergy, and immediately after the onset of the war became vocal about the possibility of continuing to not have Carnival at all. A Protestant parish priest, Heinrich Weertz in Ründeroth, a nearby village just east of Cologne, favored this idea, describing how annual reform attempts before the war had never been effective and that prohibition was necessary for the preservation of morality and the war economy. The benefits did not just end at saving money either. By 1916, with two years without Carnival passed, the

absence of the nuisance meant “much money saved [and] much fewer damages to body and soul.”²⁴⁴ The socialist press expressed similar views about the impossibility of Carnival as an immoral and inappropriate practice. “...[I]n the year 1916 no person of wit and feeling thinks about Carnival tomfoolery,” declared an author in the socialist *Rheinische Zeitung*.²⁴⁵ On the “Reform of Carnival,” the first time the press didn’t title a piece about Carnival’s “reform” in scare quotes, the author contended that “all respectable (*anständig*) people” will require years to process the trauma of the war experience. In such times, “all who are called to a position of leadership of the nation (*Volk*) [after the war] should help free us forever from the desolate public rampage of Carnival.” Interestingly enough, barring the demand for summer holidays, this perspective anticipated post-war arguments that would sweep the nation. This working-class critic was one among a consolidating body of diverse groups who became opposed to the existence of Carnival entirely on moral and economic grounds. So why not a future without Carnival as well? Indeed the question of Carnival’s scale—that it was excessive in length, content, and most of all financial expense—was a popular point of contention in most forthcoming discussions about Carnival’s future in Cologne. Carnival’s excessive financial expenditures before the war were the frequent targets of the socialist press, but economic crisis and broad social plight that only worsened as the war went on informed new understandings of Carnival. During the war then, most who spoke of Carnival, either positively or negatively, spoke of money and morality.

²⁴⁴ Heinrich Weertz, “Ohne Karneval,” *Kölnische Volkszeitung*, Nr. 190, 5 March 1916. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

²⁴⁵ “Zur Reform des Karnevals,” *Rheinische Volkszeitung*, 14 Februar 1915, Sonderausgabe. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

Religious authorities and the socialist press promoted a permanent end to Carnival then. The socialist press celebrated its wartime absence and used the war and its requirements to reiterate opposition to the holiday. No doubt outspoken prewar critics of Carnival like the socialist leadership and the Protestant clergy seized on the war as an opportune moment to push their anti-Carnival agenda. One article in the socialist *Rheinische Zeitung* in 1915 mocked the decades of Carnival's purported significance in these times of its absence. The author detailed the ease of the absence of "the whole Carnival spook from consciousness as if wiped away."²⁴⁶ It was so "peculiar" how little the population seemed to miss the holiday or commiserate over its absence. A chunk of the funds that ordinarily went to Carnival orchestration instead went to "the best ones of the city war fund and of the Red Cross" according to a publicized "welcome invitation"—probably the vehement encouragement of the August 1914 assembly by civil officials to volunteer money and labor to the Cologne war effort. Indeed residents in Cologne had been required to give up Carnival and encouraged to donate generously to the war cause, which they had met in stride. If this process had run so smoothly, as the author claimed it did, why return to Carnival at all? According to this socialist critic, although Carnival amounted to a few days off for laborers during Carnival week, a much better use of the funds would involve guaranteed summer holidays for workers. After all, the holiday included, as it always had, a certain measure of financial misspending and needless theatrics by the well-off while others remained in need. And now, during wartime, it was far easier to argue that it was unpatriotic to waste resources and to authorize public celebrations while soldiers were dying. Moreover, whereas before the

²⁴⁶ "Zur Reform des Karnevals," *Rheinische Volkszeitung*, 14 Februar 1915, Sonderausgabe. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

war socialist journalists suggested that the “prosperity” and civic pride in Cologne Carnival were convenient tools of the middle-class and city elites to make money while denying aid to the laboring classes who were suffering, during the war it was harder to write off the suffering populations now derived through conscription from all of Cologne’s social backgrounds.

Similar to Weertz and others too, the author also made a moral critique about Cologne’s remaining friends of Carnival. The author invoked the idea that anybody who could think of Carnival during these bitter war days possessed some failing, comparing Carnival enthusiasts to those “irredeemable booze hounds” among the population who remained addicted to the bottle despite the wartime schnapps prohibition. In wartime, the imbibing of alcohol took on new politics as alcohol became connected to both escapism and illicit action. During the war years, due to the strict regulations discussed above in the previous section on alcohol—so important to prewar celebrations of Carnival in Cologne—enjoyment of alcohol was evidence of an unpatriotic mentality or worse, incapacity. The Protestant clergy had been among those prewar critics to take aim at Carnival due to the role played by alcohol.²⁴⁷ During the war then, these new politics surrounding alcohol enabled the clergy as well as socialists to push for what they couldn’t before the war: wholesale and permanent prohibition of the Carnival holiday. Arguments about alcohol being a problem or immoral or selfish found greater resonance in society, connected in this way to the fate of Cologne and the nation as a whole. Thus by 1916

²⁴⁷ “Von leitender Stelle des Kölner Karnevals,” *Stadtanzeiger*, Nr. 460, 7 October 1904. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969. “Protest der Leiter des Kölner Karnevals gegen die Angriffe des Pfarrer Hötzel,” *Kölnisches Tageblatt*, Nr 728, 7 October 1904. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

Carnival activity became connected for the first time to not just not being sensible but rather outright insanity and mental incapacity.

The idea that some Carnival enthusiasts lacked moral judgment or were possessed of some mental or moral defect indeed became more popular. Some authorities and reformers had expressed the idea in a form already in the prewar years. These critics believed that the most vulnerable groups like women, children, and the working-class lacked the ability to confront activities like Carnival in the metropolises and were imperiled as a result by this lack of judgment. But the idea found broader resonance from the war years on, as Carnival in time of war seemed offensive and problematic to a much broader audience. Several authors made reference to Carnival supporters who in any conditions would insist on an embrace of the holiday's amusements. The moderate pro-Carnival author, whose text opened this chapter, encouraged a restrained observance of Carnival through charity and a sober concert that would nevertheless completely avoid any incitement to typical Carnival mood. This was because such mood was now inappropriate—described as sometime that could be “seduce[d]” out of one—but also because of this subclass of now “well famous... weak souls and thoughtless enthusiasts who are unable to conquer themselves despite the difficult times.”²⁴⁸ Moreover, the aforementioned Rhenish pastor Weertz implied that Carnival enthusiasts during wartime lacked sound judgment. To Weertz, the General Commando's decree that blocked Carnival behavior, which stayed in force throughout the war, should please all “rational

²⁴⁸ “Der Karneval und der Krieg. Ein Vorschlag,” *Stadtanzeiger*, 4 February 1915. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

people.”²⁴⁹ Notable here, the priest uses the word “*Armutzeugnis*,” which literally means an “evidence of incapacity.”

Public Carnival activities posed problems in need a reform in the prosperous prewar years, but during the war they became unthinkable. A broad and indeed broadening audience both during and following the war increasingly saw anybody who did not grasp this notion as dispossessed of moral virtue and wit. The lack of self-restriction and moderation by the population during Carnival had already been seen for decades according to Weertz, excesses that despite years of reform before the war had led nowhere. Audiences like religious authorities had historically challenged the holiday on moral grounds. But the realization of General Riemann that populations would insist on Carnival celebrations from the outset of the war strengthened this notion in military and government officials that prohibitions were necessary as opposed to the more moderate approach that predominated in the prewar years of reform. The necessity of Carnival prohibitions by 1916 to Weertz and others emerged from the conviction that “still many Germans have not grasped the seriousness of the times.”²⁵⁰ Regulation of Carnival was necessary to wartime patriotism, and if the populace did not grasp this, authorities could enforce it from above. Local officials across Germany seemed to side with this interpretation as well, as they too banned Carnival behavior as opposed to discouraging it.

Indeed this idea that restrictions forced the people to conform to national morality was also expressed in an article in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* on the ban on Carnival,

²⁴⁹ Heinrich Weertz, “Ohne Karneval,” *Kölnische Volkszeitung*, Nr. 190, 5 March 1916. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

²⁵⁰ Heinrich Weertz, “Ohne Karneval,” *Kölnische Volkszeitung*, Nr. 190, 5 March 1916. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

namely that after “hundreds of years” of Carnival revel in “pleasure-seeking Cologne” that through the wartime prohibition on Carnival “Cologne has become serious and moral.”²⁵¹ The war achieved what reform before the war only kind of did. The article, on “Cologne Fasting Time” captured a double meaning then through on the one hand the naming of Carnival based on the annual time of fasting in Lent, and the literal time of fasting that occurred in Cologne at that time. Indeed the article went on to detail the many restrictions brought on by the war as a new time of fasting in Cologne during Carnival time, including the aforementioned necessary restrictions on flour for baked goods specific to Carnival, the closing of entertainment venues like cinemas and theaters, the closing down of public transit, and the climbing prices. The expansion of exactly these arenas had solidified Carnival’s place as a massive and thriving holiday industry before the war and they were now given up as demands for the war economy. Indeed seriousness and sobriety became connected to Carnival in dramatic ways already by 1915, and by the later years when actual hunger gripped Cologne’s populace, this fasting time took on still more dimensions.

Through the war experience then, one traditional understanding of Carnival—as a necessary departure from one’s sorrows to experience joy in life—gave way to the interpretation that turning away from the seriousness of the times was symptomatic of mental and moral failure—escapism and immoral indulgence as opposed to a right to necessary cheer for the people. Carnival became connected as an element of this interpretation to the modern “pleasure industry” of modern cities, as it had in part within prewar Protestant clergy criticisms that Carnival was party of music hall culture, morally-

²⁵¹ “Kölner Fastenzeit,” *Frankfurter Zeitung*, Nr. 39, 8 February 1915. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

suspect economic activity, and eventually war profiteering, as few had the funds to afford the pleasures and excesses of the holiday.²⁵² Carnival morality during the war meant escapism and immoral indulgence. Weertz made reference to this rationale as well, when he said that some of the Cologne population “had still perhaps thought that relief (*Abwechslung*) in the sad wartime is okay in order to banish sorrows for a few days or hours....”²⁵³ Some of Cologne’s populace did support Carnival even during the war for a variety of reasons, but the private Carnival entertainments of the “*Divertissementchens*,” the small variété-like performances that literally meant “little distractions,” were not viewed as necessary relief, an expression of mirth as a right of the people. Rather, people who embraced them were “seduced” to Carnival mood by such acts, vehemently labeled as addicts and zealots, weak-willed and irretrievable souls.²⁵⁴ Here Weertz homed in on a practice especially popular on the part of Catholic religious orders before the war that Protestant critics had bemoaned already in 1904.²⁵⁵ Through this new understanding though, Carnivalist enthusiasm now was not about a right to gaiety but another form of war attrition, another expression of the great cost of the war to the souls of Cologne’s populace.

²⁵² “Zur Reform des Karnevals,” *Rheinische Zeitung*, 14 Februar 1915, Sonderausgabe. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

²⁵³ Heinrich Weertz, “Ohne Karneval,” *Kölnische Volkszeitung*, Nr. 190, 5 March 1916. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

²⁵⁴ “Zur Reform des Karnevals,” *Rheinische Zeitung*, 14 Februar 1915, Sonderausgabe. Heinrich Weertz, “Ohne Karneval,” *Kölnische Volkszeitung*, Nr. 190, 5 March 1916. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969. “Der Karneval und der Krieg. Ein Vorschlag,” *Stadtanzeiger*, 4 February 1915. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

²⁵⁵ “Sittlichkeit und Karneval,” *Localanzeiger*, Nr 277, 7 October 1904. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

In the face of this critical view toward the holiday that was forming, concern for the financial spending practices and morality of Carnival did provide the bedrock for at least one moderate Carnival proposition for the holiday's present and future. It dealt with the historical function of the holiday in Cologne in particular, namely as philanthropy. In the modern prewar Cologne Carnival, much of Cologne's population understood their acts at Carnival as displaying the inherent qualities of warmth and friendliness of people from Cologne.²⁵⁶ Carnival was an opportunity to put such a trait on show, and one expression of this was through generosity. Before the war, numerous organizations, especially Carnival ladies committees, put on charity events like masquerade balls at the Gürzenich under the ostensible rubric that they generated funds for social causes. Altruism had been an historical element of Carnival, as the holiday ostensibly put on display the inherent generosity of Rhenish people. In 1915, one wartime author for the city newspaper the *Stadtanzeiger* encouraged a reworking of Carnival culture through an invocation of this function of Carnival. Such a moderate stance reflected the paper's connection to the most vocal press of the Carnival leadership before the war, as the *Stadtanzeiger* was the local daily Catholic supplement to the national *Kölnische Zeitung* that derived financial revenue from the advertisements of the elite Carnival societies. Carnival could become a wartime celebration of the spirit of altruism—one true meaning of Cologne Carnival—in times of great need, so long as it didn't involve all the other Carnival practices that went with the whole Cologne Carnival hoopla. In what the author describes, the war in effect created the symbolic world of Carnival in everyday life and

²⁵⁶ For more on the shift to seeing Carnival as a departure from a diabolic kingdom to an expression of positive personality traits of the people from Cologne, see: Jeremy DeWaal, "The Reinvention of Tradition: Form, Meaning, and Local Identity in Modern Cologne Carnival," *Central European History* 46, no. 3 (Sept 2013): 495-532.

was thus an invitation for the greatest Carnival in history—without official Carnival activities.

The author's proposition to make Carnival a celebration of charity, namely through pledging funds for war relief, would mark "a milestone in the history of the city and of Carnival" which will instill in the populace great "awe and pride for the truly home-town (*vaterstädtisch*) and nationalistic (*vaterländisch*) act" of providing relief to those in need.²⁵⁷ Carnival could be a "day of sacrifice for the nation (*Volk*).” The author cites the centrality of the impoverished figure in Carnival celebration, with Prince Carnival as a “beggar” as had been seen in the nearby city of Aachen. Of course peasants and peasant characters were a central feature of European carnivals stretching back to the medieval period. Carnivalists in wartime Aachen had made this adjustment in solidarity with suffering and loss in the war. Prince Carnival, the rules of the Carnival world and the key figure of the Triumvirate in the Rose Monday parade, represented rather the feudal landowner as opposed to the peasant farmer (*Bauer*). Within Carnival cultures during the war then one sees Carnival practices as dynamic, shifting as Carnivalists applied them to diverse ends, which in this case even involved stripping a figure of its clear class associations that would otherwise be offensive and inappropriate. Prince Carnival, once the bourgeois hero of the Rhenish Carnivalists who played the role in the parades, effectively became instead the peasant farmer instead, the figure that pointed to the hard labor of the masses and not the privilege of the elite. Following the author's proposition, there could be an afternoon concert of “patriotic repertoire” put on by the city orchestra at the zoological garden to generate proceeds for those most in need. Such

²⁵⁷ “Der Karneval und der Krieg. Ein Vorschlag,” *Stadtanzeiger*, 4 February 1915. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

a suggestion that Carnival could still in any way remain connected to civic pride and patriotic nationalism was exceedingly rare from 1915. But the author sought to disaggregate the wholesomely patriotic in Carnival revel from the degenerately selfish, to make charity and self-chosen sacrifice trump pleasure without jettisoning the holiday altogether. In this peculiar way, Cologne could have its Carnival, without the usual fanfare of masquerades and assemblies now equated with moral failing, but still following traditional Carnival meaning within this milieu of a world already upside down. What had often been play in Cologne Carnival—the role of the peasant, or “charity” as the pretense for extravagant parties—could now be the context of a true Carnival against the backdrop of everyday life.

What in fact resulted during the war was a peculiar patchwork of these propositions. The ordinance restricted all official traditional elements of the holiday in public life. Some impromptu Carnival activities in public did occur but were rare, so that only select private and unofficial Carnival activities occurred during the war and afterward. Carnival debates during the war pointed to a new era of Carnival understanding, as a reworking of the holiday’s relationship to nationalism, patriotism, and indeed the nation itself ensued. As Carnival became tied to national outcomes in serious times, its prewar meanings and uses intensified, broke down, or shifted entirely. By 1915 though, what was clear was that official Cologne Carnival in public space was impermissible. On the other side of the war Carnival debates reflected this dramatic shift that had occurred. Officials and indeed much of the Cologne populace had since the outbreak of war invoked the “seriousness of the times,” and the ill-fitting nature of celebrations like Carnival in the face of widespread suffering of broad social circles in

Cologne as across Germany. In the German press even after the war, very few even brought up Carnival as Rhenish communities confronted the formidable crisis in the region left after the war. The Cologne archbishop in 1923, Cardinal Schulte, described “the spirit of Carnival” (*Fasching*) as the impure part of the soul preventing Germans’ ascent to heaven.²⁵⁸ An author of an article on “More Seriousness and Dignity” in the *Kölnische Zeitung* decried then the “crooked pictures” of immorality that came from the pubs, window displays, pleasure houses, and Carnival romps.²⁵⁹ But such public discourse in the Cologne press after the war was comparably limited.

When in 1920 the great Press Ball of Berlin took place for the first time since the war, one of the first revivals of great prewar masquerade ball traditions that took place around Carnival time, the *Kölnische Zeitung*, so supportive of official sanctioned Carnival celebrations in Cologne before the war, printed an article that challenged the appropriateness of these activities in such trying times. As with many such grand and expensive festival traditions of the prewar years, the express purpose of the Press Ball in Berlin was social benefaction. However, in 1920, the notion of Carnival and masquerade festivities under the cloak of charity was a harder sell, even in the context of the worsening economic collapse befalling the city. According to one article about the Press Ball in the *Kölnische Zeitung*, “whether under the current circumstances a great public festival for this [purpose] is rather still the right means, there can exist ... very diverse opinion.”²⁶⁰ The many prewar criticisms of such practices, often written off before the

²⁵⁸ “Mehr Ernst und Würde,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, Nr. 75, 31 January 1923. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁶⁰ “Der Zeitgemäße Presseball,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, Nr. 116, 3. February 1920. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

war in this paper as the complaints of humbugs, now had traction. “Many an applicable word from before about the psychology of such charity celebrations has already been said from a general standpoint.” Then there was also the general social problem that such events could only be afforded by a select few—far few now even than in the prewar years—who were not viewed as philanthropists after the war but rather as “war profiteers” or even “revolution profiteers.” Indeed already early into the post-war period, leisure practices like Carnival became connected as here to concerns over good commercial activity, a critique about capitalism in Germany that led to potentially antisemitic discourses of the so-called *Schieber* class of black market traffickers.²⁶¹ Such narratives about betrayal by the populace who were enemies of the nation working in the shadows became a popular explanation for national problems. The foremost example of such narratives was the “stab in the back” myth popularized by conservatives, which explained the impossible loss of the German military in the war due to betrayal on the home front. Even articles in the British press reporting on the occupation of Cologne after the war printed such ideas about the *Schieber* and Carnival in Germany by 1921, as seen in an article on “Collapsed Carnival.” “After a brief month of unrationed—and therefore, abundant—meat, we are told that the authorities intend to stop profiteering by re-instituting rationing—thereby gladdening the heart of the *restaurateur* and the meat *Schieber*, who keeps the former supplied with smuggled meat which is retailed at

²⁶¹ Contemporaries used the German term *Schieber* widely at this time, which meant a variety of things, including profiteer, black market worker, exploiter, price-gouger, or capitalist, among other meanings. Many deployed this term within discussions of perceived immoral economic activity in a time of national economic difficulties, which produced narratives that varied for instance between the KPD, Social Democrats, and the national right, and captured contemporary anxiety about appropriate commercial activity but also broad anxiety about internal enemies that could be antisemitic. As a result of the ambiguity, the term is left in German in this text.

outrageous prices to the public.”²⁶² One version of this story dealt with the unsubstantiated claim that these profiteers were made up of Germany’s Jewish communities who shirked their duty in the military and instead supported black market capitalism and the spread of sex work in urban centers like Berlin. The possibility for prewar public Carnival—within this new climate around urban celebrations and their spread of immorality, here as financial exploitation, but elsewhere as simply inappropriate—seems to have fundamentally vanished. Activities proliferating in Berlin drew sharp rebuke. “Do we still have the ears and the mood for this music?” the author asked.²⁶³

In effect then, the war initiated a dramatic shift for Carnival in Cologne. What resulted was a diverse series of perspectives about the holiday, including: that it was inappropriate given the state of affairs in the country; that it was a poor use of public and private funds in the war as in peacetime; that it put on display the mental and spiritual failings of German people, symptomatic of a lack of self control, the spread of escapism, or simply growing hedonism. But it was also that its prewar messages—in the absence of its wild theatrics and excessive freedoms—might facilitate a therapeutic form of relief from the sacrifices of the war both in terms of some communal cheer as well as some community aid. Select propositions could be seen through which Carnival’s meanings would be reworked to inoculate the dangers of the holiday. In this section then, the newspapers that had been the most vocal about Carnival before the war, namely the *Kölnische Zeitung*, *Stadtanzeiger*, *Rheinische Zeitung*, *Frankfurter Zeitung*, and the

²⁶² “Collapsed Carnival by the Bystander in Occupation,” *The Bystander*, 2 March 1921. The British Newspaper Archive.

²⁶³ “Der Zeitgemäße Presseball,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, Nr. 116, 3. February 1920. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

Kölnische Volkszeitung were seen expressing shifts within approaches to the holiday from their prewar ones. The *Kölnische Zeitung* and *Stadtanzeiger* that had been representative of official leadership opinions about Carnival embraced restraint but moderate approach, continuing to push for reform-based avenues even once a prohibition was on the books. The socialist *Rheinische Zeitung* maintained the prewar criticisms about misappropriated funds and denied benefits to workers through an appeal to have Carnival funds permanently issued for the guarantee of summer holidays. The Protestant clergy position detailed in the Centrist Catholic *Kölnische Volkszeitung* described Carnival as it always had, as a terrible scourge on civilization and Christian values, especially convenient because of its popularity on the part of Catholic populations. This marked a move toward each other for the Cologne Catholic and Protestant clergy who before the war were often at odds with each other over the issue of Carnival. Finally, the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, which before the war detailed the decline in Carnival as an effect of crisis over reform in Cologne likewise detailed Carnival time as a new era of fasting due to the strict restrictions of the Cologne municipal government. Lent became the patriotic holiday during the war instead of Carnival as in the prewar years. These shifts in Carnival debates within Cologne during the war were then accompanied after the war by a host of new and shifting understandings of and uses of the holiday, the subject of the next chapter.

III. Conclusion

It is no surprise that the war changed Carnival in Cologne and what it represented. Carnival in part was defined in the years before the war by a departure from the norms of

everyday life, a central message of prewar Carnival celebrations in Cologne, which during the war became the norm for Cologne's populace for years. Everyday life in Cologne after 1915 became in many ways like Carnival brought to life. Carnival celebrations were based on the idea of a world that had turned topsy-turvy. During the war years the world really did turn upside down for Cologne's citizens. As a result of this state and the requirement of Carnival's formal restriction as part of the austerity and moral probity demanded of the population, the war ushered in a dramatic shift in Carnival cultures in Cologne. On the one hand, prewar critics of the holiday seized on the moment to push for their anti-Carnival agendas within an atmosphere more amenable to such views. These critics sharpened their attacks on the holiday, turning their calls for reform to ones of permanent prohibition. On the other hand, Carnival enthusiasts of the prewar years attempted to salvage the holiday through appeals to its charitable effects and potential promote patriotism within a unified community. Carnival thus took on new meanings as disparate audiences reworked prewar understandings of the holiday to accommodate new needs in wartime Cologne. Either way prewar Carnival became an impossibility linked as it was to wastefulness and impropriety, as Carnival became one among many restrictions and dislocations of life in the war. The only Carnival events that resulted were austere concerts and illicit private celebrations behind closed doors.

The prohibition during the war, and the change in the politics and morality surrounding Carnival were likely effects of the war itself. But whereas municipal authorities banned the holiday in Cologne from 1914 due to the demands of the war effort, this experience of Carnival prohibition would persist through most of the Weimar years as well. The contested politics and new meanings of the holiday, as well as the

prohibition of it, would become a new norm within the socio-cultural battles over Germany in the early twentieth century. From 1915 onward, as this chapter has shown, Carnival became not a display of civic pride plagued at times by the nuisance of bourgeois vice and the dangers of urban play, as it had been before the war. Rather its absence became a display of patriotism in the form of support—material as well as emotional solidarity—for those fighting at the front. Carnival's immorality shifted then from bourgeois vice and lasciviousness to public participation overall. During the war years Carnival immorality could largely be characterized as the holiday's existence overall, but especially in public space, as the maintenance of public serious and order became significant to support for the nation. The new threats posed by Carnival from the war years onward though only persisted into the immediate period following the war, during which the politics of the holiday shifted all the more in the context of new risks as well as new mobilizations of Carnival.

Chapter 3

A New Politics of Carnival

...[O]n account of the economic and political state of the Fatherland ... amusements and festivities similar to those that happened in previous years ... must be restricted in the most extensive scope possible on the occasion of the forthcoming Carnival. ... Carnival events must be stopped for the avoidance of clashes with the families of the occupation troops, but also uniformly for the entirety of states of the empire, so that there doesn't arise in the Rhenish population, which has Carnival joy in their blood in particular amount, the feeling of less favorable treatment and setback compared with the population of the unoccupied territories, especially those that have to suffer far more under the pressing results of the war as a result of the occupation.²⁶⁴

These were the Reich Interior Minister's words in a 1921 announcement to all state governments that Carnival was to be banned, not just in Cologne and the Rhineland, but across the country. The Minister, Social Democrat Adolf Köster, had just met with leaders of the Cologne government, together with the police president, the Christian labor unions, the free labor unions, the cartel of German labor unions, the general vicariate, and four leaders of the premier Carnival societies. They unanimously demanded this solution. This chapter will explain how such a disparate group who before the war held conflicting views came to see politics in the region as so serious that they supported a policy that was unthinkable in the prewar years. The passage already points to some of the reasons for this—"economic and political" difficulties in Germany, the foreign occupation and Carnival's potential to instigate "clashes," together with the feelings of Rhenish people that they might "suffer far more," and therein pay an unjust price for the war. These

²⁶⁴ Minister of the Interior in Berlin to all state governments, 2 December 1921, Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

rationales pointed to a new politics of Carnival in Cologne and the Rhineland, the subject of this chapter.

The war initiated a dramatic shift in Carnival debates in Cologne, but the dire politics in Cologne and in the Rhineland sustained debates about Carnival's dangers after it. The hardships and dislocations of World War I for Cologne ushered in new Carnival discourses during the war. But the results of the war in Cologne also radically changed the politics of the holiday there. Alongside the new ways of imagining or criticizing the holiday that resulted from the wartime experience of Carnival's restriction, a variety of new Carnival cultures emerged after the war's end in the absence of sanctioned public celebrations there. After the war, groups in conflict with each other, nearly all foreign to Cologne Carnival from the prewar years, operationalized Carnival to diverse ends. These conflicts unfolded over social danger and morality, as they had in select form before the war. But they also extended to national Reich and regional politics in wholly new ways through the results of the war. A host of new political forces took up the holiday then for their political aspirations. Amidst shifts in Carnival's meanings the citizenry in Cologne embraced the holiday and its applications in new ways. Not only did municipal authorities and eventually Reich officials take up the holiday to forward their politics in a fragile and hyperpoliticized post-war Rhineland, but so too did the foreign occupation forces of the British, French, Belgian, as well as Rhenish separatists. Carnival during these years became thus an expression of socio-cultural contestations within Germany, as these mobilizations of Carnival also elevated the holiday to a national issue with high risks that resulted in a federal prohibition on the holiday in 1921.

This chapter analyzes these simultaneous and conflicting mobilizations of Carnival that resulted during this particularly tumultuous period in Cologne's history in order to demonstrate Carnival's risks to German authorities in the Rhineland and in turn at the national level. It takes up this new landscape of Carnival cultures in Cologne and indeed in the Rhineland after the war, as the results of the war exacerbated tensions within the politics of Carnival's sites, symbols, and practices. This chapter analyzes these competing Carnival mobilizations then as manifestations of the war that compelled new uses of the holiday's practices as well as new ways of imagining its meanings. These simultaneous stories of Carnival's mobilizations include: the published story of domestic Carnival in the Cologne press; the official story of Carnival from the Weimar government; the story of Carnival on the part of the British occupation in Cologne; the local story of clandestine Carnival celebrations by Cologne's populace; and the story of Rhenish separatists together with French and Belgian occupation support for Carnival. It begins with an examination of Cologne in the early years of the Weimar Republic, including the end of the war and occupation in Cologne, and the peculiar presence of multiple authorities in the Rhineland region each with their own Carnival policies. The chapter then turns to tensions and local skirmishes over Carnival in Cologne and in the Rhineland, with violent separatist uprisings as a particularly dramatic example of Carnival's new politics after the war. Carnival's regulation emerges thus as a contestation over competing powers, most in opposition to Weimar republicanism.

I. New Carnival Cultures After the War

While the armistice ended fighting in the war, it also ushered in a British occupation of the city of Cologne—the presence of 25,000 British and Dominion troops over the next six months from December 1918 when martial law was established. Martial law under a British general gave way to a Rhineland High Commission diplomatic rule following the signing of the Versailles Treaty in the summer of 1919. A British occupation likewise began in the cities of Wiesbaden and Bonn, where large Carnival celebrations had taken place before the war, although the British later ceded administration of the latter to France. Although the British forces left Cologne in January 1926, troops stayed on in neighboring Wiesbaden until 30 June 1930, when the last of all Allied occupying forces left as well. The mayor of Cologne Konrad Adenauer was effectively compelled into diplomatic work with the British occupation authorities, but he commended the British on how fairly they consistently ran the occupation, a remark that was not made for the French or Belgian.²⁶⁵ While comparable relations between the German residents of Cologne and the British seemed less serious and more balanced than the experiences of other Rhenish people, the occupation disrupted life in Cologne in palpable ways. Forces took up residence in hundreds of private homes and occupied great hotels in prime locales for the establishment of their offices. The occupation had the authority to interfere with life in Cologne in order to serve the demands and interests of Allied forces in their missions. Complaints from the civilian population streamed in, which necessitated the establishment of a special office solely for their review. Food distribution and low wages continued to be a problem, a problem that would not be

²⁶⁵ For an informative brief history of the British occupation in Cologne, see: D. G. Williamson, “Cologne and the British, 1918-1926,” *History Today* Vol 27, No. 11 (November 1, 1977): 695-702.

alleviated due to chronic inflation of the German Mark. The onset of a hyperinflation crisis with no effective relief motivated protests, strikes, and riots, especially during the first half of the occupation period in Cologne, the Weimar years from 1919 to 1923 when crisis was most palpable. Occupying forces engaged in looting as well as disgracing or defacing public statues and monuments. Across Germany, hysteria and a propaganda war blazed over the alleged rape of German women by the black colonial troops stationed by French and Belgian forces in other occupied territories, in what became sensationalized as the “Black Shame on the Rhine.”²⁶⁶ Despite the acute politicization of gender and race in the occupied Rhineland, in the seven years of British occupation of Cologne, nine reports of rape were alleged.²⁶⁷ While the British did station troops from its empire in Cologne, these included units from New Zealand,²⁶⁸ which evoked less scorn and bitterness than in the French- and Belgian-occupied territories. According to reports about violence by occupied forces, during the entire occupation 18 civilians were killed

²⁶⁶ A broad body of literature exists on histories and interpretations of the “Black Shame on the Rhine,” focusing primarily on political history, the press and propaganda war, as well as questions of race and gender. Consider among many others, the following: Christian Koller, *“Von Wilden aller Rassen niedergemetzelt”: die Diskussion um die Verwendung von Kolonialtruppen in Europa zwischen Rassismus, Kolonial- und Militärpolitik (1914-1930)* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2001). Peter Collar, *The Propaganda War in the Rhineland: Weimar Germany, Race and Occupation after World War I* (London: Tauris, 2013). Iris Wigger, *The “Black Horror on the Rhine”: Intersections of Race, Nation, Gender and Class in 1920s Germany* (London: Palgrave, 2017). Julia Roos, “Women’s Rights, Nationalist Anxiety, and the ‘Moral’ Agenda in the Early Weimar Republic: Revisiting the ‘Black Horror’ Campaign against France’s African Occupation Troops,” *Central European History* 42 (Sept 2009): 473-508. Sally Marks, “Black Watch on the Rhine: A Study in Propaganda, Prejudice, and Prurience,” *European Studies Review* 13 (1983): 297-334. Paul Weindling, *Health, Race, and German Politics between National Unification and Nazism, 1870-1945* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989). Robert C. Reinders, “Racialism on the Left: E. D. Morel and the ‘Black Horror on the Rhine,’” *International Review of Social History* 13 (1968): 1-28.

²⁶⁷ Williamson, “Cologne and the British, 1918-1926,” 700.

²⁶⁸ See numerous British Pathé films.

in Cologne. This included a schoolboy shot by a lieutenant, who misinterpreted his calls to a fellow peer as an insult. He fatally shot the young boy. The occupation also included 283 injuries to German citizens in Cologne that resulted from some sort of altercation.²⁶⁹ Thus even in the occupied Cologne where conditions were better than in other nearby occupied cities, where the Belgian and French troops were more committed to humiliating the German populace, there were these new loaded tensions in public space.

Officially the High Commission could veto any legislation coming from the Berlin-based federal government, including the Carnival prohibition put in place at the onset of the occupation. For instance, in direct contradiction of the federally-set closing times as well as a nationwide ban on all public Carnival displays in place from late 1921, occupation authorities often undermined the German governments by permitting select Carnival activity or overriding the curfew temporarily. One instance of this occurred in February 1924 when the occupation authorities issued an authorization for restaurants, coffee houses, and pubs to stay open all night for the Carnival days from March 1st to 4th that year.²⁷⁰ Anti-occupation sentiment as well as the occupation's restrictions to certain liberties like right to assembly and the press repeatedly resulted in temporary publishing bans on the *Kölnische Zeitung* for allegedly criticizing the occupation. One instance of this, not the first, occurred between the 16th and 24th of February in 1923, the week after Carnival that year. Although the Weimar years are known for a lessening of the censorship that proliferated during the Kaiserreich, such prohibition as well as regulations on immoral literature or depictions were part of incisive Weimar censorship campaigns

²⁶⁹ Williamson, "Cologne and the British, 1918-1926," 700.

²⁷⁰ "Fastnacht," *Kölnische Zeitung*, 29 February 1924 (Nr. 152): 2. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

that the Reich or state interior ministries spearheaded.²⁷¹ In light of this, it is unsurprising that Cologne newspapers embraced strict censures of Carnival acts if they spoke of the holiday at all. This was regardless of what their perspectives on the “home-town holiday” may have been. Indeed it seems that Carnival’s potential for political aspiration and threat to order made it particularly risky for natives to speak positively about the holiday in public and simultaneously likely that Carnival and the politics surrounding it could legitimize the different active powers exerting influence over the Rhineland at the time in subtle ways. What resulted then was that Carnival reflected the tense politics in the region, but also became a tool in regional politics to the competing authorities there, non of which exceptionally well-legitimated there to Cologne’s natives.

One peculiarity then about the history of Carnival in the early Weimar era in the Rhineland dealt with this conglomeration of competing authorities in the region, all of questionable legitimacy to different groups and invested in a particular vision of public order. Before the war city authorities and Carnival’s elite leadership had worked together to regulate and control Carnival festivities—what resulted was one official Cologne Carnival and some competing unofficial and less regulated cultures of Carnival. Following the war, however, the Weimar government authorities in Cologne officially prohibited the holiday due to the “seriousness of the times,” and the dire social and political state in the Rhineland. The “seriousness of the times” as well as the “serious economic and political state” were universally used in discussions of Carnival prohibition

²⁷¹ *Kölnische Zeitung*, Nr. 86, 3. Feb 1923, Abend-Ausgabe. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin. On censorship programs from the Kaiserreich through the end of the Weimar Republic, see Kara Ritzheimer, *“Trash,” Censorship, and National Identity in Early Twentieth-Century Germany* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

by Weimar officials across the political spectrum, throughout the years of the republic.²⁷² Meanwhile, Carnival's prewar leadership shifted activities to more private activities that were more underground and unofficial. At the same time, the occupation of Cologne by British authorities introduced a new government into the city that could effectively veto Weimar policies at bay. The British were generally indifferent to Carnival but took it up in a sort of touristy way.²⁷³ Finally, in other Rhenish cities like Aachen and Düsseldorf the presence of French and Belgian troops introduced still more authorities, who saw in Carnival an opportunity to sow unrest throughout the region, in particular among the conservatives and monarchists, in the support of local bands of separatists—groups who would attempt to establish themselves as yet another power in the region by 1923. Each of these competing powers took up Carnival during these years to competing ends. The remainder of the chapter then demonstrates the mounting city, regional, and national politics of post-war Carnival in Cologne through an examination of these competing visions and uses of the holiday.

After the war, the German government in Cologne banned Carnival outright and the prewar Carnival elites supported this. One hint about why can be found in the report of an assembly of city officials, labor groups, and Carnival association leadership from November 1921, when the group met about the extension of the Carnival prohibition for the following year. In truth, the Carnival leadership went along with the consensus that

²⁷² Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz. Series R/1501 Reichsministerium des Innern 11 March 1922 to 24 February 1925, Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde.

²⁷³ For a treatment of British attitudes toward Germany during the Weimar Republic, which includes the occupation but does not take up Carnival in the city, see Colin Storer, *Britain and the Weimar Republic: the History of a Cultural Relationship* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2010).

ongoing seriousness and probity was necessary due to the “seriousness of the times,” and the “serious economic and political state” of Germany. The leadership went along reluctantly though, only after suggesting that perhaps the *Kappensitzungen*—the closed-room Carnival assemblies of the elite gentlemen in Cologne—might be allowed, which the group turned down.²⁷⁴ The consensus held then that Carnival should continue to be cancelled in all its forms, although many Carnivalists even from the elite privately flouted this restriction. What resulted then were only select private and family festival traditions during Carnival among the Carnival societies, who sustained the memory and traditions of official Carnival in this way. Indeed Carnival clubs and associations restricted themselves during the war years despite the prohibition to private event gatherings, foremost among them those organized by Cäcilia Wolkenburg, credited with “keeping Carnival alive” during the prohibition until 1925.²⁷⁵ The term for these small Carnival private entertainments was literally “little distractions” (*Divertissementchens*) and very little evidence remains about the breadth and frequency of such events. Wolkenburg became so significant a figure in Carnival memory that she became the namesake for popular *Divertissementchens* theater pieces and choir traditions in the postwar period, foremost among them today put on by the Cologne Men’s Choir Club (*Kölner Männer-Gesang-Verein*). During the war, once-renowned Carnival clubs and associations began to function more privately then, as family societies (*Familiengesellschaften*) with events

²⁷⁴ Minister of the Interior in Berlin to all state governments, 2 December 1921, Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

²⁷⁵ Joseph Klersch, *Kölner Fastnachtsspiegel* (Köln: Bachem, 1948): 120-121. Cited in: Ralf Bernd Assenmacher, Michael Euler-Schmidt, and Werner Schäfke, eds., *175 Jahre... und immer wieder Karneval* (Köln: Bouvier, 1997): 70.

in line with the German tradition of the *Stammtisch*, a German tradition of gatherings of people for a meeting structured around thematic discussions. This was a reversal of the prewar official Carnival that was public, had lost its family festival quality, and discouraged the involvement of children. Carnival practices that before the war critics took up as having lost their quality as a family festival, as critics depicted Carnival events as youth endangerment,²⁷⁶ regained this status but as a clandestine act within intimate gatherings during the occupation years. From official German and Cologne municipal sources as well as the official Carnival perspectives reproduced in the newspaper, it would seem that official mainstream Carnival in public space had been wiped from the map from 1915 onward. The German press in Cologne universally censured Carnival, invoking images of poor German people bitterly suffering under the weight of unfair conditions that made the holiday both impossible and unthinkable. Simultaneously though, hints about the everyday experience of residents during Carnival time could be found in press coverage of the city by the British occupation newspaper and point to the existence of multiple and competing Carnival cultures used to drastically different ends. But in the occupied Rhineland the occupation authorities trumped German power, so a turn to the perspectives of the British occupation forces sheds light on the more complicated fate of Carnival in Cologne. Indeed the British occupation press as well as other British newspapers depicted rather a different story about Carnival in occupied Cologne as indeed in the occupied Rhineland, namely a proliferation of unofficial and private Carnival activities in the city by foreign occupier and German citizen alike. Through these sources then one sees a peculiar development, namely the appropriation of

²⁷⁶ “Kölner Skizzen,” subheading “Erziehung zum Karneval,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, 18 February 1909. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

Carnival by British authorities who took over Carnival spaces for their own events, identifying the city as a whole with a sort of tourist version of Carnival, as well as simultaneously Cologne citizens' clandestine embrace of Carnival festivities behind closed doors that the British tolerated.

From the first year of the occupation the British published an occupation daily newspaper, *The Cologne Post*, and would continue to do so through to the departure of British forces from Cologne in 1926. After all, from 1919 entire British families, female employees of the Army Institutions, former soldiers as well as the quarter-million-strong occupation force itself set up flourishing lives in the city. This daily newspaper thoroughly covered a version of everyday life in occupied Cologne, albeit one mediated by the importance of impressions for international foreign policy and the maintenance of legitimacy for the occupation itself. Coverage included profuse sport match results, most importantly soccer and rugby. The newspaper detailed rivalries and happenings of the newly-established Allied occupation teams that had been set up across the occupied territories according to different national and associational groupings. The newspaper also included coverage of fashion trends and tips for women in the occupied territories.²⁷⁷ Finally, the paper included details of national British news and significant international affairs, as well as reports on pertinent German national happenings. Seemingly of critical importance to its readership, coverage of leisure opportunities or the industry of so-called “army amusements” was widespread as well. Indeed it seems many of the occupied troops and their families passed the time enjoying leisure events and parties.

²⁷⁷ Consider among others, the feature “Vanity Fair. A Feature for the British Woman in Rhineland” on “Mid-Season Hats,” *The Cologne Post*, 2 February 1921 (Nr. 570): 4. Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek Köln.

The industry of army amusements boomed from the onset of the occupation and frequently entailed activities otherwise denied to the occupied citizenry themselves, although British leniency toward German celebrations banned by the Weimar government may also have meant that German women could sometimes attend such amusements, an undermining of German authority as well as the sex and gender order already perceived under threat during the occupation on account of the “Black Shame on the Rhine.” British forces enjoyed concerts at the elite Gürzenich, and while Cologne continued to not observe Carnival rituals on New Years Eve, occupation forces enjoyed not just “many successful dances” on the night but also “theaters and picture palaces [that] were well patronized.”²⁷⁸ The British occupation army also organized weekly dances, including fancy-dress balls around Carnival time in great halls like the Bürgergesellschaft once reserved for the Carnival masquerades of Cologne’s bourgeois elite.²⁷⁹ Of course such festivities were neither permitted publicly nor openly celebrated by the German civilians in Cologne. It is even likely that their foreign embrace by hostile occupiers made them less popular by association. Indeed from the newspaper it seemed as if army amusements were of critical importance, providing stationed forces with always-sold-out theater performances at elite Cologne theaters like the Deutsches Theater and the Scala Theater. The occupation seems also to have ushered in the establishment of entirely new cultural institutions in Cologne as well including the popular Army Theater, as well as packed cinema screenings, often of international films.

²⁷⁸ *The Cologne Post*, 1 January 1920 (Nr. 234): 3. Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek Köln. “1920. How the New Year was Welcomed in Cologne. A Bright Start.” *The Cologne Post*, 2 January 1920 (No. 235): 3. Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek Köln.

²⁷⁹ Advertisement for weekly dances at the Bürgergesellschaft, organized by the W.O.s and Sergeants of No. I G.H.Q., in 1920 one held on Ash Wednesday. *The Cologne Post*, 2 February 1920 (Nr. 278): 4. Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek Köln.

Indeed there was certain hypocrisy about army amusements as they were experiences frequently denied to the Cologne population but highly popular and well-publicized. They revealed the special privileges of the occupiers. In many ways the new arrivals took over the rich prewar public culture of Cologne Carnival that German residents no longer enjoyed. Although public balls and masquerades at Carnival time and in general were forbidden by the Weimar government, on Carnival Monday in 1921 for instance, the Royal Army Ordnance Corps (R.A.O.C.) gave a dance at the Bürgergesellschaft, expressly for “British and Allied personnel only.”²⁸⁰ Likewise in the week following Carnival that year, the Rhine Forces Officers’ Club hosted a “Valentine Fancy Dress Ball” that ran from 9 in the evening to 1 in the morning. German citizens by contrast were restricted to a national curfew of 11 PM.²⁸¹ As a result, late into the night costumed figures could presumably be seen stumbling home from the fête, while Germans could neither stay out late nor wear disguises or masks in public space. On Carnival Saturday in 1921, according to coverage of this recent “Boom in Amusements” for the occupation army in Cologne, “[a]ll the Army Amusements were ‘crowded to capacity’ ... and at the Deutsches, the Scala, and the Army Cinema people had to be turned away as no seats were available.”²⁸² Despite bans of such amusements, occupiers and members of their substantial community hosted their own such events around Carnival time—and on top of everything, the much-beloved costuming traditions of Cologne natives sometimes made the otherwise-packed events less appealing. Despite the

²⁸⁰ “R.A.O.C. Dance” in “Echoes of the Rhineland” Section, *The Cologne Post*, 5 February 1921 (Nr. 573): 4. Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek Köln.

²⁸¹ Advertisement “Valentine Fancy Dress Ball,” *The Cologne Post*, 3 February 1921 (Nr. 571): 2. Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek Köln.

²⁸² *The Cologne Post*, 1 February 1921 (Nr. 569): 4. Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek Köln.

“particularly lively” proceedings at one dance of the VL Corps Officers’ Club on Carnival Friday in 1920 for instance, due to the requirement of fancy-dress, “[t]he attendance was not so strong, numerically, as a result.”²⁸³ How must German residents of Cologne have seen these foreign usurpers who took to their most elite institutions during Carnival time, and met their cherished traditions with such lukewarm embrace? Moreover, this British occupation of Carnival sites and practices was like the assumption of a new bourgeois elite in the city particularly due to the focus on sites and practices with the most prestige before the war, an added humiliation of the occupation in which the holiday’s gatekeepers were ousted by foreigners.

Through the British occupation press one saw the broad association of the city as a whole and its citizens with Carnival. The British press in the *Cologne Post* and elsewhere almost pathologized the need for Cologne Carnival by the city’s natives, while it described restrictions on it by the nascent German government as “strict” and “severe,” the absence of the holiday in Cologne as “a serious crisis.”²⁸⁴ Such descriptions diminished the indeed serious challenges facing Rhenish citizens, whose stress was reduced to some perverse addiction to Carnival partying, as opposed to rather an important symbol of restored normalness in the region, both economically and in terms of public life. On the effects of the crisis of Carnival on Cologne’s people, one report in the British occupation press claimed that “[t]he Cologne inhabitant was used to his carnival festivities before the war, and now he gets nervous, because he wants to cheer, to sing, to

²⁸³ *The Cologne Post*, 15 February 1920 (Nr. 273): 3. Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek Köln.

²⁸⁴ “Carnival,” *The Cologne Post*, from the “Echoes of the Rhineland” section, 17 February 1920 (Nr. 274): 4. Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek Köln. “Carnival,” *The Cologne Post*, from the “Echoes of the Rhineland” section, 15 February 1920 (Nr. 273): 4. Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek Köln.

dance, and to be merry.”²⁸⁵ Another British periodical, *The Bystander*, likewise spoke of Cologne’s crisis after the war as the lack of Carnival. To this “grievance” that has befallen the city, the article’s author claimed that “[s]he does not talk about it openly, but nurses it with the devotion of a mother to her first-born.”²⁸⁶ Still another article on “Collapsed Carnival” in *The Bystander*, spoke of the city without Carnival as the running joke du jour. “Comedians paraphrase the title of Berlin’s latest operatic success, *The Dead City* as ‘Cologne without Carnival.’”²⁸⁷ As part of leisure in everyday life for the British occupation forces and their families, the British took up Carnival spaces and practices, which strictly speaking was not Carnival. At the same time though the forces associated such practices and indeed the city as a whole with a sort of tourist version of Carnival—a wholly new culture of Carnival created by the foreign occupation of Cologne after the war. Unlike the German authorities, the British appeared indifferent to Carnival’s potential risks, not locating in the holiday especially dangerous threats, as the Cologne natives German government officials did. The results of this stance then were both their makeshift appropriation of the holiday by the British occupation forces and their families as well as a local story of clandestine Carnival revelry on the part of the local population that the British press frequently casually reported on in passing. Through the British approach to Carnival, one glimpses the local story of Carnival enthusiasm, in effect as local undermining of Reich authority, that continued despite the official government sanctions against the holiday.

²⁸⁵ “Carnival,” *The Cologne Post*, in the “Echoes of the Rhineland” section, 15 February 1920, (Nr. 273): 4. Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek Köln.

²⁸⁶ Eric Gordon, “Collapsed Carnival. By The Bystander in Occupation,” *The Bystander*, Vol. 69, Nr. 900 (2 March 1921): 460. Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek Köln.

²⁸⁷ “Collapsed Carnival by the Bystander in Occupation,” *The Bystander*, 2 March 1921. The British Newspaper Archive.

Some did expect that Carnival would be restored after the war, and the German government attempted to manage this expectation through select events. According to one report, placards around town in February 1920 advertised for a “big carnival festivity at the Gürzenich on Monday next (*Rosenmontag*).”²⁸⁸ Mayor Adenauer, now bound in diplomatic relations with the occupation governor of Cologne, prohibited the gala even though it was meant to be black tie and not fancy dress. Instead he permitted a concert on March 1st, nearly two weeks after Carnival Tuesday in 1920 once the energy of the holiday days would have dispersed. A concert well after Lent would have a fundamentally different meaning than a party at the Gürzenich during Carnival week. Following this instance, three months into the British occupation, more advertisements for Carnival amusements in Cologne occurred. Response to the announced event, however, pointed to one significant way that German residents in Cologne celebrated Carnival in a more austere way during the occupation. Indeed special performances around Carnival time, an idea proposed as a form of patriotic Carnival charity for the nation during the war, became popular entertainment around Carnival time after it. One reason why such events may have been allowed was due to their jovial amusement in the absence of the participatory nature of typical Carnival that unfolded on public streets. There were frequent concerts by bands and orchestras, in elite theaters and cultural institutions but also in cafes and restaurants. The opportunity to glimpse but not take part in Carnival activities was made possible by cabarets and music halls that, as reported in

²⁸⁸ “Verboten,” *The Cologne Post*, from the “Echoes of the Rhineland” section, 15 February 1920 (273): 4. Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek Köln.

1921, included “special carnival turns and features in their programmes.”²⁸⁹ By 1922 these performances, often by famous and well-known orchestras in large restaurants were always sold out. Outside of these institutions, “would-be visitors lined up in queues, and so large that mounted police had to regulate the throngs.”²⁹⁰

But with a centenary of Cologne Carnival approaching, in 1923, it seems some natives were not as eager to give up the tradition as the German authorities hoped. The mood during Carnival time alone seemed difficult to suppress. Even in the absence of costumes or public fanfare, a sort of ambience wafted across the city. Despite the “strict prohibitions of the German authorities” on Carnival Tuesday in 1920 the *Cologne Post* reported that “...the carnival spirit was all prevailing in [the] Rhineland on Sunday.”²⁹¹ An article in *The Bystander* quipped about a similar air of passive resistance to authorities and respectable revelry during Carnival: “Their crowning festival, the Cologne Carnival, has not taken place since war broke out, but during the week it lasted no one really slept, no work was done, and while no respectable person was ever drunk, no self-respecting person was ever quite sober!”²⁹² The days of Carnival in 1921 were characterized by “considerable gaiety,” and likewise the following year in 1922, the press contended that the “spirit of Carnival was very much in evidence” and that “[e]verybody was very good

²⁸⁹ “Carnival,” *The Cologne Post*, from the “Echoes of the Rhineland” section, 4 February 1921 (572). Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek Köln.

²⁹⁰ “Carnival,” *The Cologne Post*, from the “Echoes of the Rhineland” section, 1 March 1922 (Nr 896): 4. Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek Köln.

²⁹¹ “Carnival,” *The Cologne Post*, from the “Echoes from the Rhineland” section, 17 February 1920, (Nr. 274): 4. Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek Köln.

²⁹² “The Jovial Rhineland by the Bystander in Occupation,” *The Bystander*, 21 January 1921. The British Newspaper Archive. Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek Köln.

tempered.”²⁹³ It was only in 1923 that the Carnival mood that filled the air during Carnival week was dampened, that year cursed with both the worst nadir of economic collapse as well as bad weather during the Carnival days. Even despite the dire conditions that year, the paper reported “[a] few spasmodic attempts to work up a festive mood....”²⁹⁴ Again in 1924 amidst some improvement at least in the hyperinflation crisis, the paper detailed how “the spirit of carnival has been very manifest.”²⁹⁵

Despite the Carnival prohibition and the select allowances for concerts during Carnival, much impromptu and private Carnival amusement took place anyway. Although such activities would be “severely dealt with, especially masquerading or singing of songs,” such acts in private and sometimes in public but with fewer costumes seemed somewhat common.²⁹⁶ According to the British occupation reports, during Carnival time some “fantastic caps and dresses” were seen on open streets suggesting that dressing up with select costume articles occurred, but masks, which were strictly forbidden, were much less common.²⁹⁷ Many reports pointed to private fancies, that there was “doubtless a fair amount of private jollification,” what another report labeled the “modified version of the Cologne Carnival, that is to say the private jollifications which

²⁹³ “Carnival,” *The Cologne Post*, from the “Echoes of the Rhineland” section, 8 February 1921 (575): 4. Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek Köln. “Carnival,” *The Cologne Post*, from the “Echoes of the Rhineland” section, 4 March 1924 (1502): 4. Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek Köln. “Carnival,” *The Cologne Post*, from the “Echoes of the Rhineland” section, 1 March 1922 (896): 4. Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek Köln.

²⁹⁴ “Carnival,” *The Cologne Post*, from the “Echoes of the Rhineland” section, 13 February 1923 (1183): 4. Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek Köln.

²⁹⁵ “Carnival,” *The Cologne Post*, from the “Echoes of the Rhineland” section, 4 February 1924 (1502): 4. Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek Köln.

²⁹⁶ “Carnival,” *The Cologne Post*, from the “Echoes of the Rhineland” section, 15 February 1920 (273): 4. Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek Köln.

²⁹⁷ “Carnival,” *The Cologne Post*, from the “Echoes of the Rhineland” section, 28 February 1922 (896): 4. Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek Köln.

include ‘viel’ wine and beer.”²⁹⁸ To the Carnival misrule that reigned in private quarters, although technically banned by the restrictions, “[i]n this town police must overlook what is going on in private houses, because Cologne remains Cologne, that is the say, the Carnival town of Germany.”²⁹⁹ It wasn’t as if Carnival activities in private homes weren’t also part of standard Carnival activities; they were, but the most important aim of Carnival regulation in the Rhineland seemed to be the maintenance of a public face of seriousness as opposed to say the heart and soul of Rhinelanders. So the rule did seem to be to keep activities out of the view of authorities who would otherwise be compelled to act. Some lenience may have been shown to the city where Carnival was so important. According to an article, “[i]n other cities the prohibitions are even more severe,” although from other reports it is known that nearby cities like Düsseldorf and also Königswinter allegedly experienced “real Carnival,” which “a large number of townspeople” left the city to take part in.³⁰⁰ Another report pointed to the practice of traveling to other towns where Carnival was permitted, stating that “there were plenty of revellers abroad on Sunday.”³⁰¹ Although authorities turned a blind eye to private revelry during Carnival in Cologne, those revelers did eventually have to get home. “One civilian I met nearing his home at a latish hour, was carrying shoes under his arm, and approached the family

²⁹⁸ “Carnival,” *The Cologne Post*, from the “Echoes of the Rhineland” section, 4 February 1921 (572). Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek Köln. “Waiters versus Carnival,” *The Cologne Post*, from the “Echoes of the Rhineland” section, 8 February 1921 (575). Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek Köln.

²⁹⁹ “Carnival,” *The Cologne Post*, from the “Echoes of the Rhineland” section, 15 February 1920 (273): 4. Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek Köln.

³⁰⁰ “Carnival,” *The Cologne Post*, from the “Echoes of the Rhineland” section, 28 February 1922 (Nr. 896): 4. Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek Köln.

³⁰¹ “Carnival,” *The Cologne Post*, from the “Echoes of the Rhineland” section, 8 February 1921 (Nr. 575): 4. Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek Köln.

mansion in stockinged feet,” one 1920 quip observed.³⁰² Another from 1921 described the trend of “[d]uring the twenty-third hour,” the time of the national curfew, “when the big parties broke up” that “festive revellers in masks and fancy costume ... made [the] night merry,” presumably spilling out into the streets to make their way home.³⁰³

The Carnival days during the occupation seemed characterized by some fun on the streets—a certain type of mood in the air, the Carnival *Stimmung*, despite the official public fanfare—coupled with often un-costumed and un-masked special attire, together with some carousing in bars and restaurants. Indeed most activity seemed to be private or off public streets, like drinking and carousing in cafes, pubs, and restaurants—“It was in the cafes...that the greatest merriment prevailed”—and occasional impromptu processions often by costumed children.³⁰⁴ The historical tradition of impromptu processions occasionally resulted as well. One article in 1920 described how “Cologne youngsters were determined to have their Carnival, and, dressed in fancy costumes, with blackened faces, paraded the streets. A few tin whistles, mouth organs, and biscuit tins made a very passable imitation of a Jazz band.”³⁰⁵ From the text it remains unclear whether the costumed youth, who were likely accustomed to blackface costuming practices during Carnival, were aware of the contemporary politics surrounding race

³⁰² “Carnival,” *The Cologne Post*, from the “Echoes of the Rhineland” section, 17 February 1920 (Nr. 274): 4. Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek Köln.

³⁰³ “Carnival,” *The Cologne Post*, from the “Echoes of the Rhineland” section, 8 February 1921 (Nr. 575): 4. Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek Köln. On the mandatory closing hours set by the Reich government see “Schlemmerei und Alkoholmissbrauch,” Letter, Reichskanzler in Berlin to the Landesregierungen, 17 January 1923, Series R43I/1199 Akten betreffend Branntweinhandel u. Maßnahmen geg. Alkoholismus 28 October 1920 to 31 December 1923, Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde.

³⁰⁴ “Carnival,” *The Cologne Post*, from the “Echoes of the Rhineland” section, 1 March 1922 (Nr. 896): 4. Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek Köln.

³⁰⁵ “The Children,” *The Cologne Post*, from the “Echoes of the Rhineland” section, 17 February 1920 (Nr. 274): 4. Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek Köln.

given the heated propaganda war raging in the region over the Black Shame on the Rhineland. Likewise in 1921, another report described how on Carnival Sunday there again could be seen “many impromptu processions of children.”³⁰⁶

From the press of the British Army on the Rhine then, the story of Carnival varies from the narrative of the German government and the Cologne press, as one sees both the appropriation of Carnival institutions and practices by the occupation forces and their families, as well as the seemingly commonplace private and unofficial Carnival festivities that proliferated on the part of the Cologne citizens. Through even this coverage though, one sees a new politics of Carnival emergent from such serious times in Cologne. The British occupation discourses did certain work, namely by depicting themselves as benevolent and the German government by contrast severe, but also describing Cologne’s citizens and their relationship to Carnival in pathological terms that diminished their ongoing suffering during the worst years after the war, the crisis years until around 1924. Indifference toward Carnival on the part of the occupation authorities undermined German authority and could potentially bolster the popularity of the occupation authorities due the Carnival’s importance to the population. When the British in 1924 permitted open hours in all institutions of carousal in 1924 during the Carnival days—in direct violation of the German government legislation—such action wasn’t harmless. At the same time even instances within the British occupation and British mainland presses pointed to instances of mounting pressure and tense politics in the city as in the region, with Carnival implicated in these urban, regional, and national politics as a result. The final section then takes up expressions of these mounting pressures within stories of

³⁰⁶ “Carnival,” *The Cologne Post*, from the “Echoes of the Rhineland” section, 8 February 1921 (Nr. 575): 4. Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek Köln.

Carnival in Cologne, namely instances of skirmishes, social unrest, and even violent uprisings connected to Carnival time and discourses of Carnival amidst the fragile geopolitical affairs in the region.

II. Carnival & Unrest in the Rhineland

Most coverage of Carnival happenings around the city found in *The Cologne Post* depicted Carnival indulgences as harmless pleasures that evaded the laws of German governance. Cologne's German residents stepped *slightly* over the line of protocol and law that would evoke penalties or retaliation by authorities in Cologne. However, some reports pointed to slightly more brazen acts of resistance or political critique. Such reports were mediated by the ideological demands of managing the occupation amidst geopolitical politics of the region, and yet the possibility for subtle resistance came through in the reports to varying degrees. For instance during Carnival week in 1921, many stressors affecting Cologne after the war came to a head. In that year restaurant workers went on strike for higher wages, a strike that persisted either intentionally or not through Carnival week. The result of this convergence of social unrest and the unfulfilled desire for Carnival—apparently restricted even in its mediated form that year by a lack of staff to serve patrons—led to “many troops of would-be merrymakers [who] streamed through the city on [Carnival] Saturday” and were met with violence by “large numbers of magnificently mounted Prussian police.”³⁰⁷ This was the language of the British

³⁰⁷ Eric Gordon, “Conflicts and Conciliation. By The Bystander in Occupation,” *The Bystander*, Vol. 904, Iss. 69 (30 March 1921): 684. Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek Köln.

occupation press about the strike during Carnival time that year. The clash resulted in “a large number of damaged heads.” Notably too, the striking restaurant workers identified certain restaurants’ owners with the German “Schieber class,” anti-capitalist rhetoric that proliferated after the war about those believed to have made money off the war and revolution.³⁰⁸ As a result, at least two of these restaurants were believed to “have been badly smashed up during the week-end” as a result of rioting during Carnival.³⁰⁹ This was a far cry from prewar public Carnival festivities in the city but that year there was a Carnival of sorts after all. Even through the tempered depictions of the British occupation press one could glimpse the tense politics in the city that became heightened during Carnival time. In this example it wasn’t rather the wholesome Carnival humor that citizens deployed for their ends but the holiday’s political dimension. In a fragile post-war Cologne society, Carnival week even without sanctioned public celebrations was an opportunity to express local frustrations and social persiflage, one element characteristic of prewar Carnival practices that the elite in their reforms had worked to diminish before the war in public Carnival displays.

Illicit Carnival activities in Cologne as elsewhere weren’t always tolerated either, as already in 1919 reports of arrests and punishments were published in the press. The contrast in depiction of the treatment of Carnival activities in Cologne between the British occupation press and that of the mainland British press potentially stemmed from an investment in being seen as benevolent on the part of the former. British mainland papers by contrast published stories of the demeaning enforcement of Carnival acts in

³⁰⁸ “Waiters versus Carnival,” *The Cologne Post*, in the “Echoes of the Rhineland” section, 8 February 1921 (Nr. 575): 4. Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek Köln.

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

public. One article in the *Sunderland Daily Echo* on “Carnival in Cologne” detailed the arrest by the “military police” of a local bourgeois lady—one is to infer based on the article’s reference to her servant—in her “ball dress.”³¹⁰ She was sentenced to “clean thirty pairs of military boots,” what she recommended her servant do for her, a proposition speedily rejected. As a result, “she was kept busy with the brushes and the blacking until the dawn of the day.” This sort of humiliation of a bourgeois woman, at a time during which anxiety over German women’s safety abounded in the occupied territories, marked a striking inversion of prewar norms around Carnival and the protection of bourgeois respectability. The article, originally published in the *Westminster Gazette* detailed similar fates for still other Carnival revelers in Cologne that year. “Thirty dancers were also brought in, and while the ladies were locked up their partners were condemned to do certain fatigue duties in the way of street cleaning, in their festive attire.” Such punishments, while a humiliating display of foreign power replete with class irreverence, were nevertheless substantially less than the large fines and jail time set for Carnival prohibitions by the Weimar governments. Penalties for breaking the national prohibition on Carnival varied by locale. Whereas in Wiesbaden and Cologne the penalties were 30 Marks and 60 Marks respectively, in Berlin and Prussia breaking the prohibition carried an up-to-300 Mark fine. In nearly all drafts of the prohibition over time and throughout the country, the penalty could alternatively carry a prison sentence of up to one year.³¹¹ Yet, one is also left to wonder about which events in particular the

³¹⁰ “Carnival in Cologne,” *Sunderland Daily Echo*, 25 April 1919. The British Newspaper Archive.

³¹¹ Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

papers reported such “picturesquely unpleasant” images considering the article was published in late April and Carnival week that year was in late February to early March. So again the British ambiguity in views toward Cologne’s natives as people whose reason for existence was Carnival may have further informed a depiction of other amusements, also not permitted to German citizens, as the pathological drive to Carnival.

This experience of new enforcement of Carnival prohibition was shared as well, evidenced by reports on the breaking up of elite Carnival activities in Munich. The police broke up a Carnival ball in Munich, of mostly the “former Royal Court of Bavaria” in the words of the *The Scotsman*, due to its “defiance of the recent order prohibiting all Carnival celebrations.”³¹² According to the *Localanzeiger*, “the entire company, which included several Princes and Princesses, were taken on foot to the police station for identification.” At the same time, other articles explicitly linked social and political unrest to Carnival activities and their restriction. In an article then on the “Bavarian Outbreak; Nationalists Stop a Carnival,” the British newspaper the *Pall Mall and Globe* first reported that “Further demonstration by National Bolsheviks against the demands of the Paris Conference are reported from various districts”—demonstrations and political displays in other words that took place during Carnival week in Munich that year.³¹³ The article continued then that “[w]hile a carnival and ball were in progress to-night Nationalist students and Communists stormed the building and drove out all the merry-makers,” a report taken from the *Central News*. From such events and their depictions,

³¹² “Munich Ball Stopped,” *The Scotsman*, 9 February 1921. The British Newspaper Archive.

³¹³ “Bavarian Outbreak. Nationalists Stop a Carnival,” *Pall Mall and Globe* (story reported originally in the *Central News*), 2 February 1921: 2. The British Newspaper Archive.

the embrace of Carnival after the war is seen implicitly as a sign of opposition to the new Weimar government, here as a clash between nationalists and communists on the one hand and monarchists, members of the aristocracy, and conservatives on the other. These brief glimpses of measures against Carnival on the part of authorities in Cologne as well as police and local groups in Munich point to these new politics of Carnival after the war. Indeed Carnival's occasion for skirmishes became a dominant expression of tense politics in the Rhineland as elsewhere after the war, as Carnival in the Rhineland created space for opposition to Weimar republicanism on the part of diverse groups both German and foreign. At this time the holiday's regulation in particular became tied to clashes over the Weimar state and the wellbeing of true Rhinelanders and true Germans, as well as the future of the German nation.

This local support for Carnival and its connection to Rhenish politics amidst growing social and political unrest is seen in one letter from an Aachen dentist written in 1920. The dentist wrote a letter to the *Kölnische Zeitung* in 1920 protesting the newspaper's resistance to the restoration of Carnival after the war. Carnival was woven into the fabric of self-understanding for Rhinelanders, "this ancient Rhenish Volk custom" that still needed "preservation."³¹⁴ Indeed the holiday's importance, as emblematic of local traditions and essential to civic identity, was still very much alive to Rhenish nationalists. And whereas before the war this Rhenish pride in Carnival promoted regional identity within a German nation, it now fueled opposition to the republic. At least to this dentist, to have Carnival cheer in such dark times wasn't

³¹⁴ Aachener Dentist Bolkenius writing to the editor of the *Rheinischen Herold*, 18 October 1920 in response to article in the *Kölnische Zeitung*. Quoted in: Martin Schlemmer, *"Los von Berlin": die Rheinstaatbestrebungen nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2007): 520.

unpatriotic and anti-national acts of madness and escapism, as the Prussian authorities in Berlin would have people believe. Rather, “[i]t is auspicious that in this dismal time there are still enviable people, who have humor and can give it off to their fellow men.” The dentist then contested the idea that a “true German, in particular a Rhinelander” could through such “gatherings that distract one from the misery of current everyday” serve as a “promotion of gluttony (*Schlemmertum*) and waste (*Prassertum*).” In other words, it wasn’t the *Rhinelanders* or any *true Germans* who misused Carnival but someone else. In such cases one could see select instances in which Rhenish nationalists amidst the tide of anti-Carnival fervor disaggregated the peril and problems of Carnival at the time through appeal to themselves as the true authentic bastions of Carnival emotion and praxis. Carnival is seen here then both as a powerful force for Rhenish identity even after the war, as well as a site of contentious regional and national politics that expressly contested the messages of the Reich government based in Berlin.

Indeed Carnival also seemed to be placed at the peculiar intersection of political legitimacy and social grievance in the city and the region as a whole, an unsuspected player in the broader propaganda war over the Rhineland during the region’s occupation.³¹⁵ How could a popular city holiday like Carnival, imagined as a sign of Rhenish goodness and what drew Rhenish people together before the war, carry such international significance? One passing line in an article by *The Bystander* captured the answer succinctly: “Politics formed the basis of the carnival procession, and even without the added complications of a foreign garrison, its disappearance from a land whose

³¹⁵ For a particularly insightful treatment of the occupied Rhineland as a propaganda war over impressions, see Anna-Monika Lauter, *Sicherheit und Reparationen: die französische Öffentlichkeit, der Rhein und die Ruhr (1919-1923)* (Essen: Klartext, 2006).

politics are as bitter and complicated as those of Rhineland [*sic*] probably ensures the preservation of not only clear but unbroken heads with which to start fasting.”³¹⁶ It did then seem possible that the belief of many German authorities in Carnival’s potential for skirmishes and political mishaps in the occupied territories held some truth. One of the most frequently cited reasons for the national ban on Carnival was the possibility of “clashes” (*Zusammenstoßen*) between citizens and the occupation forces and their families. According to the Berlin Interior Minister, Social Democrat Adolf Köster, Carnival simply “would not be understood by our former adversaries.”³¹⁷ The tensions imbedded in Carnival and its restrictions in the Rhineland hotbed by these years is captured again in the British press, in its description of Rhenish people in the post-war cultural and political milieu as paradoxically totally defeated and tenaciously rebellious. In the words of author Eric Gordon, “[i]t is a little bit difficult to be at once utterly crushed by, yet determined to resist, ‘outrageous’ demands, and, at the same time, keep up the spirit of carnival, with the dispensers of spirits, wines and all else that maketh glad the heart of man on strike.”³¹⁸ This was meant to poke fun at the “jovial Rhinelanders” after the war, but the description also pointed to Carnival as an expression of local political tensions at that time. These tensions eventually came to a head in the crisis over the Ruhr and the attempted establishment of the Rhenish Revolution in 1923.

³¹⁶ Eric Gordon, “Collapsed Carnival. By The Bystander in Occupation,” *The Bystander*, Vol. 69, Nr. 900 (2 March 1921): 460. Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek Köln.

³¹⁷ Minister of the Interior in Berlin to all state governments, 2 December 1921, Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

³¹⁸ Eric Gordon, “Conflicts and Conciliation by The Bystander in the Rhineland,” *The Bystander*, 30 March 1921 (904, Nr. 69): 684. Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek Köln.

Select acts of Carnival actively challenged local legislation in Cologne around 1923. That year was the worst of German hyperinflation and the year of a further occupation of the Ruhr region allegedly due to failure to make reparations payments. One report in *The Cologne Post* described the singing of political songs in cafes during Carnival time. Although singing even Carnival songs was strictly forbidden, “the customary Lieder (songs) were largely interspersed with parodies dealing with the Ruhr!”³¹⁹ Furthermore reports from 1924 detailed the streets being “full of revelers” even after midnight, clearly breaking curfew, and that all these people were “very merry and bright until the inevitable ‘thick head’ reminded the workers that over-night pleasures have their penalties.”³²⁰ Some individuals even in 1921 were described as wearing masks despite their strict forbiddance.³²¹ One report from 1924 even reported an incidence of open cross-dressing on the street by a woman. “One daring young thing ventured down the Hohestrasse dressed as a man, and very dandified she looked, too, in a well-cut suit, silk socks and of course other garments, plus an elegant cane and a cigarette.”³²² But these select potentially subversive Carnival acts in Cologne paled in comparison to the revolutionary ones that broke out in 1923 as Carnival became connected to real revolution in the Rhineland through the separatist movement.

Already in 1922 the French and Belgian occupation forces had encouraged Carnival among the bands of Rhenish separatists in the Rhineland. In contrast to the

³¹⁹ “Carnival,” *The Cologne Post*, in the “Echoes of the Rhineland” section, 13 February 1923 (Nr. 1183): 4. Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek Köln.

³²⁰ “Carnival,” *The Cologne Post*, in the “Echoes of the Rhineland” section, 4 March 1924 (Nr. 1502): 4. Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek Köln.

³²¹ “Carnival,” *The Cologne Post*, in the “Echoes of the Rhineland” section, 8 February 1921 (Nr. 575): 4. Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek Köln.

³²² “Carnival,” *The Cologne Post*, in the “Echoes of the Rhineland” section, 4 March 1924 (Nr. 1502): 4. Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek Köln.

British undermining of German authorities through indifference, the French and Belgian forces used Carnival to stoke the flames of social unrest in the region that bordered on civil war. The *Kölnische Zeitung* then broke its silence on the holiday to write about “Carnival friends and separatists.”³²³ The article proclaimed total outrage about pro-Carnival action that had taken place in other cities in the Rhineland, namely Düsseldorf and Aachen. The article begins by discussing the region’s emergency state, the “struggle for existence” (*Daseinskampf*) that is motivating a desire to “come to grips with the nuisance of gluttony.”³²⁴ Concern over this question was so acute in 1921 that the Bavarian state government (*Staatsregierung*) sent a proposed law “against the nuisance of gluttony” to the Imperial Assembly (*Reichsrat*) in Berlin on November 11, 1921 to be introduced. By diluting beer or restricting festivities like Carnival in such dire times, the desire was “to bring the nation (*Volk*) back to its senses.” The absence of Carnival in Cologne represented rational action, paradoxically a symbol of the return of a normal nation in spite of Carnival’s typical role in that normalness to the region’s natives. Following the thinking of conservative clerics like Weertz or even moderate wartime nationalists like the author who highlighted Carnival’s charitable function, this author saw demands for Carnival as indicative of mental and moral failure, an inability to understand Germany’s domestic state and control oneself in turn. “Hardship teaches [one] to economize.” Nevertheless, the actions of the “Rhenish Carnivalists” reveal “that they are unteachable.” Rhenish Carnivalists wanted their Carnival as in the prewar years. But in 1922 this desire had become tantamount to not only incapacity but also treason.

³²³ “Karnevalsfreunde und Sonderbündler,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, 29 October 1922 (757): 1. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

³²⁴ Ibid.

The details of the situation dealt with multiple Rhenish organizations who advocated for the return of Carnival despite the occupation. A persistent vision of Carnival as regional folk heritage, a central prewar notion of the holiday, was seen in the name of one of the organizations alone, “The Association for the Preservation of Rhenish Folk Festivals and Customs” (*Vereinigung zur Erhaltung der rheinischen Volksfeste und Gebräuche*). This idea of “preservation” spoke then to the contemporary assault not just by the German authorities on Rhenish customs but on the region in general by foreign occupations. The group, which claimed a combined membership of 200,000 people, had already invoked such rationale in a protest assembly on 21 April 1922, meant to oppose the new national prohibition from 21 December 1921 that had banned Carnival not just in the occupied territories but also throughout the whole of Germany.³²⁵ Another such protest had also occurred even earlier in the year, when a protest assembly representing 30,000 people in Düsseldorf opposed the law on 1 January 1922.³²⁶ The Carnival preservationists criticized Prussian meddling in regional culture, much as they had already as part of anti-Prussian prewar Rhenish nationalism from the early nineteenth century. In an assembly of the organization, 25,000 members of the “population of Aachen” then “vehemently demanded” the authorization of Carnival, and on the same day, a “Congress of Rhenish Carnival Societies” assembled by the association met and

³²⁵ “Abschrift I 3104,” Vereinigung zur Erhaltung der rheinischen Volksfeste und Gebräuche E.V. in Aachen, 21 April 1922, R/1501 Reichsministerium des Innern. 11 March 1922 to 24 February 1925, Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde.

³²⁶ “Bericht über die öffentliche Protest Versammlung 13. 1. 22. Hotel Rheinhof,” 13 January 1922, Series R/1501 Reichsministerium des Innern 11 March 1922 to 24 February 1925, Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde.

resolved to hold Carnival sessions and a costume party in every club.³²⁷ According to a publication from the association, they already had talks with the Cologne district presidents (*Regierungspräsidenten*) and “representatives of Cologne cardinals and of the evangelical presbytery” about the alleged “consensus” of the population that a return to Carnival was needed. A consensus of the community seems apocryphal given the clearly divided views toward the holiday in Cologne, essentially unthinkable to the article’s author “considering the moral barbarization of our time.”³²⁸ The author of the article in the *Kölnische Zeitung* probed the organizations claims and derided Carnival’s pretense to separatist agitation.

The 25,000 members represented by the organization, the journalist argued, “might be taken aback” however if they had seen what this “assembly of Rhenish separatists and high traitors” addressed and “how much they tried to capitalize on [the situation] of the assembly.” The journalist even questioned the claim to such a high membership, suggesting that there couldn’t possibly have been 25,000 pro-Carnival community members. However, the image of pro-Carnival Germans was made all the worse by another situation detailed in the article. It centered around the “high traitor” Joseph Smeets. As a leader within the Rhenish separatist movement, alongside others like Hans Adam Dorten and Josef Friedrich Matthes, Smeets was the founder and chairman of the Rhenish Republican People’s Party (*Rheinische Republikanische Volkspartei*), first established in the Rhineland in 1919 with the aim to found an autonomous Rhineland, and editor of the separatist journal the *Rheinische Republik*. He would be badly injured in

³²⁷ “Karnevalsfreunde und Sonderbündler,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, 29 October 1922 (757): 1. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

³²⁸ Ibid.

March 1923 due to an assassination attempt. Smeets, allegedly “at the behest of” the “Lower Rhine friends of Frankish folk festivals,” went to the French commander general of the Düsseldorf bridgehead in light of the “difficulties that the Rhenish Schützen and Carnival clubs would have to endure in the occupied territory.”³²⁹ *Schützenfest*, or the “Marksmen’s Festival” is another popular German and Swiss festival that centered around a target shooting competition and was like Carnival characterized by a lot of carousal. What had resulted in Düsseldorf though was that a known separatist in the Rhineland went to a French occupation leader, even though the prohibition came from the German government, invoking Carnival’s relationship to “Frankish folk festivals” to appeal for the holiday’s authorization. The French general replied that Carnival was “fully permitted,” therein undermining the authority of the Berlin government.³³⁰

The author derided Smeets for purportedly thinking he was possessed of “more understanding of the Rhenish soul” than the “Slavic Prussians”—the separatist members of Smeets’ party were well-known to be anti-Prussian as many prewar Carnivalists had likewise been.³³¹ This was yet another person invoking Carnival or distance from it in terms of what it meant to be a “true Rhineland” or a “true German.” The author invoking the sensible among the Cologne population concluded that “to the thinking part of the Rhenish population” it is clear that “the high traitor wants to use Carnival excitement to set the Rhenish population against the federal state authorities

³²⁹ David Williamson, *The British in Interwar Germany: the Reluctant Occupiers, 1918-1930* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017): 152.

³³⁰ “Karnevalsfreunde und Sonderbündler,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, 29 October 1922 (757): 1. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin. “Fastnacht,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, 29 February 1924 (Nr. 152): 2. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

³³¹ “Karnevalsfreunde und Sonderbündler,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, 29 October 1922 (757): 1. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

(*Landesbehörden*)” and that the restriction of Carnival by those authorities was absolutely necessary for security and order because Carnival “can lead to the most severe riots and excesses (*Ausschreitungen*).” The war experience had fundamentally changed the stakes of Carnival, coming to represent political aspirations, and stirring anxieties that for once took seriously the tropes of the holiday that were ordinarily only play-acted. What the article pointed to was indeed deep fissures in regional politics, as Carnival was at once a force for the undermining of German society as well as for the bolstering of Rhenish civic identity—ostensibly bought into not just by the separatists but also by the Cologne district presidents together with the Cologne cardinals and representatives of the evangelical presbytery. These were indeed serious politics with high national stakes by 1922.

Indeed Carnival’s regulation became tied by 1922 to arguments about true membership in the *Volk* and the soul of the people, as Rhenish Carnival enthusiasts—conservatives, monarchists, Rhenish separatists, and commercial groups—used appeals for Carnival to oppose the legitimacy of the republic. Regional nationalist groups in the Rhineland used Carnival to undermine the German government based in Berlin and embraced pro-Carnival stances as a way of undermining Prussian and Weimar legitimacy. Discussions of Carnival’s alleged necessary gaiety and the Weimar regulation of play became invariably tied up in critiques of government legitimacy, as representatives of the Carnival societies, Carnival tradespeople, and occasionally the Cologne liberal press accused the Berlin-based government of not only denying the populace something good for national wellbeing—like a plant that becomes “stunted” when it “must go without light,” according to the Association of Hall and Concert Venue

Owners of Germany.³³² They also accused the government of illegally and ignorantly meddling in Rhenish affairs, the Weimar administration seen to embrace philistinism in domestic policy. If the government could be seen spearheading such policies against Carnival then its officials surely “did not know the soul of the nation (*Volk*),” the organization argued.³³³ Carnival societies likewise maintained that it was unlawful to restrict Carnival merriment in this way, labeling Carnival bans as unconstitutional and undemocratic. The aforementioned protest assembly in Düsseldorf argued that Carnival prohibition violated rights laid out for Rhinelanders in the Weimar constitution: ordinances against Carnival “infringe upon the constitutional rights of the citizens.”³³⁴ Carnival supporters assembled publically and recounted aggressive and intimidating measures against Carnival enacted on children by the local police during Carnival.³³⁵ Sparse extant sources about Carnival during the year points to at least one wartime public display of Carnival, an impromptu Carnival procession of mostly children in 1919, staged on the traditional Neumarkt center of Carnival in Cologne, amidst a brigade of stationed military vehicles and occupying British troops that cluttered the historic Carnival

³³² “Verwahrung gegen ein beabsichtigtes allgemeines Karnevalsverbot,” Letter Bund der Saal- u. Konzertlokal-Inhaber Deutschlands E.V. in Berlin to the Preußische Ministerium in Berlin, 23 November 1921, Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

³³³ Ibid.

³³⁴ “Bericht über die öffentliche Protest Versammlung 13. 1. 22. Hotel Rheinhof,” 13 January 1922, Series R/1501 Reichsministerium des Innern 11 March 1922 to 24 February 1925, Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde.

³³⁵ “Abschrift I 3104,” Vereinigung zur Erhaltung der rheinischen Volksfeste und Gebräuche E.V. in Aachen, 21 April 1922, R/1501 Reichsministerium des Innern. 11 March 1922 to 24 February 1925, Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde.

gathering place. The British forces violently opposed them.³³⁶ What is more, these pro-Carnival groups who challenged the legitimacy of the Weimar government and its actions in the Rhineland became not just implicitly but explicitly connected to public separatist political action.

Foreign occupation and separatist agitation in the Rhineland and Pflanz regions pulled Carnival into tense domestic politics with high stakes. The French actively used the politics surrounding Carnival and its regulation to compel social unrest and empower separatist forces in the region. French occupation support for Carnival involved linking up with local separatists to foment separatist sentiment on the part of the local population through notions of denied local heritage. In 1922 then the French occupation forces joined known Rhenish separatists who empowered Carnival supporters like members of the Association for the Preservation of Rhenish Folk Festivals and Customs.³³⁷ In other words, a feeling of being singled out and denied their traditions on the part of Carnival supporters was used to fuel separatist movements fomenting in the region. This was especially ironic as the national ban of Carnival laid down in December 1921 was meant to guard against Rhinelanders feeling like a marginalized group that disproportionately paid the price for the war. Correspondence by Interior Minister Köster upon receiving the initial recommendation from the Cologne assembly to ban Carnival across the country expressed this intention, communicated to all state governments in their local setting of the initial nationwide prohibition, was to avoid a “feeling of less favorable treatment and

³³⁶ Joseph Klersch, *Die Költnische Fastnacht von ihren Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* (Köln: Verlag J. P. Bachem, 1961): 165.

³³⁷ “Karnevalsfreunde und Sonderbündler,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, 29 October 1922 (757): 1, Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

setback in relation to the population of unoccupied Germany.”³³⁸ Numerous officials went on to cite the importance of Rhinelanders not feeling singled out or like second-class citizens in the context of such restrictions. Nevertheless, numerous affected industries, like for instance the Association of German Toy Manufacturers writing to the Reich Interior Ministry in November 1921, cited the singling out of Carnival for suppression while other forms of leisure were allowed.³³⁹ The separatists and foreign forces homed in on this sentiment. The French then backed the founding of the “Rhenish Republic” in the Carnival hub of Aachen in August 1923, as leaders in the movement like Josef Smeets from Cologne used appeals to customs like Carnival to instill passion for a Rhineland independent from Prussia, tensions that existed since at least the nineteenth century and were frequently the subject of prewar Carnival displays of the *Rote Funken* who “agitated” for Cologne as a Free Imperial City. Such support by the French could sway impressions in the region against the German administration without using force or even overtly being seen to influence affairs. But the French also actively undermined German authority outright in the process of Carnival regulation, which raised issues of governance and authority.

Separatist groups worked together with the French occupation to use Carnival as a fulcrum to overthrow German control in the region through inciting indeed serious social unrest to civil war. Such actions alone elevated Carnival in the Rhineland to new national

³³⁸ Minister of the Interior in Berlin to all state governments, 2 December 1921, Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

³³⁹ Deutscher Spielwarenverband Verbandsgeschäftsstelle Sonneberg S.-M. to the Reichsministerium des Innern in Berlin, 10 November 1921, Series R/1501 Reichsministerium des Innern 11 March 1922 to 24 February 1925, Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde.

politics after the war. But it also worked. An attempted establishment of a Rhenish Republic had failed already in 1919 but displayed the degree of separatist sentiment against Prussian control in the region. Following the illegal occupation of the Ruhr territory, separatist uprisings actually broke out in the region, which proved difficult to immediately suppress.³⁴⁰ A Rhenish Republic was declared in Aix-la-Chapelle as separatists founded a provisional government in Coblenz. Bands of workers ejected the separatists from Aix-la-Chapelle as well as from Mönchengladbach near Düsseldorf. In Coblenz separatists seized the government building, the mayor's office, and arrested the district president (*Regierungspräsident*). In Monschau in the district of Aachen, separatists seized power and disarmed the police. The separatist republic was declared at Sankt Goar in the Rhineland-Palatinate. Demonstrations and looting broke out in Düsseldorf. Counter attacks against separatists broke out and failed to suppress separatist action in Bonn. Communist skirmishes with marines broke out in Hamburg, where rioting and street fighting had ensued, and still other communist bands attempted to march into Berlin. The chaos was most severe in those territories of large Carnival celebrations—in

³⁴⁰ On select peasant mobilization and protest in rural Bavaria see "Agrarian Mobilisation: Protests and Politics," in Benjamin Ziemann, *War Experiences in Rural Germany, 1914-1923* (Oxford: Berg, 2007). On rural protest and separatist agitation during the crises over the Rhineland and the Ruhr occupation, see also Jonathan Osmond, *Rural Protest in the Weimar Republic: the Free Peasantry in the Rhineland and Bavaria* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993). Conan Fischer, *The Ruhr Crisis, 1923-1924* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). Martin Schlemmer, *"Los von Berlin": die Rheinestaabestrebungen nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2007). Gerd Krumeich ed., *Der Schatten des Weltkriegs: die Ruhrbesetzung 1923* (Essen: Klartext, 2004).

all of the sites listed above except Berlin and Hamburg. The Interior Minister's claim in 1921, that Carnival could incite "clashes" in the occupied territories, was true.³⁴¹

According to numerous British presses, German Chancellor Gustav Stresemann proclaimed about the events that "if the French and Belgians had not supported the Separatists with their bayonets, the whole population of the Rhineland would have ended the carnival procession within twenty-four hours."³⁴² Stresemann did indeed diminish the significance of separatists' acts by writing them off as this "horrific Carnival episode of separatists" (*Karnevalspuk der Separatisten*), at a speech delivered in Hagen on 24 October 1923.³⁴³ His exact words though were slightly different:

The separatists are attempting now to forcibly subjugate the Rhineland and others of Germany's territories. When French and Belgian bayonets help them in certain places, that is the breach of promise toward all the solemn (*feierlich*) assurances that have been delivered internationally. What does the assurance of neutrality have to do with the nature of disarmament of those who would gladly be ready to defend Germany and, given the freedom to do so, would make an end to the horrific Carnival episode of the separatists in 24 hours.

³⁴¹ Minister of the Interior in Berlin to all state governments, 2 December 1921, Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

³⁴² This quote was printed within numerous British press outlets after Stresemann used the language in a speech in Hagen. See then "'The End.' German Chancellor's Warning. The Rhineland 'Carnival.'" *Daily Echo*, 26 October 1923. The British Newspaper Archive. German Chancellor's Bitter Utterance. France Accused of Bad Faith," *The Yorkshire Post* (story reported originally in the *Reuter's Telegrams*), 27 October 1923. The British Newspaper Archive. "German Capacity to Pay," *The Penrith Observer*, 30 October 1923. The British Newspaper Archive. "Rhineland Crisis. Effects of French Policy. Starvation and Anarchy," *The Staffordshire Sentinel*, 26 October 1923. The British Newspaper Archive. "Chancellor and Separatists," *Nottingham Evening Post*, 26 October 1923. The British Newspaper Archive. "Chancellor Defiant. Protest Against French Aid to Separatists," *Sheffield Independent*, 27 October 1923. The British Newspaper Archive.

³⁴³ Gustav Stresemann, "Rede in Hagen vom 25. Oktober 1923," reproduced in Karl Dietrich Erdmann and Martin Vogt ed., *Die Kabinett Stresemann I und II: 13. August bis 6. Oktober 1923, 6. Oktober bis 30. November 1923* (Boppard am Rhein: Boldt, 1978).

Given Carnival's role in the outbreak of the episode there was a sort of comical doubling to Stresemann's statement here, in which he uses the invocation of Carnival to write off the seriousness of agitators' concerns at the same time that Carnival had served as a fulcrum to pull off the outbreak itself. Not only did the foreign occupation use Carnival to promote the outbreaks of separatist agitation across the region through an appeal to Rhenish nationalism. But the Chancellor himself described the whole episode as a horrific act of Carnival. Taking up the language of Carnival madness then, Stresemann declared in the context of ongoing challenging negotiations to prevent a wholesale secession of the Rhineland, that if the negotiation failed "then hunger and chaos will ensue."³⁴⁴ Stresemann diminished the outbreak's severity without foreign intervention as a "Carnival episode," exclaiming that due to the interventions of foreign powers that "Germany has reached the end of her economic strength."³⁴⁵ An article in *The Staffordshire Sentinel* reported from Cologne described the potential outcomes now as "the splitting up of Germany, annexation or Communism; it makes for starvation, anarchy, and civil war."³⁴⁶ Rhineland Carnival ushered in revolutionary politics, as the holiday became a Reich issue that would plague the republic for all of its years.

Beyond the founding of the Rhenish Republic in Aachen and elsewhere, other separatist episodes in Carnival hubs took place as well, as they did in Pirmasens in 1923. In Pirmasens on 29 November 1923, a 300-person troop of separatists backed by the

³⁴⁴ "Chancellor Defiant. Protest Against French Aid to Separatists," *Sheffield Independent*, 27 October 1923. The British Newspaper Archive.

³⁴⁵ "'The End.' German Chancellor's Warning. The Rhineland 'Carnival.'" *Daily Echo*, 26 October 1923. The British Newspaper Archive.

³⁴⁶ "Rhineland Crisis. Effects of French Policy. Starvation and Anarchy," *The Staffordshire Sentinel* (story reported originally in the "*Times*" *Telegram*), 26 October 1923. The British Newspaper Archive.

French and agitating for an autonomous Palatinate seized public buildings despite opposition by the mayor and city council. The separatists banned all political assemblies other than their own, which led to school and city administration strikes, arrests, violent skirmishes, and expulsions. Separatists and Red Guard communists worked together temporarily, but eventually this system deteriorated, leading to the presence in a single German town of four governments simultaneously: the French occupation government, the local German administration, the Separatists, and the Red Guards. This represented another particularly ironic doubling of Carnival logic, as merely weeks after the beginning of the Carnival season, brigades of alleged authorities took over the town, publically celebrating radical political visions. Historical Carnival in Cologne as elsewhere included various infantry and artillery units of different affiliations, Carnival societies that took over the city, foremost among them in Cologne, the “Red Sparks” (*Rote Funken*) and the “Blue Sparks” (*Blaue Funken*), the former of this aforementioned overt revolutionary nature. The Red Guard rioted, leading to the occupation of the city hall, which they withdrew from after ten days, a result brokered by the local German government in exchange for food. The Separatists by contrast were eventually violently attacked by the populace itself on 12 February 1924, which led to the torching of the district office that the separatists had occupied. Such Carnival-like activity—revolutionary action, political critique, the citizenry storming those in power, practices frequently play-acted at Carnival—represented a chilling episode just a week and a half before *actual* Carnival week that year. Allegedly anti-separatists beat to death or shot

men emerging from the building while still others perished in the flames.³⁴⁷ The results of the event included 22 deaths and 158 injured.

Although negotiations were able to save the republic, Carnival's federal prohibition from 1921 absolutely seemed warranted. Politics in the Rhineland were indeed serious and threatened the German state and nation in unprecedented ways. Reports of Carnival in Cologne as indeed elsewhere pointed to the holiday's potential danger, as select episodes of violence and conflict resulted and rationalized its strict regulation—or attempted regulation. At its most basic level, the mobilization of Carnival practices to further the interests of groups in tension with or in outright opposition to the German government represented a new politics of the holiday after the war and led to greater attention to the holiday by officials in the Rhineland as well as in Berlin. Carnival week in Cologne ushered in strikes and rioting, discourses about community enemies and true Germanness, measures against the occupied citizenry and even within political factions of that citizenry. In this newly hyperpoliticized Rhineland after the war, Carnival emerged as the threat of anarchy and chaos and its regulation a requirement for public order and national security. The attempted establishment of a Rhenish Republic and the importance of Carnival to those political aspirations brought the holiday into potential danger of another nature. Cologne was the heart of the Rhineland, which took on a fragile geopolitical status after the war. But Carnival's entwinement with and connection to these politics pulled the holiday into national politics with high stakes. Carnival, both due to its traditional rituals and due to new uses by occupation forces and the citizenry, was swept into new national politics as a result.

³⁴⁷ Jonathan Osmond, *Rural Protest in the Weimar Republic: The Free Peasantry in the Rhineland and Bavaria* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993):

III. Conclusion

After the war, Carnival became a space of competing powers and political visions, a set of practices defined simultaneously in different ways to different ends. In Cologne, the British occupation forces appropriated Carnival spaces and practices, through a tourist association of the city with the holiday. The British indifference to Carnival, in part surely a means of undermining the legitimacy of the local and Reich government, produced a robust private culture of Carnival celebration for Cologne's populace. The only public Carnival celebrations that took place led to violence, as in the case of the restauranteur strike or police action against select acts of Carnival near the Neumarkt. At the same time the British embrace of Carnival further stigmatized the holiday by associating it not with local traditions but with the humiliations of defeat and occupation. Such stigmatization only increased once the French and Belgian supported the holiday together with Rhenish nationalists agitating for an independent Rhineland. Tensions over Carnival did produce skirmishes and conflict then, as the holiday provided fertile ground for a sort of pressure cooker of politics after the war. The French and Belgian occupation forces seemed to understand this well, and used Carnival in the region to stoke separatist agitation through appeals to the holiday's prewar attraction—as a source of civic pride within Rhenish nationalism often in opposition to Prussian governance. The separatist leadership homed in on this manifestation of regional pride as well, by making appeals to Rhenish cultural associations for the preservation of true Cologne and Rhineland culture now believed by these groups to be under siege. These new politics of Carnival

compelled the attempted establishments of the Rhenish Republic, which rationalized the federal prohibition on Carnival for all of Germany in December of 1921, before still more separatist agitation and violence broke out in 1923 and early 1924.

In sum, before the war Carnival promoted regional identity within a German nation, as Carnival's leadership in Cologne merged local customs into a regional Rhenish identity within a modern Germany. After the war, precisely this manifestation of Rhenish pride in Cologne and in the Rhineland fueled opposition to Weimar republicanism, threatening to break up the nation instead of unifying it. Beyond this dangerous Carnival culture of Rhenish separatists, backed by French and Belgian occupation forces, the new Carnival cultures in Cologne, both of the British occupation and of the Cologne citizenry due to British occupation policy, undermined the legitimacy of the republic and its authority further. Not only were these new mobilizations of Carnival symptomatic of a new politics of Carnival after the war, a dramatic shift in the history and meaning of the holiday, but Carnival after the war also posed new threats in Cologne, in the Rhineland, and to the republic. These threats extended beyond the local conflicts between these parties in conflict with each other in the region as the next chapter on the national Carnival debates will detail. As a result, it wasn't just in Cologne and in the Rhineland where concern over Carnival played out. Indeed discussion of Carnival and its associated risks actually remained limited in the occupied territories themselves, glimpsed in this chapter through snippets in the press and the select conflicts that broke out in peak moments. In opposition to the general silence about Carnival in Cologne and the Rhineland, great debate within every level of Weimar government occurred over Carnival's risks and regulation. For a real discussion of these contestations over Carnival

then, especially following the setting of a national German ban on the holiday from 21 December 1921, one must look to the national level, where debate over Carnival took place throughout the entire tenure of the republic.

Chapter 4

The Nationalization of Carnival Discourse

“Seriousness of the Times!”
 Neighborhood brothels! Dens of gluttony!
 Inside with bubbly, the profiteers bawl
 Where ten “brown ones,”
 Subject to whim
 Without the eyelash wincing,
 [How] one loses himself in a night!
 Where coquettes,
 Naked nearly like the Hottentots,
 Dance the Shimmy and also the foxtrot
 With the plump profiteer oxen!
 Yeah, so such things are allowed,
 Because it’s absolutely
 Firstly, elevating morality,
 Secondly, fitting with the Seriousness of the Times!

But wanting in joyful circles,
 Cologne *Volk* after the ways of the fathers,
 On the ear the foolscap,
 Feasting on true jokes
 And with glasses of beer or wine
 Once to let go of the worries:
 Then it’s necessary to shield respectability!
 Such a festival threatens one to charge!
 Then one hears the mothers gasp
 (Partly from Cologne, partly from afar):
 Carnival, one says it’s stamped out
 Because it derides ethics (*die Moral*)
 And destroys morality (*Sittlichkeit*)
 To us doesn’t fit with the Seriousness of the Times!³⁴⁸

By 1921 Carnival had become wrapped up in the national politics of the republic. What once seemed like a pragmatic and precedented policy, Carnival’s cancellation during

³⁴⁸ “Bericht über die öffentliche Protest Versammlung 13. 1. 22. Hotel Rheinhof,” 13 January 1922, Series R/1501 Reichsministerium des Innern 11 March 1922 to 24 February 1925, Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde.

serious times, became during ongoing national regulation of the holiday an important symbol of deep social, political, and regional fissures in Germany. This poem, distributed in 1922 in Düsseldorf by protestors of the national ban on Carnival, displays these fissures well, pointing to what the ban indeed was meant to prevent: a feeling of marginalization and unjust shouldering of burden among Rhinelanders. But beyond that palpable sentiment is also this stark juxtaposition, a moral critique, between good traditional Rhenish Carnivalists in the Rhineland, and unsavory types outside of the Rhineland indulging in immoral and exploitative nightlife that was allowed to flourish. Throughout the years of the republic, widespread audiences even far away from Düsseldorf debated Carnival's regulation and took up similar themes and morally-charged language about what was wrong with German society. This chapter takes up Carnival's national prohibition and the national debate that resulted, using thematic analysis of discourses to display dominant anxieties over Carnival and the shared visions of Weimar society that they depicted.

Carnival's cancellation during wartime had been relatively uncontroversial. After the war by contrast, as other restrictions fell away, Carnival prohibition wasn't just extended—it was intensified. On 2 December 1921 Reich Minister of the Interior, German publicist and SPD politician Adolf Köster, distributed the prohibition to local city and state governments, whose officials implemented slightly varied versions of the suggested ban in the form of local ordinances. Köster's original ban, passed as a police ordinance for all of Prussia and which informed all the borough, city, and state ones, homed in on both practices and spaces in its formulation:

§1. Public Carnival (*karnevalistische*) events of all natures are forbidden. In particular the following falls within this prohibitions: (1) the organization of public Carnival

(*karnevalistischer*) processions and miscellaneous events in the open [and] (2) the organization of public Carnival (*karnevalistischer*) performances, public Carnival (*karnevalistischer*) lectures, and public Carnival (*karnevalistischer*) dance festivities indoors. §2. Forbidden on open streets and squares, in public pubs, [and] at public events and gatherings [are] (1) the wearing of Carnival (*karnevalistischer*) disguises or insignia of all natures (2) the singing, playing and performance of Carnival (*karnevalistischer*) songs, poems, and lectures [and] (3) the throwing of paper streamers, confetti, and the like.³⁴⁹

The ban took up in essence a Cologne Carnival model in its formulation, expressly pointing to the four main types of Carnival activity in Cologne: assemblies, the Street Carnival, the Rose Monday parade, and masquerade balls. While its scope extended to all Carnival activity in this way, the prohibition suggested as well that the most problematic displays were those in public space, a concern for public order also seen in occupied Cologne. Nevertheless, Carnival differed from city to city even in the Rhineland, and what resulted was that the process of Carnival regulation was also quite unsystematic. Authorities' fumbling only intensified the tensions that such measures aimed to diffuse. The language of *karnevalistisch* too, meaning "Carnival" or "Carnival-like," seen above in the prohibition's wording simply wasn't universally coherent in Germany. Yet, while confusion compelled some debate about Carnival, what compelled it more was Carnival's intersection both with pressing national issues on the one hand, and palpable anxieties within Weimar society over a public mass of people in revel and the spread of hedonism. What resulted was a crackdown on the holiday—Carnival was illegal for the whole of Germany from 1921 to 1927 and again from 1930 to 1933—as well as constant debate about Carnival at the national level.

³⁴⁹ Minister of the Interior in Berlin to all state governments, 2 December 1921, Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

During Weimar national Carnival prohibition, broad audiences and authorities took up and fiercely debated the meaning of the holiday at every level of government. Weimar officials from all over Germany penned missives to each other over and to the Interior Ministry in Berlin about the holiday's suppression. Newspapers in Cologne, Düsseldorf, Berlin, and elsewhere critiqued the meaning of the holiday in their pages and cast judgment about the value and efficacy of nationwide Weimar prohibitions. Carnival societies and associations in the traditional Carnival regions organized new groups, like the one that organized the protest in Düsseldorf, for the preservation of local tradition in order to combat the prohibitions and to publicize their interpretation of the true meaning of Carnival. Social reformers, civic organizations, religious authorities, and youth groups sent impassioned letters to the officials who set anti-Carnival measures in order to stress the urgency of the holiday's restriction in such trying times. Tradespeople, factory owners, bar and restaurant managers, and other Carnival industry representatives regularly corresponded with such officials to discuss the difficult effects of Carnival's restriction and the importance of the holiday to economic and public life in Germany.

This chapter is formed on the basis of internal official correspondence and public statements of Weimar officials across local borough, city, state, and national Reich governments throughout the nine Weimar governments of the republic, combined with public discourse seen in newspapers or journals, ministerial or religious gazettes, meeting minutes or reports of associations and assemblies, and miscellaneous sources about Carnival for instance in protest materials or speeches.³⁵⁰ Because such broad audiences

³⁵⁰ The vast majority of this chapter is sourced on the basis of an hitherto unaccessed archival collection of the Secret State Archives Prussian Cultural Heritage (*Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz*) on "Ministry of the Interior Files Concerning

took part in the debate over Carnival during these years—including statesmen, tradespeople, religious leaders, women, foreign powers, relief groups, social reformers, youth, heritage groups, and public educators among others—and held divergent opinions about Carnival’s regulation, these narratives are presented as thematically assimilated opinions. This broad nationalization of Carnival discourse is taken up here in reference to three areas of debate within Weimar society: the suffering German economy; the new international status and politically-sensitive geopolitical nature of the Rhineland; and the persistent concern for the moral health of the German people. What results is a diverse spectrum of opinion within the first two sections on the economy and on the Rhineland—what one expects from this period known for its social, cultural, regional, and political polarization and fragmentation. However, as the last section on ideas about morality and health demonstrates, a surprising consensus across the spectrum of debate is seen, which included representation of every major political party, class group, geographic region, and religious faith in Germany. This last section points then to shared visions of Weimar society across these divisions within Germany, and represents surprising consensus within otherwise deep social and political fissures.

Carnival and Masquerade Balls.” The files, which span from 1 December 1921, when the federal prohibition was first circulated to all local and state governments, to 31 December 1936, largely detail the internal dealings of the Reich, Prussian, and state interior ministries, as well as the individual German governments regarding Carnival’s prohibition as well as other restrictions on festivities like masquerade balls. The ambiguity between Carnival and other forms of related amusements seen within Carnival debates over time is thus also reproduced in the archival files. The files include mostly received and circulated correspondence, internal policy discussions, as well as public announcements and letters of complaint or thanks to the officials from the German public. In other words, they are several hundred opinions about Carnival and its regulation over time, very often a single letter on behalf of an organization or from an official within the German government.

I. Economic Crisis

One central vehicle through which Carnival took on national relevance during the Weimar years dealt with the urgent need to manage Germany's economic crisis after the war. Officials argued that serious economic times precluded the possibility of Carnival—invoking the repeated phrase of the “seriousness of the times” as well as the “serious economic and political state” universally used by Weimar officials across the years of the republic.³⁵¹ Because of the significant economic weight of Carnival's orchestration each year, the question of Carnival's possibility immediately embroiled officials, tradespeople, and other affected groups in heated debate. German economic realities became connected within debate to Carnival stimulus or Carnival restriction as possible responses to economic problems.

Economic concerns were rightly justified, as the German population confronted severe hardships following the war. Runaway hyperinflation produced panic, as in the course of a single day dramatic devaluation could occur, the effect of the government's printing of paper money to meet impossible reparations payments. Citizens rushed with hundreds of devalued Marks to acquire foodstuffs before prices were raised daily. The wild devaluation of the Mark—from 4.2 Marks in 1914 to 4.2 trillion Marks per US

³⁵¹ The “seriousness of the times” as well as the “serious economic and political state” were universally used phrases in discussions of Carnival prohibition by Weimar officials across the political spectrum, throughout the years of the republic. Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz. Series R/1501 Reichsministerium des Innern 11 March 1922 to 24 February 1925, Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde.

dollar in November 1923—ushered in dramatic experiences in turn for the population.³⁵² In Berlin in December 1922 the cost of 1000 grams of wheat bread was 363.70 Marks, up from 7.48 in January of that year.³⁵³ Likewise, the weekly cost of living for a family in Berlin with two children soared from 28.6 thousand Marks in January 1922 to 1.3 million by December.³⁵⁴ Staggering prices were met with soaring unemployment rates and reductions in per capita production up to 1924, when the hourly wage rate as well, 82 Marks, was down 18% from even the previous year, the nadir of Germany's post-war inflation.³⁵⁵ German citizens also confronted severe malnutrition that was underreported during the war years, which contributed, alongside political polarization and divisive haggling among the Allied forces over reparations, to ineffective aid for and relief of the German populace.³⁵⁶ The degree of poverty that was rampant during the inflation years is well captured in percentages of residents on welfare. In December 1923, 25% of urban populations received income support in Germany.³⁵⁷ These dire economic concerns

³⁵² Gerald Feldman, *The Great Disorder: Politics, Economics, and Society in the German Inflation, 1914-1924* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993): vii.

³⁵³ These amounts are prices for those without stamps. *Jahrbücher für Nationalökonomie und Statistik* 65 (1923): 225. Reproduced in: Gerald Feldman, *The Great Disorder: Politics, Economics, and Society in the German Inflation, 1914-1924* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993): 622.

³⁵⁴ *Jahrbücher für Nationalökonomie und Statistik* 65 (1923): 256. Reproduced in: Gerald Feldman, *The Great Disorder: Politics, Economics, and Society in the German Inflation, 1914-1924* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993): 623.

³⁵⁵ Gerhard Bry, *Wages in Germany, 1871-1945* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960): 362.

³⁵⁶ See a discussion of diplomatic incoherence over reparations negotiations in: Bruce Kent, *The Spoils of War: the Politics, Economics, and Diplomacy of Reparations, 1918-1932* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989). The idea that “potentially fatal malnutrition was not visible” and undermined German relief is taken up in: Gerald Feldman, *The Great Disorder: Politics, Economics, and Society in the German Inflation, 1914-1924* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993): 103.

³⁵⁷ Although conditions did improve during the period of relative stability from approximately 1924 to 1929, following the stock market collapse in October 1929

shaped debate over Carnival, against clear material conditions that continued to plague the Weimar government even after 1924.

Regulation of Carnival after the war dealt with no small amount of money as well. By the onset of the war, the economic activity surrounding the holiday had become tremendous both at the city level and nationally. Transformations in the holiday, its associational culture and unprecedented historical scale indeed shaped industries and businesses that responded to the significant market demands of Carnival each year. These included immense supplies of confetti, streamers, candies, toys, costumes, accessories, materials for parade floats, and a span of paraphernalia—all of which were specific to the themes, symbols, and archetypes unique to Carnival in each respective city. Moreover, Carnival required the demand of numerous venues, like halls, meeting rooms, concert venues, pavilions, gardens, and symphonies for miscellaneous Carnival events over different appointments from November to February or early March each year, as indeed during Carnival week itself all gastronomical institutions like pubs, bars, taverns, restaurants, and miscellaneous hospitality venues expected a spike in commercial activity, both from residents of the city but also from the substantial number of visitors

welfare rates would look similar as an effect of renewed economic crisis in Germany: 25% of Berliners by May 1932 and 40% of Cologners in June 1932. Wilfried Rudloff, “The Welfare State and Poverty in Modern Germany,” in Lutz Raphael ed., *Poverty and Welfare in Modern German History* (New York: Berghahn, 2017), 105-136: 108. See also David Crew, *Germans on Welfare: from Weimar to Hitler* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998). Edward Dickinson, *The Politics of German Child Welfare from the Empire to the Federal Republic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996). Elizabeth Harvey, *Youth and the Welfare State in Weimar Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993). Young-Sun Hong, *Welfare, Modernity, and the Weimar State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998). Gerhard Ritter, “The Rise and Development of the Social State in Germany, Europe and the United States from World War I to the Present,” in Haim Shamir ed., *France and Germany in an Age of Crisis, 1900-1960: Studies in Memory of Charles Bloch* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1990).

who came to take part in the annual holiday.³⁵⁸ Carnival where it occurred on a large scale entailed the booking out of the entire city's institutions of entertainment, nightlife, accommodations, and travel. As a result, this consumer culture and commercialization of Carnival that had developed before the war did indeed lead those who made money off of Carnival to be highly motivated to see its return following the war, as they were likewise significantly affected financially by the restrictions.

Unsurprisingly then, one of the most vocal proponents of recovering the suffering economy through Carnival after the war included those groups who ordinarily made money off of Carnival: Carnival industries, Carnival associations, and select government administrations in locations where Carnival historically occurred on a grand scale. These groups quite validly challenged arguments about economic stimulus through austerity, as Carnival cities and related industries and organizations were disproportionately affected by the annual absence of the holiday. At the prohibition's inception in 1921 then, numerous protest assemblies in opposition to the federal ban took place, together with a slew of letters criticizing the ban, in which Carnival supporters from affected industries took up this irony of supporting the economy through restricting economic activity. An Association of German Hall and Concert Venues in Sonneberg, a city in Thuringia outside of traditional Carnival regions, protested to Interior Minister Köster in Berlin that

³⁵⁸ To date there hasn't been a scholarly work devoted to the economics of Carnival tourism, even as numerous works point to the considerable financial effect of the holiday's growth and consolidation around the turn of the century. Consider then the discussion of Cologne infrastructure during and municipal planning for public Carnival celebrations in Cologne in: Elaine Glovka Spencer, "Custom, Commerce, and Contention: Rhenish Carnival Celebrations, 1890-1914," *German Studies Review* 20, Nr. 3 (Oct 1997): 323-341.

such a prohibition hit the Carnival article and mask industry hard.³⁵⁹ Other industries during Carnival prohibition made similar claims that such measures severely affected businesses, factories, venue owners, etc. Most industries involved in annual Carnival made similar critiques: that sharp prohibition on Carnival in the words of an Association of German Mask and Paper Wares Factory Owners in Leipzig “strongly affects Carnival-interested circles.”³⁶⁰

In truth the Carnival ban *did* heavily affect these industries, as they entered into years in a of a sort of makeshift production limbo. They would often learn of the extension of the Carnival ban as late as January just weeks before Carnival was meant to occur, and unique Carnival items could not easily be repurposed for other uses. The delay likely stemmed from Weimar political turbulence more so than malice. In the period between August 1923 and March 1930 Germany experienced nine governments, which meant numerous chancellors and Interior Ministers, those responsible for setting the fate of Carnival each year. During this period, seven Interior Ministers decided Carnival’s fate and when it was announced, and even three times breaks between tenures just before the onset of Carnival simply left the post unfilled. The government changeovers themselves often occurred in December and January, at the beginning of the peak months for Carnival activity. These ministers came from diverse political backgrounds: Social

³⁵⁹ Letter, Deutscher Spielwarenverband Verbandsgeschäftsstelle Sonneberg S.-M. to the Reichsministerium des Innern in Berlin, 10 November 1921, Series R/1501 Reichsministerium des Innern 11 March 1922 to 24 February 1925, Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde.

³⁶⁰ Letter, Verband Deutscher Masken- und Papierwarenfabrikanten in Leipzig to Minister des Innern des Freistaates Preussen in Berlin, 13 January 1926. Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

Democrat (SDP), National Liberal (DVP), National Conservative (DNVP), and German Democrat (DDP). The Chancellors during this period came from equally diverse political stripes, and shaped state sentiment about Carnival alongside the Interior Ministers. The seven German chancellors during this period represented conservative (Wihlem Cuno, undeclared but conservative politics), German Liberal, Center (*Zentrum*), national liberal (Hans Luther, undeclared but national liberal politics), German Democrat, again Center, and then Social Democrat. The Prussian state Interior Ministers were also particularly influential in shaping the Carnival ban as well, critical in ongoing state and city official negotiation over the bans' forms in Berlin. The three Prussian state Interior Ministers during this time would all be Social Democrats. Carnival's fairly consistent and restriction by such a diverse political representation is surprising in and of itself, but this government flux led to delayed announcements of Carnival's cancellation each year, which stimulated government critique all the same.

The absence of Carnival was a significant blow to many industries, whose unique production for Carnival occurred throughout most of the year in preparation for the Carnival "season." In the words of the Association of Germany Toys, for such industries "the production during the whole year is calculated for the turnover in the Carnival time."³⁶¹ Late announcement of the ban each year resulted in significant wastage for the industries, a problem that persisted despite ongoing requests from industry representatives for the administrations to make such annual announcements earlier in the

³⁶¹ Letter Deutscher Spielwarenverband Verbandsgeschäftsstelle Sonneberg S.-M. to the Reichsministerium des Innern in Berlin, 10 November 1921, Series R/1501
Reichsministerium des Innern 11 March 1922 to 24 February 1925, Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde.

year.³⁶² Despite repeated inquiries by invested parties every year, sometimes even sending letters to the Interior Minister three times in a year pointing out how crucial it was for the Carnival industries to know whether and to what extent the holiday would be permitted, the official notices were continually made late in the year, usually around October. For instance, the aforementioned Association of German Mask and Paper Wares Factory Owners wrote letters to the state government of Prussia in Berlin in May 1926 and to Ministerialrat Dr. Schütz of the Prussian Interior Ministry on August 1926, asking the government to make known what the state of the ban would be this year. It objected to the ban being announced so late the previous year, with the result that the industries lost substantial income as well as the cost of the goods produced on account of not receiving adequate notice. In other words, the economic state was bad but bureaucratic processes repeatedly produced unnecessary sunk costs with little warning. Formal notice wasn't given by the local governments until late October 1926, days before Carnival season officially began. These vocal critics of the ban—hall and factory owners, innkeepers and pub owners—came from the bourgeois Carnival circles who had historically controlled economic dealings of the holiday, and were also joined by circles from Germany's *Mittelstand* or lower middle class.

Although many officials denied such importance, some did see this critique as significant. Already in 1921, officials in Potsdam as in Munich suggested that the blow to Carnival industries and by extension city economies was significant. One representative

³⁶² Geheimnis Staatsarchiv, Titel: Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle. Volltitel: Ministerium des Innern Geh. Registratur IIIE Band 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle vom 1. Dez 1921 bis 31. Dezember 1926. Jahr: 1. Dez 1921 bis 31. Dez 1926. Band: 1 (of 2). Signatur: 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1. -on the label: I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern Tit. 318a Nr. 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1.

of the borough commission in Potsdam for instance expressed reservations about passing the prohibition there due to the “incisive economic consequences for the innkeeper and hall owner businesses.”³⁶³ The German Democratic (DDP) district president in Potsdam, Franz Schleusener, voiced such a concern to the Interior Minister in Berlin, as German democrats were joined by members of the right in this concern. Officials in Bavaria quite simply told the government in Berlin that a total ban would be too damaging economically. Out of concern for the indeed serious times, however, Bavaria, according to Interior Minister Franz Schweyer of the Bavarian People’s Party (*Bayerische Volkspartei*, BVP), relented that the region would embrace the “restriction of public Carnival (*Fasching*) amusements.”³⁶⁴ This restriction of “public” (*öffentlich*) Carnival events and “Carnival” (*karnevalistisch*) displays on open streets was the most important and consistent term across all national bans and represented the central goal of the Weimar government, even as both of these terms caused issues in their own right. Many administrations—including those of the foreign occupations—then actively suppressed public expressions of Carnival while turning a blind eye to underground or private events of a Carnival nature across the nation. As conditions improved in Germany, additional officials expressed increased concern about the economic weight of such prohibitions, as

³⁶³ “Verbot öffentlicher karnevalistischer Veranstaltungen.” Letter from the Regierungspräsident Potsdam I.D. 11954. II. Ang. to the Minister of the Interior in Berlin, 27 December 1921, Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

³⁶⁴ Schweyer, “.2544 a 74. Bekanntmachung über die Einschränkung der öffentlichen Faschingslustbarkeiten,” Staatsministerium des Innern in Munich to the Gesamtbevölkerung Bayerns (printed in the *Staatsanzeiger*), 17 December 1921. Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

in 1926 the local administration in Baden even refused to pass a strict Carnival prohibition, claiming that the administration “is not willing to take every source of income away from the economy and from the industry through a one-sided radical” prohibition.³⁶⁵

Other new Weimar regulations after the war also meant that Carnival’s absence was damaging to the city administrations as well, which could generate additional revenue through steep new Weimar amusement taxes (*Lustbarkeitssteuer*). This was beyond the fees for Carnival events each year that had been typical before the war. One article in the Düsseldorf press in 1923 then made clear that the steep amusement taxes introduced in the early years of the republic meant that administrations stood to make even more revenue from permitted events than previously. In the case of Düsseldorf, the local administration could charge between 5 and 500 Reichsmarks for a single permit.³⁶⁶ Still other officials were clearer that Carnival prohibition denied the administration significant revenue. Thus the ongoing commercialization of Carnival continued to extend to government bureaucracies as well. As a result of the clear effect of Carnival prohibition in cities with large Carnival celebrations, some officials did challenge the approach, but not until after the most acute years of economic crisis. Thus, given improved conditions in Germany in 1925, the governor of the Rhineland himself, German

³⁶⁵ Letter, Verband Deutscher Masken- und Papierwarenfabrikanten in Leipzig to Minister des Innern des Freistaates Preussen in Berlin, 13 January 1926. Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

³⁶⁶ Notice, Polizeipräsidium in Düsseldorf, reported in: „Bestimmungen über Karnevalistische Veranstaltungen des Polizeipräsidium zu Düsseldorf,“ *Düsseldorfer Nachrichten*, Nr 593, 23 November 1926. Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

lawyer and Catholic Center (*Zentrum*) politician Johannes Fuchs, suggested that local populations should be allowed the reintroduction of public life—by which he meant Carnival.³⁶⁷ By the more prosperous Weimar years then, fewer officials, even from parties that were the most critical of Carnival and immoral public leisure like Center and the German National People's Party (DNVP), supported Carnival regulation on purely economic terms, as these arguments would take a backseat to other concerns discussed below. Nevertheless, it remained rare for statesmen to speak out against the prohibition; when they did it dealt with finances.

In opposition to economic arguments about stimulus through Carnival activity, by contrast, much of anti-Carnival discourse about economic management took up Carnival restriction as a means of repurposing funds to offset social plight. Carnival regulation became connected to ongoing bitter hardship in Germany, as officials and reform or aid organizations asked what role Carnival would play in resolving the significant plight and poverty of the German people. For starters, numerous government officials as well as the Berlin police operated under the assumption that if money wasn't spent on Carnival that it would go to aiding the suffering German public. In 1923 General of the Infantry Hans von Seeckt instituted Reich measures in the "struggle against hunger and cold," within which von Seeckt expressed that pleasure houses in Berlin—dance palaces, taverns, gourmet restaurants, and the like—could furnish the poor with "communal kitchens,

³⁶⁷ "Karnevalsfeier 1924/25," Letter, Oberpräsident der Rheinprovinz in Coblenz to the Minister des Innern in Berlin, 5 December 1924. Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

community mess arrangements, heated halls, [or] accommodation rooms.”³⁶⁸ Van Seeckt was chief of the German Army until 1926 and led the Black Reichswehr. He restructured the Reichswehr in line with the terms of the Versailles Treaty but also under the fervent belief that another war would come for which a strong German nation was necessary. He developed tactics and operational procedures during the Weimar years that the German army carried out during the Second World War. In 1925 the Bavarian state government also argued that those with dispensable income should use it for social relief. “It must be the obligation of honor of all the proprietary [people] of one’s own accord to put everything which they can possibly go without in the service of altruism.”³⁶⁹ This implicit representation of Carnival activity as uncharitable stood in direct opposition to prewar notions of the holiday’s elements, a direct result of the experience of economic crisis after the war.

Religious leaders as well as the Catholic Centrist press frequently made such arguments, as an article on “German Hardship and German Joy” in the *Kölnische Volkszeitung* in 1922 shows. This paper, the main press organ of Rhenish Catholics aligned with the Center (*Zentrum*) party in these years, printed the Cologne archiepiscopal general vicariate message in the *Kirchlichen Anzeige*, within which the

³⁶⁸ “Wirtschaftliche Maßnahmen,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, Nr. 790, 15 November 1923, Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin. Omer Bartov and Eric Weitz, *Shatterzone of Empires: Coexistence and Violence in the German, Hapsburg, Russian, and Ottoman Borderlands* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013). Wolfram Wette, *The Wehrmacht: History, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006). Williamson Murray, *A War to be Won: Fighting in the Second World War* (Cambridge: Belknap Press for Harvard University Press, 2000).

³⁶⁹ Transcript of Kundgebung of the Bayrische Staatsregierung from 27 November 1925, sent from Preußische Ministerpräsident in Berlin to Staatminister (Ministerialdirektor) Nobis St. M. I. 15508, 11 December 1925. Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

church's stance on Carnival underscored this urgent need.³⁷⁰ The Catholic Centrist press and religious authorities linked up in the aim to relieve the suffering populace through Carnival prohibition and the redistribution of such funds. The holiday's purported effect to Rhinelanders before the war—as a practice that dispelled social grievances rather than intensified them—became inverted after the war. The possibility of those with dispensable income parading it about in the face of those suffering bitterly became seen as highly problematic, likely to sharpen class antagonisms tremendously, and of course understood as not conforming to the “seriousness of the times.” The Catholic Center press and Catholic authorities were joined by German officials of the Bavarian state government, who understood such activity to “operate like a bitter scorn” on the hardship of the people.³⁷¹ The government issued this statement regarding the possibility of Carnival in Munich in 1925.

This represented a significant shift from prewar narratives and functions of Carnival. Prewar Carnival events, particularly by the bourgeois associations, included numerous annual philanthropic events to support charitable causes. Although some prewar critics in particular the socialist leadership in Cologne had mocked the notion of the bourgeois elite in Cologne gathering in feudal court attire under pretenses of charity, few actively challenged the philanthropic nature of these events before the war. The fanfare and symbols of Carnival had been offensive to some, but charity was an accepted

³⁷⁰ “Deutsche Not und deutsche Freude,” *Kölnische Volkszeitung*, 8 January 1922. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

³⁷¹ Transcript of Kundgebung of the Bayrische Staatsregierung from 27 November 1925, sent from Preußische Ministerpräsident in Berlin to Staatminister (Ministerialdirektor) Nobis St. M. I. 15508, 11 December 1925. Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

element of the holiday's prewar culture. Outside of the context of prewar economic prosperity in Germany, by contrast, many audiences after the war even in Carnival heritage cities connected Carnival to the potential to *magnify* poverty rather than alleviate it. This impression shaped anxieties about social tensions and the possibility for rioting at Carnival. As a result of such concern about Carnival's ability to compound economic crisis, combined with new suspicion about the holiday's charitable events, officials attempted to *compel* Carnival's charitable function after the war, as they recommended policies across the country to channel dispensable income into social relief. The assumption that resources freed up by Carnival's absence would go to social relief was then reinforced through coercive legislation, especially popular to military officials like Van Seeckt alongside parliamentarians from the DNVP and Center.

In parliamentary debates statesmen pushed to compel this prewar function of generating public aid through amusement taxes and additional fees for Carnival events and other forms of festivity, even if they purported to serve this historical charitable function of annual festivities. These efforts were particularly championed in the Prussian state parliament by the DNVP, led by Lothar Steuer from Kassel in 1925, when it proposed additional fees atop the already new and high Weimar amusement taxes. Steuer, who formerly worked in the police, was an early avid supporter of a DNVP and National Socialist (NSDAP) cooperation. He joined the DNVP in 1919 when he was immediately made its chief executive, and was voted to the Prussian Parliament in 1924, a seat he held until 1933. His recommended amusement fees would be applied not just to Carnival amusements but any costuming practice in winter. According to the conservative nationalists' resolution, for "all public amusements for the months of January, February,

and March 1926”—the high season of Carnival and winter ball amusements in other words, when New Years Day, association assemblies, winter balls, press balls, costume parties, masquerades, and miscellaneous Carnival events ordinarily took place—the state should “levy considerably measured supplementary hardship charges to the normal taxation and ... utilize the revenue for the immediate alleviation of extant hardship.”³⁷² In cases in which a charitable function was claimed, as was common among the middle-class Carnivalists before and after the war, the proposal recommended permitting the event only “if the actual usage for the registered purpose is also guaranteed, and if the provided sum for this purpose exceeds the tax liability.” In other words, groups would be required to cover the hefty taxes as well as prove that their events were indeed philanthropic in nature.

The debate over the suffering economy in Germany and Carnival’s role in relieving it came down to a face-off over stimulus as economic activity versus stimulus as repurposed funds—liberal free market actors verses a market constrained by morality. For the most part, on the side of critics of the restoration of Carnival, tradepeople, industry representatives, Carnivalists, and cultural preservationists made a slew of arguments that essentially all pointed to national economic improvement through the removal of restrictions to economic activity and trade at Carnival. On the contrary, those in opposition to Carnival’s return, primarily local and state officials, argued that the repression of the holiday would invariably lead to national economic stimulus as social relief. These officials attempted to use measures like prohibitions and ordinances to

³⁷² “Nr 1814 Entschliessungsantrag,” Resolution Proposal of the Preuß. Landtag 2. Wahlp. 1. Tg 1925, Berlin, 11 December 1925. Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

encourage specific economic activity, and then reinforce such desired activity through additional such measures. Audiences on both sides of the debate, within which little consensus could be found, took Carnival up as a means to achieve national recovery. Successful recovery of the German economy though also required the successful maintenance of the Rhineland region in more ways than one.

II. The International Status of the Rhineland

Alongside the economic crisis, the nationalization of Carnival discourse resulted from the Rhineland's new international status after the war. The significance of the Rhineland to domestic and international issues led to new national stakes for Carnival. As was discussed in the previous chapter, the terms of the Versailles Treaty resulted in the foreign occupation of the Rhineland as a measure to guarantee effective reparations repayment for Germany's impossible bill set forth in the war guilt clause. As a result of the Rhineland's significance to Carnival and the region's new status after the war, the regulation of Carnival became connected to the nation's most pressing concerns: foreign occupations and the threat of violence; international scrutiny and the mitigation of the reparations bill; and social unrest and the threat of civil war, revolution, or separatism. The perception of Carnival's power to influence these issues played out within debate, again lacking much consensus, over Carnival and management of the Rhineland.

Most official correspondence about Carnival prohibition took up the foreign occupation, which entailed the occupation of almost every major city of Carnival practice in Germany. Cities with long Carnival histories that were occupied at some point

included Cologne, Frankfurt, Mainz, Düsseldorf, Bonn, Saarbrücken, Wiesbaden, Aachen, Trier, Koblenz, Krefeld, Essen, and Dortmund—collectively constituting nearly all large Carnival celebrations in Germany except that of Munich. The armistice initiated the occupation of the German lands west of the Rhine—this territory and a piece also east of the Rhine made into a demilitarized zone. The occupation also included four bridgeheads east of the Rhine. These occupations began in 1918, and were confirmed with the Versailles Treaty for a term of fifteen years, the aim of which being the protection of France against a plausible German military offensive and, most importantly, the securing of Germany's effective reparations payments. German refusal to the orchestration of payments following Allied proposals rationalized a further occupation by the French in 1921 as well as another controversial occupation of the Ruhr territory in 1923. The latter stimulated an episode of Rhenish separatist take-over, detailed in the previous chapter, as agitators proclaimed a "Rhenish Republic" in Aachen, Coblenz, Düsseldorf and elsewhere. British troops occupied Cologne and later Weisbaden, American troops occupied the northern bridgehead of Coblenz, Belgian forces occupied Aachen, Krefeld, and Erkelenz, and finally, the French stationed troops at different times in Frankfurt, Saarbrücken, Trier, Mainz, Coblenz, Bonn (initially occupied by the British), Wiesbaden (administration taken over by the British), Königswinter, and Düren. French and Belgian forces also in 1921 illegally occupied other cities including Düsseldorf, Bochum, and Dortmund, occupations that were controversial and often violent.

Already in 1921 the view was widespread that Carnival was too risky to allow due to the foreign occupation of the Rhineland, one heart of Carnival in Germany, as well as

the region's new significance to tense foreign affairs after the war. City, state, and Reich officials frequently spoke of the possibility of "clashes with occupation troops and their families," a phrase regularly used in administration correspondence. As already seen in Chapter 2, these clashes did indeed take place. Interior Minister Köster, from the northern predominantly Protestant region around Hannover, invoked this rationale in his official circulation of the nationwide Carnival ban to all state governments in 1921.³⁷³ There was a more benign interpretation of his Köster's language that Carnival "would not be understood on the part of our former adversaries."³⁷⁴ Köster had served in Weimar's first government as foreign minister. Indeed Carnival wasn't even understood by other populations in Germany, many argued, yet alone by foreign garrisons. However, the use of black colonial troops in the occupations resulted in broad national hysteria about the use of black troops and their alleged violence against vulnerable populations, in particular women. This context suggested a different possible meaning to such feared "clashes" with the occupation.

The use of black colonial troops in the occupied territories heightened anxieties over public safety, miscegenation, and moral virtue. When in April 1920 France briefly occupied Frankfurt, a city with its own large Carnival celebrations before the war, Moroccan troops (Senegalese Tirailleurs) shot nine civilians merely days into the occupation. This stimulated a media hysteria over the alleged "Black Shame on the Rhine," as media printed inflamed reports of attacks, rapes, and mutilations of German

³⁷³ Minister of the Interior in Berlin to all state governments, 2 December 1921, Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

³⁷⁴ Ibid.

women by black colonial soldiers, reports bought into by all German political parties even the far-left. The use of these colonial troops amongst France's 40,000 soldiers in the Rhineland occupation also generated anxiety about relationships between German women and soldiers, fears about racial miscegenation and national morality born out in the ridicule of so-called "Rhineland bastards."³⁷⁵ Such feared relationships and resulting children, so-called "occupation children," did result between German residents and foreign occupying troops during the decade of foreign occupation in Germany.³⁷⁶ Could a holiday that entailed disguises, public mockery of state or political figures, the airing of social grievances, and free license to carousal and sex possibly lead to attacks on or by occupation forces, or even illicit affairs between revelers and the new residents? References about Carnival in the occupied territories to possible "clashes," "riots," or "sedition" on the part of officials both in and outside of the occupied territories suggested broad official awareness of the risks of Carnival there.³⁷⁷ No official seemed willing to even suggest that this concern was overstated. As a result, the occupation persistently precluded the possibility of Carnival, in particular during the tensest years of foreign occupation up to 1926, the year that the first official occupations ended. Carnival's absence would be a measure against riots, local violence by Germans or occupiers, or

³⁷⁵ Tina Campt, *Other Germans: Black Germans and the Politics of Race, Gender, and Memory in the Third Reich* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004).

³⁷⁶ Julia Roos, "Racist Hysteria to Pragmatic Rapprochement? The German Debate about Rhenish 'Occupation Children,' 1920-1930," *Contemporary European History* 22, no 2 (May 2013): 155-180.

³⁷⁷ Minister of the Interior in Berlin to all state governments, 2 December 1921, Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz. Letter, Regierungspräsident in Aachen Preussischen Minister des Innern in Berlin, 26 February 1932. Volume 2, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 2 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 Januar 1927 to 31 December 1936, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

even racial miscegenation. But the presence of foreign audiences in the Rhineland also informed Carnival policy in another way: by presenting the opportunity for the maintenance of impressions and international scrutiny.

Broad audiences after the war felt that the Rhineland and its people were no longer “amongst themselves” but rather had become, in the words of the Cologne press in 1923, the most important “focal point of world interest.”³⁷⁸ Before the war urbanization had driven expansion in the communities who took part in Carnival, no longer imagined as a town custom among acquaintances and friends. After the war, Cologne represented a global stage, and its public order integral to German wellbeing. In the period from the Versailles Treaty in 1919 to the occupation of the Ruhr district in 1923, the French and German question of the economic and political future of the Rhineland was up for debate. In both German and French media, as well as in the international press, the Rhineland question became characterized by propaganda machines grappling with questions like the annexation of the Rhineland in the French case, different approaches to unity and peace, as well as perspectives on the impossible and unjust terms of the Versailles Treaty for Germany.³⁷⁹ Narratives of the “Black Shame” were part of a broader process of negotiating power and influence internationally as the Rhineland sat in an awkward hotbed of diplomatic tension. Impressions of the Rhineland were of utmost importance for the occupying country but in particular for Rhenish and German officials who hoped to both continue receiving desperately-needed foreign aid from countries like the United

³⁷⁸ “Mehr Ernst und Würde,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, Nr. 75, 31 January 1923. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

³⁷⁹ For analysis of the Rhineland question in the French media in particular, see: Anna-Monika Lauter, *Sicherheit und Reparationen: die französische Öffentlichkeit, der Rhein und die Ruhr (1919-1923)* (Essen: Klartext Verlag, 2006).

States, as well as to apply international pressure abroad in order to have the terms of the Versailles Treaty overturned.

Therefore, the humiliating occupation of the Rhineland made one central hub of Carnival observance into a stage of national and international politics, a site for constant domestic and international scrutiny. Many perspectives toward Carnival over time reflected this concern. In 1921, the Cologne government banned Carnival in order to expressly stop the spread of similar events that would “incite excitation in high places.”³⁸⁰ The Catholic Centrist press of Cologne in 1922 also suggested that the absence of Carnival would help foreign audiences feel convinced that Germans after the war were suffering enough. A journalist writing in the paper maintained that “foreign countries would like to know how the otherwise gaiety-inclined Rhenish population feels the pressure of the present.”³⁸¹ The *Kölnische Zeitung* a year later detailed how significant the region was for foreign affairs and the shaping of policy towards Germany.³⁸² Amidst improving conditions in 1924, Interior Minister Köster wrote to all district presidents and governors in his announcement of the ban’s publishing in the ministerial gazette that year. He persisted with the claim again that Carnival prohibition would still be necessary due to the “still unsure state of the future of the occupied territories to be vacated according to the Versailles Treaty and beyond that of the whole

³⁸⁰ Cologne press announcement printed in: “Verwahrung gegen ein beabsichtigtes allgemeines Karnevalsverbot,” Letter Bund der Saal- u. Konzertlokal-Inhaber Deutschlands E.V. in Berlin to the Preußische Ministerium in Berlin, 23 November 1921, Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

³⁸¹ “Deutsche Not und deutsche Freude,” *Kölnische Volkszeitung*, 8 January 1922. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

³⁸² “Mehr Ernst und Würde,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, Nr. 75, 31 January 1923. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

Fatherland.”³⁸³ The national liberal press in Cologne, the *Kölnische Zeitung*, tended to take up such argumentation. It was particularly popular among local and state officials as well, who saw the absence of Carnival as a necessary sacrifice in the struggle to overturn the severe burden put on Germany after the war by the victor nations.

Narratives about Carnival even far away in Munich made precisely these connections, of the holiday to domestic and foreign affairs, the spread of social tension and unrest, to race and morality. Indeed the now high national stakes of Carnival were well captured in a New Years Eve speech that warned against the immoral excesses of the coming Carnival season in Munich in 1922 by Michael von Faulhaber, the prominent Catholic Cardinal and Archbishop of Munich for 35 years. That year at the annual *Katholikentag*, an annual festival of the Roman Catholic laity for German-speaking people, Faulhaber and mayor of Cologne Conrad Adenauer became embroiled in conflict over whether to allow Protestants to join the ranks of the Center (*Zentrum*) party, of which Faulhaber patently rejected the idea. Faulhaber rejected the republic outright as illegitimate, the result of treason, and instead favored a Catholic monarchy. Although he denounced the Beer Hall Putsch of the following year, he eventually supported the NSDAP and its purported commitment to resurrect Germany with the help of Christianity. Faulhaber abstained from a public response to the boycott of Jewish businesses in April 1933, but in the words of historian Michael Phayer, was possessed of

³⁸³ “Karnevalistische Feier,” Letter, Minister of the Interior to all Regierungspräsidenten and Oberpräsidenten, 31 December 1924. Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

“typical Christian antisemitism, but it was not Nazi antisemitism.”³⁸⁴ About Carnival he expressed both the economic and social concerns surrounding Carnival that in turn raised grave moral effects in both the occupied territories as indeed nationwide, as the holiday was now more broadly connected to the most important national issues. The Cardinal warned the citizens, of a city of once tremendous prewar Carnival celebrations, that

Gluttony and amusement can only embitter the famished at home and awaken abroad the impression that the economic distress and incapacity of our people to pay are not to be taken seriously.... The moral nadir of our people is marked by many sad symptoms, most crassly through the glorification of the work of the flesh, through the contamination of the blood in the bodies of our people, through the poisoning of public behavior. More shameful than the black shame in the occupied areas are the negro dances in the unoccupied areas.³⁸⁵

More than just government officials bought into Carnival’s connection to economic failure, the Black Shame, delicate foreign affairs, and the fight for German morality after the war. The economy and German morality went hand in hand in these years of acute crisis, intrinsic to physical and spiritual health, domestic and international affairs alike. The holiday was perceived at the intersection of German citizen and foreign occupier, Rhenish reveler and international audience. This potential liability of Carnival due to the Rhineland’s new geopolitical importance after the war only grew with acute local tensions in the Rhineland and other nearby regions, where the fomenting of separatist movements discussed in the previous chapter became connected to support for the holiday as well.

Regional tension where Carnival had historically taken place was so tense that Carnival constituted a major national liability. The possibility of riots and revolution at

³⁸⁴ Michael Phayer, *The Catholic Church and the Holocaust* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000): 15.

³⁸⁵ Quoted in: Gerald Feldman, *The Great Disorder: Politics, Economics, and Society in the German Inflation, 1914-1924* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993): 574.

Carnival was always built into the holiday's rituals. The containment of Carnival was always a critical requirement. But in the fragile Weimar state after the war, Carnival threatened society in unprecedented ways. In the early years of the republic, the threat of civil war was clear. Debates over the possibility of Weimar Carnival expressed palpable anxiety over public unrest, rioting, and revolution. As Köster put it during the initial prohibition's passing in 1921, Carnival threatened not just to "sharpen class antagonisms" in such times of acute hardship and plight. To permit the holiday would clearly "risk public safety."³⁸⁶ Officials in correspondence openly referenced the possibility that Carnival activities could provide fertile ground for "wide political sedition."³⁸⁷ Indeed Carnival's connection extended beyond the mere playacting of a revolutionary moment. Not only did riots, skirmishes, and occasionally revolutions break out during historical Carnivals during the medieval and early modern period as indeed in 1848—which stimulated revolutionary Carnivalist organizations like the *Rote Funken* led by democratic revolutionary Franz Raveaux. But fear of them also guided officials' restrictions on the holiday during severe political tensions and ruptures.³⁸⁸ Weimar was

³⁸⁶ Here Dr. Schulze of the Saxon Ministry of the Interior in Dresden writing to the State Ministry of the Interior in Munich was making reference to the fact that the Minister of the Interior in Berlin believed Carnival would have these effects. "Abschrift. 4527 II A. zu 2544 a 61. Dresden," Letter to the Staatsministerium des Innern in Munich, 30 November 1921, Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

³⁸⁷ Letter, Regierungspräsident in Aachen Preussischen Minister des Innern in Berlin, 26 February 1932. Volume 2, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 2 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 Januar 1927 to 31 December 1936, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

³⁸⁸ On state prohibitions on Carnival for state security during the French occupation of Cologne by revolutionary troops see "Karnevalsverbot 1795," Der Brigade-General und Stadtkommandant an den Magistrat, 12 February (*Hornung*), 1795. Printed in: Hildegard

another such moment. As was detailed in the previous chapter, not only was separatist agitation and social unrest acute in the Rhineland, what could easily preclude the possibility of Carnival in its own right. But Carnival became tied to this unrest directly, the inspiration for separatist fervor to Rhenish cultural preservationists on the one hand and a palpable demonstration of perfidy on the part of the French and Belgian authorities on the other.

At the same time, Weimar labor unrest was widespread,³⁸⁹ not just in the Rhineland but also in the large Free State of Prussia and Bavaria, where agitation and labor demonstrations led to frequent street fighting, counter-attacks on separatists, and actions against the elite on the part of communists and Social Democrats. Carnival, as a holiday with a political dimension, exacerbated prewar worry over what the laboring classes would do with Carnival's freedoms in such serious times. The crisis over Carnival was also one over public order. Officials in correspondence openly referenced the possibility that Carnival activities could "degenerate into riots"³⁹⁰ or provide fertile ground for "wide political sedition" as Prussian parliamentarian and Center politician Georg Stielen, the district president in the hotbed of separatist unrest of Aachen,

Brog, *Was auch passiert, D'r Zoch kütt! die Geschichte des rheinischen Karnevals* (Frankfurt: Campus: 2000): 35.

³⁸⁹ See discussions for instance in Mary Nolan, *Social Democracy and Society: Working-Class Radicalism in Düsseldorf, 1890-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981). Pamela Swett, *Neighbors and Enemies: the Culture of Radicalism in Berlin, 1929-1933* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004). Jonathan Osmond, *Rural Protest in the Weimar Republic: the Free Peasantry in the Rhineland and Bavaria* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993). Eve Rosenhaft, *Beating the Fascists?: the German Communists and Political Violence, 1929-1933* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

³⁹⁰ "Nr. 99190. Tanzbelustigungen und Fastnachtsveranstaltungen betr. Norm. XXII 4," Notice from the Ministerium des Innern in Karlsruhe on recent enacted prohibition, 15 December 1921, Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

maintained as late as 1932 even after the occupations ended.³⁹¹ Through Carnival debates after the war, the holiday could be seen depicted as if demonstrations and their effects were more like May Day demonstrations—because indeed Carnival had taken on new politics through the war experience. Indeed what May Day and Carnival both historically did was warn the ruling order through mass demonstrations with political displays that could devolve into chaos and destruction. May Day was propped up around the turn of the century in Düsseldorf by Social Democrats as a proletarian holiday to rival the Catholic parish fairs. Around the turn of the century, May Day in Düsseldorf had become equal parts political demonstration and festive celebration, in historian Mary Nolan's words that the "march, replete with bands and flags, with which the festival opened had strongly political overtones, but the remainder of the day was a vast carnival, offering something for everyone."³⁹² Such a description then rivaled the Carnival system of paraded political world accompanied by street partying in prewar Cologne Carnival. After the war both celebrations became connected to symbolic political cultures with very real political threats and the possibility of violence.

The similarities between Carnival and May Day though didn't end at their political natures and possibilities for disorder and violence. Rather the trajectory of May Day's regulation during the Weimar years was actually similar to that of Carnival's. At the height of social unrest in the Rhineland the Reich Interior Ministry had banned Carnival in all its public forms in part in an attempt to secure public order and prevent

³⁹¹ Letter, Regierungspräsident in Aachen Preussischen Minister des Innern in Berlin, 26 February 1932. Volume 2, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 2 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 Januar 1927 to 31 December 1936, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

³⁹² Mary Nolan, *Social Democracy and Society: Working-Class Radicalism in Düsseldorf, 1890-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981): 139.

violent skirmishes. At the time, Interior Minister, Social Democrat Adolf Köster, carried this out. In 1929, severe instability that again signaled a very real threat to the survival of the republic once again precipitated such a ban. Again a Social Democratic Reich Interior Minister, in this case Albert Grzesinski, prohibited all political demonstrations on open streets. Again this attempt to secure public order in the face of serious threats to the republic actually stimulated social unrest and violence anyway. Whereas in the Rhineland before, that had taken the form of the separatist agitation, in 1929 the KPD defiance of the ban and the reaction of the Berlin police led to what's been termed the *Blutmai*, when Berlin police forces used excessive force to oppose May Day demonstrations. The result was three days of rioting and violence, as well as the deaths of 33 civilians.

The very real threat of violence and social unrest compelled restriction of festivities and demonstrations then, seen later in the *Blutmai*, but also far earlier in uprisings that occurred in the Rhineland and Palatinate. With the memory of violent uprisings fresh in their minds, the local German administration in Pirmasens, in the Rhineland and elsewhere in the cities of strong separatist movements and severe social unrest unsurprisingly was hesitant to permit Carnival in this hotbed of tension, as similar events in towns nearby like Kaiserslautern and Bad Dürkheim had already occurred as well.³⁹³ In such contexts, space for the political mockery and satirical protest characteristic of Carnival was particularly risky. Yet, the experience of Carnival prohibition in the Rhineland seemed to compel tension and agitation further. For Carnival supporters, in particular the perception of uneven enforcement of the ban across the country made Carnival enthusiasts, according to one Carnival industry representative in

³⁹³ Stewart Stehlin, *Weimar and the Vatican, 1919-1933: German-Vatican Diplomatic Relations in the Interwar Years* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983): 267.

1926, of the Organization of German Mask and Paper Wares Factory Owners in Leipzig “needlessly agitated.”³⁹⁴ Agitation about and during Carnival however remained the dominant impression throughout the Weimar years. The governor of the Rhine province himself, Catholic Centrist Johannes Fuchs, wrote to the Interior Minister in Berlin in 1924 suggesting the need for mitigated Carnival prohibition due to the great local agitation in occupied Carnival cities, agitation that according to the police was nearly impossible to regulate.³⁹⁵ According to Fuchs, local pro-Carnival agitators had been highly successful at galvanizing support for the holiday across numerous traditional Carnival cities, French-backed support that each year threatened to break out in riots. During Carnival time in particular, according to the governor, these sharp local tensions became too sharp to contain.

Considering many officials already saw Carnival as a site of possible social and political revolt before these episodes occurred,³⁹⁶ they saw a Carnival permitted in Pirmasens, Aachen, Cologne or anywhere nearby as impossible, even as the ability to contain agitation itself was understood as impossible as well. Carnival prohibition was a

³⁹⁴ Letter, Verband Deutscher Masken- und Papierwarenfabrikanten in Leipzig to Minister des Innern des Freistaates Preussen in Berlin, 13 January 1926. Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

³⁹⁵ “Karnevalsfeier 1924/25,” Letter, Oberpräsident der Rheinprovinz in Coblenz to the Minister des Innern in Berlin, 5 December 1924. Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

³⁹⁶ “Nr. 99190. Tanzbelustigungen und Fastnachtsveranstaltungen betr. Norm. XXII 4,” Notice from the Ministerium des Innern in Karlsruhe on recent enacted prohibition, 15 December 1921, Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz. “Karnevalsfreunde und Sonderbündler,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, 29 October 1922 (757): 1. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

means of alleviating social unrest while simultaneously a force that compelled that unrest further. What resulted then were the sharpest applications of such prohibitions in the occupied territories, both out of concern for the occupation but also due to this widespread social unrest, an experience that fueled resentment in the region in turn. The established possibility of rioting and revolution likewise precluded the possibility of Carnival outright in the Rhenish cities, which experienced broader and more strictly enforced Carnival prohibitions than in Prussia. Pirmasens experienced a Carnival ban significantly broader and more severe than the national recommendation laid down by the Reich government. Administrations in the cities in the Rhineland overwhelmingly implemented the most broadly interpreted Carnival prohibitions, which treated most costuming or themed practices during all of winter as falling under the umbrella of Carnival activity. This was a direct result of the region's politically-sensitive nature—and the quite real unrest that happened there. After all, unlike in Prussia where Carnival traditions were comparably nascent, what constituted Carnival was much more concrete in the Rhineland.

The centrality of the Rhineland and its international status shaped national Carnival debate most strongly from the end of the war to 1926 when the first occupations ended. As economic and geopolitical conditions continued to improve around this time, the original justifications for national suppression of Carnival came to take a back seat to arguments of a moral nature, which had been present from the beginning of the holiday's regulation but became amplified over time. The chapter will close then by taking up this third vehicle through which Carnival became a national concern after the war, namely in

regards to the moral health of the German people, debates that most frequently and severely proliferated during the more stable years of the Weimar Republic.

III. The Moral Health of the German People

Through the lens of moral arguments about the German nation after the war, one sees clearly how audiences assimilated the above concerns about Carnival and its risks, and channeled this anxiety into broader configurations about the German nation and *Volk* that were much less pragmatic or justified than the concerns discussed above.

Nevertheless, concerns about the moral health of the German people represented one of the strongest avenues through which Carnival took the national stage during the Weimar years. It also represented the line of inquiry least subject to dynamic conditions unfolding over time, as invocations of pejorative or imagined national conditions and communities were much more troubling to measure or prove over time. This section takes up discourses about the moral health of the German nation, as broad audiences used national narratives about Carnival to carve out imagined in and out groups, conceptions of which groups were to blame for Germany's problems, imaginations of who exactly supported or didn't support Carnival activity, and solutions as to how to "heal" the ailing *Volk* vis-à-vis these singled-out groups. Such configurations, arguments made by all groups in the debates—government officials, Carnival societies, religious authorities, social reformers, Carnival industries, youth or civil associations, and diverse press organs—centered around a specific set of ideas: a notion of old Carnival being gone; a perception of spreading excess; perceived moral bankruptcy; anti-Prussian sentiment; claims about

alleged *Schiebertum* and the problem of profiteers in society; notions of Carnival permitted elsewhere; and ideas about *Volk* sickness and *Volk* heritage. Whereas in the first two sections much of debate revolved around regulating order in society, this concern for order especially in public space was coupled with a fear of hedonism, immoral mass revelry in public in essence, through these moral valences. This last section of the chapter deals then with these dominant visions of Weimar society seen in narratives about Carnival on all sides of the debate.

One of the clearest invocations that came through in debate over Carnival during the Weimar years dealt with the impression that old world Carnival was gone or no longer possible. This was a crucial starting point of much anti-Carnival sentiment after the war. This argumentation took many forms, but the experience of the war, revolution, occupation, economic collapse, and ongoing changes in society simply made prewar Carnival feel lost or impossible. Few such configurations brought up how Carnival for once outside of a monarchical society was affected by such a shift. Nevertheless, such language expressed potent loss over the Kaiserreich in a particular way, a potent narrative of lost Carnival, a lost ordered world—paradoxical even when applied to a holiday at which people frequently celebrated disorder. But indeed not only was the old Carnival lost but the whole society that gave it life in the first place. In 1921 Interior Minister Köster maintained that there was no room for prewar Carnival. In Köster's words, "Carnival cannot be uninhibitedly celebrated as in earlier normal times."³⁹⁷ The Cologne Catholic Centrist press the following year made a similar distinction between "formerly

³⁹⁷ Minister of the Interior in Berlin to all state governments, 2 December 1921, Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

harmless” Carnival of the prewar years and the contemporary excessive materialistic form of the day, what the author labeled as a “crass materialism” that only carried mere traces of the prewar form.³⁹⁸ The *Kölnische Zeitung* in 1923 likewise argued about old Carnival customs that they had become indulgent, wasteful, not fraternal, inappropriate and unchristian.³⁹⁹ The following year, Cologne’s archbishop recognized the importance of Carnival to locals in the Rhineland. Karl Schulte, Cologne’s archbishop since 1921, was a prominent cardinal part of the 1922 papal conclave whoe vehemently opposed both communism and National Socialism. To him what could be seen around now differed from actual or historical Carnival custom. Even though Carnival is close to the hearts of true Rhinelanders, he argued, postwar Carnival had taken on a new nature, of hatred and “undignified hypocrisy.”⁴⁰⁰ Such a phrase probably referred to acts of debauchery that took place at Carnival, a perception of critics even before the war, combined with the new broad claim that “charity” was a pretense for selfish indulgence and waste while the populace suffered and even starved. A month later the Cardinal challenged both the spirit of historical Carnival as generosity or warmth, as well as Rhenish Carnival’s purported charitable nature. Moreover, in reference to the revival of Carnival in Vienna, the national Cologne press in 1924 criticized how contemporary Carnival brings the “edge of doom,” and rather that the tradition after the war displays the “degeneration” of the

³⁹⁸ “Deutsche Not und deutsche Freude,” *Kölnische Volkszeitung*, 8 January 1922. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

³⁹⁹ “Mehr Ernst und Würde,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, Nr. 75, 31 January 1923. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

⁴⁰⁰ Newspaper clipping, “Kölns Erzbischof gegen den Karneval, Telegraphische Meldung,” Cologne, 16 Dezember 1924. Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

economic capacity of Carnival revelers.⁴⁰¹ The Evangelical Community in Düsseldorf made similar arguments in 1925 when it described Carnival in the Weimar years as carrying different meanings, equated to a twisting of the holiday's original elements. Instead of Carnival highlighting characteristics of the alleged "gaiety-inclined" Rhenish people,⁴⁰² namely of warmth, exuberance, and generosity, as was a prewar understanding of Carnival in the Rhineland, Weimar Carnival instead had become a mere "distortion of noble joy in recklessness and superficiality."⁴⁰³ The "noble joy" of Carnival's prewar elite in the Rhineland that many had seen as "impeccable" had been supplanted by dangerous indulgence not at the heart of the nation's most pressing interests. Importantly, as Chapter 1 showed, claims of recklessness, superficiality, immorality, and Carnival's ability to underscore social difference *were* actual prewar concerns but after the war the broad consensus shifted memory of the prewar to a configuration of beautiful and patriotic noble and impeccable Rhenish Carnival in opposition to contemporary immoral, excessive, selfish, degenerate Carnival. Such a juxtaposition would also be made between good Rhenish Carnivalists and hedonistic exploitative party-goers in Berlin, as the opening passage from Düsseldorf demonstrated.

This idea of Carnival being different than in prewar years continued into the years of permitted Carnival as well, from approximately 1927 amidst a period of relative stability and optimism to 1930 on the heels of the stock market collapse and ensuing

⁴⁰¹ "Sanierungsfasching," *Kölnische Zeitung*, Nr. 100, 9 January 1924. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

⁴⁰² "Deutsche Not und deutsche Freude," *Kölnische Volkszeitung*, 8 January 1922. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

⁴⁰³ Letter, Presbyterium der evangelischen Gemeinde in Düsseldorf to the Reichsministerium des Innern in Berlin, 17 January 1925. Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

economic downturn. In 1929 DNVP parliamentarian Lothar Steuer attempted to use the Prussian state parliament to legislate time restrictions on Carnival, in order to insure that the holiday didn't exceed into the Easter season. Although the end of Carnival was always Carnival Tuesday each year, the statesman maintained that such measures were necessary because, actually, Carnival wasn't being restricted according to "the old folkways" (*Volksitten*).⁴⁰⁴ Finally, in 1930 Cologne's archbishop Schulte reiterated the commercialization and capitalist elements of modern Carnival when he criticized the holiday as not "native heritage" but rather an "enterprising" holiday instead.⁴⁰⁵ Even in the invocations of a lost Carnival heritage one clearly sees accusations of excessiveness, capitalistic and consumerist drives, an overall sully or distortion of the holiday's customs and meanings after the war. Given the ongoing commercialization of the holiday that began before the war and continued after it, as well as the ways Carnival was perceived to exacerbate social plight or local tensions during the Weimar years, such accusations come as no surprise, and in turn informed pejorative configurations of the holiday's meanings during and following the years of the Carnival ban.

Those in opposition to Carnival's restoration identified a number of issues with this perceived new form of Carnival during the Weimar Republic, linked to consumption, greed, immorality, and selfishness. One of the most common conditions lamented in Carnival criticisms was a perception of "spreading excess" within society after the war.

⁴⁰⁴ "Herr Steuer besieht: es darf nicht mehr getanzt werden! Die Deutschnationalen wollen sogar den Karneval verbieten!," *Nationalzeitung*, Nr 46, 24 February 1929. Volume 2, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 2 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 Januar 1927 to 31 December 1936, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

⁴⁰⁵ "Der Rheinische Volkscharakter: Gegen den geschäftstuechtigen, nicht bodenständigen Karneval," *Kölnische Volkszeitung*, Nr 64, 4 February 1930. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

Importantly again, “excess” actually had been a problem within prewar Carnival debate—it rationalized a reform of the public holiday in Cologne—but after the war the scope of this perceived excess extended tremendously. In 1921 the conservative nationalist Minister of the Interior in Bavaria, Franz Schweyer of the BVP, despite his moderate approach to the holiday, openly censured the purported inclination toward “excesses” embodied in some Carnival (*Fasching*) acts that needed to be avoided among the populace.⁴⁰⁶ Unlike Steuer, Schweyer early on had championed a campaign to warn against the dangers of National Socialism, itself configured by Schweyer in similar language as with Carnival as a “symptom of these sick, unsettled times.” He alongside other officials underscored in Nazism an ignorance toward Catholicism and its culture.⁴⁰⁷ These claims about excess in Carnival pointed to a vague notion of *Volk* illness or unchecked psychological compulsions in German people after the war. In 1922 the Catholic Centrist press in Cologne argued that the *Volk* was suffering from “a harmful excess” seen in the sheer number of advertisements for pleasures seen around the city.⁴⁰⁸ Carnival was symptomatic of this “sharp compulsion for pleasures of the most varied nature.”⁴⁰⁹ In connecting Carnival to the war experience, Carnival rhetoric disregarded the idea that the nation was tired after an all-consuming war and wished for some

⁴⁰⁶ Schweyer, “.2544 a 74. Bekanntmachung über die Einschränkung der öffentlichen Faschingslustbarkeiten,” Staatsministerium des Innern in Munich to the Gesamtbevölkerung Bayerns (printed in the *Staatsanzeiger*), 17 December 1921. Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

⁴⁰⁷ Quoted in: Derek Hastings, *Catholicism and the Roots of Nazism: Religious Identity and National Socialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010): 105.

⁴⁰⁸ “Deutsche Not und deutsche Freude,” *Kölnische Volkszeitung*, 8 January 1922. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid.

merriment as a departure from the suffering of deep trauma. Instead such desires were seen as hedonism. In 1924 Reich Minister of the Interior, national liberal Karl Jarres, described the national Carnival ban as a measure against “inappropriate revel and excess,”⁴¹⁰ as the state Ministry of the Interior in Bavaria the same year Karl Stützel, BVP politician and decisive opponent of both National Socialists and members of the German communist party (*Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands*, KPD), identified Carnival enthusiasm as rampant “addiction to pleasure.” Such language echoed the Cardinal Faulhaber’s rejection of Carnival in 1922 as “gluttony and amusement.”⁴¹¹ Around the same time Jarres suggested that Carnival regulation would be a means by which to re-socialize liberal subjects to choose more appropriate and moderate forms of leisure. Germans would be socialized by bans to become internally regulating, in order to through their own volition avoid “inappropriate revel and excesses.”⁴¹² Such measures against excess could also be used to prevent harm to further generations, according to a teachers’ organization in 1925, the Association of Evangelical Teachers in Barmen, writing to Prussian Interior Minister and Social Democrat Carl Severing. The group maintained that opposition to “wastefulness,” seen as Carnival, was necessary in light of

⁴¹⁰ “Karnevalistische Feier,” Letter, Minister of the Interior to all Regierungspräsidenten and Oberpräsidenten, 31 December 1924. Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

⁴¹¹ Quoted in: Gerald Feldman, *The Great Disorder: Politics, Economics, and Society in the German Inflation, 1914-1924* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993): 574.

⁴¹² “Karnevalistische Feier,” Letter, Minister of the Interior to all Regierungspräsidenten and Oberpräsidenten, 31 December 1924. Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

the nation's "susceptible youth."⁴¹³ The constant attention to youth wellbeing in Carnival that proliferated already before the war was exacerbated tremendously afterward, as the involvement of youth and women compelled anxiety over Carnival and its effects. Even in the context of improving conditions from 1924 onward though city authorities, like the Düsseldorf government in 1926, continued to instruct police authorities to "intervene energetically against excesses."⁴¹⁴

Such a perception of excess and waste didn't just motivate Carnival prohibition but was part of a broader Weimar movement to restrict perilous forms of urban play, in measures to combat the perceived spread of "gluttony," "hedonism," and "addiction to pleasure" believed to threaten society. Importantly, Carnival activities during the Weimar years, even unofficial ones, paled in comparison to the scale of prewar Carnival festivities, but such activities became illegitimate and indeed illegal after the war, which stimulated such pejorative and indeed pathological configurations about Carnival activity. Carnival became one vice of Weimar leisure that administrations attempted to regulate after the war, as officials embraced often illiberal tactics in an attempt to restrict forms of play perceived as dangerous or excessive in nature. These forms included Carnival but also extended to dance, alcohol, masquerades, funfairs, cinemas, cabarets, revues, and related amusements perceived as immoral, perilous, or deleterious, especially to

⁴¹³ "Einspruch gegen die Wiedenzulassung von Karnevalsveranstaltungen," Letter, Verein Deutscher Evangelischer Lehrerinnen in Barmen to Preußischen Minister des Innern, 2 February 1925. Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

⁴¹⁴ "Einschränkung der Carnevals-Veranstaltungen," *Düsseldorfer Nachrichten*, 31 January 1926. Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

vulnerable German populations like youth and women. The Weimar administration introduced steep amusement taxes from the outset of the Weimar years, in addition to extending wartime curfew ordinances purportedly out of concern for material resources, but maintained them even after periods of acute need subsided. From 1925 onward, statesmen primarily from the DNVP party like Reinhard Mumm spearheaded the initiative for a bundle of federal laws in the Reichstag, “The Law for the Protection of Youth at Amusements,” which would have set a legal drinking age as well as barred youth entry to *any* public amusement.⁴¹⁵ Mumm was a Protestant theologian from Düsseldorf particularly committed to the evangelical fight against “filth” and “trash” (*Schmutz und Schund*), who founded of the Protestant conservative Christian Social People’s Service (*Christlich-Sozialer Volksdienst*, CSVD) in 1929, a party compelled into the NSDAP in 1933. In its original draft this legislation also included the stipulation that youth could not attend film screenings, even in the presence of a parent or guardian, unless the work was seen to possess “higher artistic or scientific value.”⁴¹⁶ Rather than being struck from parliamentary legislation, this set of laws stayed in parliamentary debate for years, repeatedly edited and debated without agreement, but nevertheless reflecting broad political interest in such concerns. By 1929 the legislation had gone through four unsuccessful Reichstag readings.

⁴¹⁵ “Der Schutz der Jugend bei Lustbarkeiten,” 1926, Document 272, Series N/2203, Artikel und Reden von R. Mumm.- Maschinenschriftliche Ausfertigungen, 1926, Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde.

⁴¹⁶ Verlag der Buchhandlung des Ostdeutschen Jünglingsbundes Berlin, “Die Lustbarkeitsstätte Berlins,” *Der Schundkampf: Blatt der Reichsschundkampfstelle der evangelischen Jungmännerbünde Deutschlands*, No 18, Sept 1927, page 3. Series N/2203, Kampf für Sittlichkeit und gegen Schund.- Schriftwechsel, Eingaben an den Reichstag, Materialsammlungen, 1925-1928.

The Ministry of the Interior also spearheaded similar campaigns against “filth” within art, literature, film, and cultural depictions.⁴¹⁷ The prohibitions that the Ministry of the Interior passed however included measures against the spread of “gluttony,” “hedonism,” and “addiction to pleasure”—a bundle of eight ordinances passed in January 1923 for the “fight against gluttony and alcohol misuse.”⁴¹⁸ Reich Chancellor Wilhelm Cuno, the undeclared but conservative politician of liberal economics who stacked his government with members of the DVP, Center, and BVP, saw these measures as necessary so that “public life can become clean and German again.”⁴¹⁹ Again this pointed to a concern for public order restored and devoid of hedonism. Cuno publically declared his willingness to use all means necessary to “crackdown relentlessly” on these problematic forms of Weimar play.⁴²⁰ This prohibition actually made dancing in public illegal across the nation. But it also included important restrictions on the traffic in brandy as well as regulations to combat alcoholism and the emergence of urban speakeasies. This bundle of eight measures explicitly targeted urban masquerades as well,

⁴¹⁷ Although the Weimar years are known for a lessening of the censorship that proliferated during the Kaiserreich, such prohibition as well as regulations on immoral literature or depictions were part of incisive Weimar censorship spearheaded on the part of the Interior Ministry and Reich government. On censorship programs from the Kaiserreich through the end of the Weimar Republic, see Kara Ritzheimer, *“Trash,” Censorship, and National Identity in Early Twentieth-Century Germany* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

⁴¹⁸ Fiche 9, Series R 43-I/1199 Akten betreffend Branntweinhandel u. Maßnahmen geg. Alkoholismus 28 October 1920 to 31 December 1923, Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde.

⁴¹⁹ “Schlemmerei und Alkoholmissbrauch,” Letter from the Reichskanzler in Berlin to the Landesregierungen, 17 January 1923, Series R43I/1199 Akten betreffend Branntweinhandel u. Maßnahmen geg. Alkoholismus 28 October 1920 to 31 December 1923, Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde.

⁴²⁰ Abschrift. Der Reichsminister des Innern. Berlin, den 8. Februar 1923. I. 1207. Eilt! (urgent!) An den Herrn Preussischen Minister des Innern. Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde. R43I/1199: Akten betreffend Branntweinhandel u. Maßnahmen geg. Alkoholismus (28 Okt 1920-31 Dez 1923).

singling out this popular element of modern Carnival celebrations as a symptom of immorality and urban vice in Weimar society. Carnival's connection to illicit excess in cities thus was part of much broader national anxieties about order and healthy play in Weimar liberal society. Indeed Cuno saw in the measures the potential to socialize the German public so that they might choose right public conduct and "carry it oneself" rather than "endure" such restrictive ordinances.⁴²¹ Officials attempted to use measures like the Carnival prohibition to combat inappropriate and "excessive" uses of new freedoms in order to safeguard society. From the outset of the republic then, the repressive containment of Carnival and immoral play emerged as a perceived requirement for the state's liberalism to function.

In addition to perceptions that old Carnival was gone and that Carnival represented new dangerous excess, broad audiences in opposition to Carnival after the war saw the holiday as symptomatic of moral bankruptcy in German society—in the aforementioned words of Cardinal Faulhaber, "the moral nadir of our people."⁴²² These arguments centered around three main ideas. Firstly, broad social plight occurred in varying degrees of severity during the Weimar years, and many critics considered it immoral to celebrate while others suffered—to "waste" income on amusements. Secondly, prewar moral critiques that had come from religious authorities but generally carried little influence took on a lot more weight after the war, as Carnival acts were heavily linked to unchristian or sinful activity. This line of argumentation was surely

⁴²¹ "Schlemmerei und Alkoholmissbrauch," Letter from the Reichskanzler in Berlin to the Landesregierungen, 17 January 1923, Series R43I/1199 Akten betreffend Branntweinhandel u. Maßnahmen geg. Alkoholismus 28 October 1920 to 31 December 1923, Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde.

⁴²² Quoted in: Gerald Feldman, *The Great Disorder: Politics, Economics, and Society in the German Inflation, 1914-1924* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993): 574.

helped along by the increase in religious activity during and after the war, both as a turn to the church became one response to such extreme changes and crisis in society during the war, and as religious organizations served critical aid functions for ailing communities during and after the war. The broadened connection of Carnival to mortal sins seen in the press and made by social reformers and religious leaders likewise helps explain how the stakes of Carnival were suddenly perceived as so much higher than previously, and only seemed to go up as conditions in Weimar society improved. Finally and relatedly, Carnival immorality was identified in some circumstances as a vague threat to the health and wellness of the nation, configured as “*Volk* morality.”

As has already briefly been introduced, officials made a connection between dispensable income and German immorality and hoped that the population would offset plight through charitable actions. Thus officials as well as Rhenish populations constructed those who poorly used their funds as anti-German or morally suspect. In 1921 BVP Interior Minister Franz Schweyer, argued that the drive to Carnival given the severe state of affairs was asocial. “Festivities of this nature act like a scorn on the bitter plight of a great part of our Volk.”⁴²³ The *Kölnische Zeitung* article on “German Hardship and German Joy” in 1922 similarly suggested a moral and mental ineptitude on the part of Carnival supporters, when the author maintained that anyone who supported Carnival was neither “rational-thinking” nor “German-minded.”⁴²⁴ In 1925 the Bavarian

⁴²³ Schweyer, “.2544 a 74. Bekanntmachung über die Einschränkung der öffentlichen Faschingslustbarkeiten,” Staatsministerium des Innern in Munich to the Gesamtbevölkerung Bayerns (printed in the *Staatsanzeiger*), 17 December 1921. Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

⁴²⁴ “Deutsche Not und deutsche Freude,” *Kölnische Volkszeitung*, 8 January 1922.

government even made an express “appeal to moral duty,” to stay away from Carnival, arguing that those who used dispensable income on Carnival were no friends of the nation.⁴²⁵

Beyond this connection of Carnival enthusiasm to immoral action perceived as selfish and poor spending habits, much sharper argumentation could be found in ideas about Carnival immorality as unchristian activity, sometimes made by the Cologne press or officials from the DNVP and Centrist (*Zentrum*) parties, but primarily made by religious, women’s, and teachers’ organizations. The Association of Catholic Youth and Young Men in Grossauheim, a small unoccupied city of 8000 residents near Frankfurt, a city of tremendous prewar Carnival celebrations, described illicit Carnival activities taking place there in 1921 as “desolate and downright scandalous.”⁴²⁶ An outpouring of Carnival activities was allegedly taking place there, flocked to by residents from nearby Hessen and Bavaria where the prohibitions were strictly enforced. Such activities, constructed as unchristian and sinful, had to be stopped, they argued, “for the salvation of the *Volk*.”⁴²⁷ In 1923 Cologne’s archbishop Cardinal Schulte, described “the spirit of

⁴²⁵ Transcript of Kundgebung of the Bayrische Staatsregierung from 27 November 1925, sent from Preußische Ministerpräsident in Berlin to Staatminister (Ministerialdirektor) Nobis St. M. I. 15508, 11 December 1925. Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

⁴²⁶ Letter from the Katholische Jugend- und Jungmännerverein in Grossauheim to the Minister für Wissenschaft, Kunst und Volksbildung in Berlin, 18 January 1923, Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

⁴²⁷ Letter from the Katholische Jugend- und Jungmännerverein in Grossauheim to the Minister für Wissenschaft, Kunst und Volksbildung in Berlin, 18 January 1923, Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

Carnival” (*Fasching*) as the impure part of the soul preventing Germans’ ascent to heaven.⁴²⁸ In an article in the Cologne press the same year, the author decried the “crooked pictures” of immorality that came from the pubs, window displays, pleasure houses, and Carnival romps.⁴²⁹ In 1923, the worst year of inflation, the trend toward pointed moral critique surrounding Carnival behavior came into sharp focus. Improved conditions and international détente that began around this time would not correlate to eased moral criticism of the holiday, but rather the reverse.

Around 1924 and 1925 the extreme tribulation that characterized the first years of the Weimar Republic gave way to a period of relative German stability that lasted until the stock market crash of October 1929. The occupation of the Ruhr territory shifted international opinion about France. The high economic cost of the occupation to both countries as well as their currencies stimulated greater rapprochement between the two. The economic crisis led to a conference in the summer of 1924 to discuss eased economic conditions, in particular the withdrawal from the Ruhr territory coupled with an improved plan to assure German reparations payments. The resulting Dawes Plan led to the departure of foreign troops from the Ruhr territory in July 1925, and ushered in a new period of increased German sovereignty and rights. As a crucial element of the plan entailed financial backing by American Wall Street, in the form of a massive loan, impressions would continue to be critical to German foreign policy. Around 1924 as well the aspirations and attitudes of many German political parties became more balanced, to a degree easing some concern surrounding the looming threat of civil war, sedition, and

⁴²⁸ “Mehr Ernst und Würde,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, Nr. 75, 31 January 1923. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

⁴²⁹ Ibid.

separatist sentiment that predominated in the German crisis years following the war. Such a shift could be seen in the Locarno Treaties of late 1925, which worked to resolve ongoing territorial issues in Europe as well as improved relations with Germany. These developments represented a move toward détente for France and Germany. This period also saw the end of many bitter occupations of important Carnival sites in Germany beyond the controversial one in the Ruhr territory. These occupations included a bitter and illegal occupation of Düsseldorf by the French, as well as the stipulated occupations of Cologne, Bonn, and Krefeld. The next occupation wouldn't end until after the global economic collapse, when on 30 November 1929 Zone 2's occupation ended, which included cities like Aachen and Coblenz. All of these trends inflected attitudes toward Carnival from 1924 onward, and yet, within this set of narratives sentiments only intensified as the original justifications for the Carnival prohibition eased.

One might expect that improved conditions in Weimar society would lead to some reduction in hostility toward the holiday. Despite general improved conditions in Germany, from 1924 or 1925 onward these moral critiques intensified in language and frequency. If the narrative of Weimar after 1924 as a “golden age” of cultural outpouring held up, one might expect an increase in leisure and amusement activities like Carnival that accompanied improved conditions in the country, as well as the broad consolidation of mass consumer society that occurred in German cities at this time. Carnival brought out a particular tension between the fragile Weimar economy and the development of a robust post-war mass consumer culture. As mass consumerism drew attack, at the same time, the state also relied on the success of mass consumerism for economic recovery in order to save the Weimar state. The viability of the state relied on nation-building

initiatives and commercial development that remained at odds with each other in their programs and promoted ideas. In other words, the “golden age” of the Weimar Republic from 1924 to 1929 ushered in the most intense language of moral peril, which corresponded to broader cultural anxieties over consumption, gender, sexuality, and the German nation at the time. In a way then Carnival prohibition reinforced itself, as improving conditions produced greater possibilities for play, which to critics motivated further restrictions to the holiday as a sign of increasing national decline.

In 1925 amidst debate over the possible mitigation of Carnival prohibitions in the nation then, the Association of Evangelical Teachers in Barmen wrote a letter to Prussian Interior Minister Severing in early 1925 and argued that *any* space created for Carnival “would open the floodgates for its debaucheries and aberrations.”⁴³⁰ Likewise, the Presbytery of the Evangelical Community in Düsseldorf described Carnival to DNVP Reich Interior Minister Martin Schiele as “the greatest injury to moral life.”⁴³¹ Society was not embracing the necessary “protective barriers” against Carnival immorality, the community argued, seen alongside officials as a serious outlook on life, but also as “Christian discipline and custom in word and example.”⁴³² Carnival was seen as

⁴³⁰ “Einspruch gegen die Wiedenzulassung von Karnevalsveranstaltungen,” Letter, Verein Deutscher Evangelischer Lehrerinnen in Barmen to Preußischen Minister des Innern, 2 February 1925. Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

⁴³¹ Letter, Presbyterium der evangelischen Gemeinde in Düsseldorf to the Reichsministerium des Innern in Berlin, 17 January 1925. Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

⁴³² Letter, Presbyterium der evangelischen Gemeinde in Düsseldorf to the Reichsministerium des Innern in Berlin, 17 January 1925. Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

unchristian to these groups. At the highpoint of Weimar prosperity and optimism in 1929 and amidst nationally permitted Carnival celebrations, the national liberal paper *Nationalzeitung* mocked how to a coalition of DNVP and Centrist statesmen in the Prussian state parliament “even the cheerful Carnival events, namely the traditional balls that happen during this time” were understood as “supremely immoral.”⁴³³

These ideas about moral bankruptcy in Weimar Carnival were also connected to notions of *Volk* morality and health, in particular from the more prosperous years of 1924 onward. In 1926, a year when the occupations of Zone 1 ended, numerous local administrations debated the possibility of Carnival that year. In unoccupied Düsseldorf, Carnival celebrations were on the rise, but the city had also experienced a spike in hardship and public health issues due to urban flooding and a harsh winter. 1926 would also be both a the year with a particularly high number of unemployed people in Germany⁴³⁴ as well as the year that Carnival debates would finally give way to the possibility of permitted official Carnivals in Germany to occur in early 1927. Was Weimar society opening the floodgates for its imminent demise, as critics of Carnival’s restoration argued, as signs of which already purportedly proliferated in Carnival cities? Numerous organizations continued to fervently protest the possibility of Carnival in such crazy times of hardship, unemployment, and public health problems. The limited permission for Carnival in Düsseldorf that year was labeled by the Presbytery of the

⁴³³ “Herr Steuer besieht: es darf nicht mehr getanzt werden! Die Deutschnationalen wollen sogar den Karneval verbieten!,” *Nationalzeitung*, Nr 46, 24 February 1929. Volume 2, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 2 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 Januar 1927 to 31 December 1936, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

⁴³⁴ Werner Kaltefleiter, *Wirtschaft und Politik in Deutschland: Konjunktur als Bestimmungsfaktor des Parteiensystems* (Cologne: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1968): 37.

Evangelical Community in Düsseldorf as “dissenting against principles of Christian lifestyle.”⁴³⁵ They maintained that only those who opposed Carnival were those who cherished the moral wellness of the *Volk*. Another religious community, the Düsseldorf Synod, argued at the same time that Carnival was a *Volk* illness that needed to be suppressed. The extreme conditions that were occurring in Düsseldorf that year had given rise to an “alcoholic delirium of joy.”⁴³⁶ A coalition of eight women’s organizations in Cologne had published a call to arms to a similar tune in the Cologne Catholic Centrist newspaper the *Kölnische Volkszeitung* a month later. The group included Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish women’s organizations, in addition to the general confederated women’s clubs of the city of Cologne and of the nationalist women’s relief group of the Red Cross.⁴³⁷ The women’s organizations saw Carnival as a mockery of the people’s

⁴³⁵ “Die evangelische Gemeinde gegen den Carneval,” *Düsseldorfer Nachrichten*, Nr 80, 13 February 1926. Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Carneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

⁴³⁶ Copy “Protestsversammlung gegen den Carneval, Düsseldorf, 2.2.26,” in “Ausschusses gegen den Alkoholismus,” Correspondence, Vorsitzender des Düsseldorfer Synodal in Düsseldorf to Pr. Minister des Innern in Berlin, 1 February 1926. Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Carneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

⁴³⁷ The eight organizations were the following: Catholic German Women’s Association, Affiliated Society in Cologne (*Katholischer Deutscher Frauenbund, Zweigverein Köln*); Association of Catholic Women’s and Mothers’ Associations of the Cologne Archdiocese (*Verband der katholischen Frauen- und Müttervereine in der Erzdiözese Köln*); Association of Catholic Young Women’s Associations of the Cologne Archdiocese (*Verband der katholischen Jungfrauen-Vereinigungen der Erzdiözese Köln*); Association of Evangelical Women’s Associations in Cologne and Outskirts (*Verband evangelischer Frauenvereine in Köln und Vororten*); The Old Catholic Women’s Association in Cologne (*Der altkatholische Frauenverein, Köln*); Israeli Women’s Association Cologne and Chapter of the Jewish Women’s Association (*Israel. Frauenverein-Köln und Ortsgruppe des Jüd. Frauenbundes*); City Union of Cologne Women’s Organizations (*Stadtverband Kölner Frauenvereine*); National Women’s Association of the Red Cross (*Vaterländischer Frauenverein vom Roten Kreuz*)

community (*Volksgemeinschaft*) and *Volk* morality (*Volkssittlichkeit*). The holiday caused “injury to female dignity” and equated to “a distortion of the essence of the German woman.”⁴³⁸ It was a violation of the *Volk* woman’s “essence,” the women argued. The celebrated freedoms at Carnival were nothing less than a “barbarization of mores,” “frivolity and disgrace.” Here women themselves used appeals to the health and morality of the German woman to argue, as male critics had in select forms for decades, that Carnival exploited and imperiled the German woman. This marked a dramatic reversal of prewar struggles on the part of women for greater participation in Cologne Carnival’s freedoms and politics. Following officials’ critiques about poor spending as well, the confederated women’s groups also added that Carnival was “a waste of the *Volk*’s wealth (*Volkvermögen*).”

The question of what exactly these audiences meant then when they used terms like “excess” or “wastefulness,” or invoked ideas about old traditional Carnival being gone and its nature much different after the war, as well as the broad impression that German society was suffering from a moral or *Volk* crisis linked to Carnival, quickly pointed to questions about perceived enemies of the nation or enemies of communities. Ideas about the failure of Carnival prohibition expressed entrenched anti-Prussian sentiment, as many critics saw clear evidence of Prussian meddling, Prussian ineptitude, misplaced Prussian piety, and Prussian aggression in this messy process of Carnival

“Frauenstimmen zum Karneval,” *Kölnische Volkszeitung*, 5 February 1926. Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

⁴³⁸ “Frauenstimmen zum Karneval,” *Kölnische Volkszeitung*, 5 February 1926. Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

prohibition after the war. Moreover, from the outset of Carnival prohibition during the Weimar years, broad audiences on the pro-Carnival and anti-Carnival side also blamed the so-called “*Schieber* class,” those perceived to have profited off the war and the ongoing crisis, as the reason for Carnival problems and Germany’s severe state.⁴³⁹ The experience of destitution in the worsening economic state in Germany informed bitter criticisms of alleged “war profiteers” or “revolution profiteers,” perceived enemies of the nation, as well as invocations of the need to care for those in need. Such language repeatedly returned to metaphors of suspect figures moving around in the shadows, a specter that damaged *Volk* health through immoral acts in the night. Such language could sound like collective trauma after the war, a pervasive anxiety and fear that became normalized and externalized, as broad audiences became committed to understandings of stark ills in society and became intent on rooting them out. Moreover, both the invocation of Prussians and Schiebers was part of a larger overarching configuration seen across Carnival debates about the perception of new carnivals taking place elsewhere than where one lived—often in Berlin—and the projections onto those revelers of all the problems that threatened the German *Volk*. This section concludes then with analysis of these

⁴³⁹ The experience of hardship, crisis, political polarization, and cultural fragmentation in Weimar Germany occasioning new languages of scapegoating, antisemitism, and imagined national enemies is a theme taken up in a number of scholarly works. See among others Martin Geyer, *Verkehrte Welt: Revolution, Inflation und Moderne, München 1914-1924* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998). Steven Aschheim, *Brothers and Strangers: the East European Jew in German and German Jewish Consciousness, 1800-1923* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982). Paul Hanebrink, *A Specter Haunting Europe: the Myth of Judeo-Bolshevism* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2018). Pamela Swett, *Neighbors and Enemies: the Culture of Radicalism in Berlin, 1929-1933* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004). The perception of profiteering as the act of an “inner enemy” already from the war years is discussed in: Belinda Davis, *Home Fires Burning: Food, Politics, and Everyday Life in World War I Berlin* (Chapell Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

languages about Prussians and Schiebers before a broader discussion firstly of this construction of good heritage Carnival here and bad foreign culture in Berlin and elsewhere, and secondly of *Volk*-based arguments about Carnival.

One form of scapegoating that could be found in Weimar debates about Carnival, the expression of anti-Prussian sentiment, was an established historical one. The messy process of attempting to restrict Carnival nationwide quickly produced anti-Prussian vitriol in pro-Carnival language. This process was interpreted as the ramshackle process of an inept Berlin-based Prussian government enacted by militant Prussian bureaucrats upon regions they did not understand. The constant experience of uneven enforcement provided fodder for claims of ineffective Prussian exercises of power, as the Association of Hall and Concert Venue Owners of Germany in 1921 criticized how the Prussians in Berlin banned Carnival while permitting other similar forms of play that went unaffected.⁴⁴⁰ In the context of similar perceptions in 1926—that Prussian officials did not follow the national Reich model of prohibition but rather applied either stricter or more lenient versions of the model across the Prussian state as they wished—a representative of the Association of German Mask and Paper Wares Factory Owners in Leipzig asked Reich Minister of the Interior, Social Democrat Carl Severing in Berlin: what’s the point of Carnival prohibition if each local Prussian official arbitrarily applies ordinances however he desired?⁴⁴¹ In one of the lighter jabs at Prussians during Carnival

⁴⁴⁰ “Verwahrung gegen ein beabsichtigtes allgemeines Karnevalsverbot,” Letter Bund der Saal- u. Konzertlokal-Inhaber Deutschlands E.V. in Berlin to the Preußische Ministerium in Berlin, 23 November 1921, Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

⁴⁴¹ Letter, Verband Deutscher Masken- und Papierwarenfabrikanten in Leipzig to Minister des Innern des Freistaates Preussen in Berlin, 13 January 1926. Volume 1,

prohibition, the national liberal paper *Nationalzeitung* labeled the anti-Carnivalists statesmen of the DNVP and Centrist parties in the Prussian state parliament as the “avant-garde of Prussian pietism.”⁴⁴²

An industry representative from the Association of Hall and Concert Venue Owners of Germany likewise wrote a scathing critique of the Prussian government due to the Carnival ban, depicting such measures against Carnival heritage in the Rhineland as clumsily cloaked paternalism on the part of Prussian officials.⁴⁴³ Early in Carnival prohibition, such language turned from depicting Prussian officials as arbitrary or paternalistic to outright authoritarian, as a force carrying out the violent oppression of Rhenish populations. The hall and venue owners called into question the resulting government that was allegedly to “throw off the yoke of authoritarianism.”⁴⁴⁴ At one protest assembly in Düsseldorf in 1922, the group lambasted the Prussians for attempting to “exterminate” Rhenish culture, and claimed that such Prussian power was “invalid,” a reference to pro-monarchy critics who saw the Weimar state as illegitimate, that of

Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

⁴⁴² „Herr Steuer besieht: es darf nicht mehr getanzt werden! Die Deutschnationalen wollen sogar den Karneval verbieten!“, *Nationalzeitung*, Nr 46, 24 February 1929. Volume 2, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 2 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 Januar 1927 to 31 December 1936, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

⁴⁴³ “Verwahrung gegen ein beabsichtigtes allgemeines Karnevalsverbot,” Letter Bund der Saal- u. Konzertlokal-Inhaber Deutschlands E.V. in Berlin to the Preußische Ministerium in Berlin, 23 November 1921, Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

⁴⁴⁴ Letter, Verband Deutscher Masken- und Papierwarenfabrikanten in Leipzig to Minister des Innern des Freistaates Preussen in Berlin, 13 January 1926. Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

usurpers.⁴⁴⁵ An assembly in opposition to the ban in Aachen in 1922, organized by the 200,000-member Association for the Preservation of Rhenish Folk Festivals and Customs together with the 17-group strong United Aachen Carnival Societies, again spoke a language of Prussian authoritarian aggression against the Rhineland. The group argued in 1922 about the strict enforcement of Carnival bans in the Rhineland that the Prussians were attempting to “expel” Rhenish folkways (*Volksitten*) with their “Prussian lashes.”⁴⁴⁶ The experience of Carnival prohibition emerged then for the Rhenish people as a narrative about unjust authoritarian oppression and almost genocidal violence, the experience of Carnival alongside the successful establishment of the “Rhenish Republic” that this group backed representing a triumph over tyranny, and the need to suppress Carnival cultures elsewhere a vindication for such unjust experiences. Such criticism of Prussia was an expression of entrenched tensions between Germany’s confederated states and ideas about Prussian aggression, austerity, and militarism. Rhineland Carnivalists flouted Prussian influence in the region in the earliest attempted official Carnival celebrations in Cologne in the early nineteenth century.⁴⁴⁷ But the end of the war saw other forms of scapegoating too, linked specifically to the war experience and perceptions of profit and sacrifice that resulted from it.

⁴⁴⁵ “Bericht über die öffentliche Protest Versammlung 13. 1. 22. Hotel Rheinhof,” 13 January 1922, Series R/1501 Reichsministerium des Innern 11 March 1922 to 24 February 1925, Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde.

⁴⁴⁶ “Abschrift I 3104,” Vereinigung zur Erhaltung der rheinischen Volksfeste und Gebräuche E.V. in Aachen, 21 April 1922, R/1501 Reichsministerium des Innern. 11 March 1922 to 24 February 1925, Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde.

⁴⁴⁷ Michael Müller, “Karneval als Politikum. Zum Verhältnis zwischen Preußen und dem Rheinland im 19. Jahrhundert.” In *Von der Entstehung der Provinzen bis zur Reichsgründung*, edited by Kurt Düwell (Wuppertel: Hammer, 1983): 207-223.

On all sides of debate critics depicted the so-called “*Schieber*” as the real problem in Germany society. This term during and after the war was used to describe profiteers, swindlers and extorters, those groups believed to have financially benefited from the war and revolution at the expense of the nation, and who were believed to extort and exploit the suffering German population during the hardships of Weimar life. The perception that an incommensurate number of Jews took part in the Weimar revolution fueled antisemitic at the outset of the republic, as one potential meaning of *Schiebertum* became Jews who had turned their back on the nation and German patriotism. Despite the significant numbers of German Jews who enlisted in the war effort, this narrative about shirking national duty further fueled the popularity of the “stab in the back” myth (*Dolchstoßlegende*). While Erich von Ludendorff and the military right of Supreme Army Commander Paul von Hindenburg is often credited with the devisement and spreading of the myth itself, its application is interpreted diversly. Most generally, the home front was believed to have turned its back on the war front, which led the invincible Prussian-led military to lose the war.⁴⁴⁸ The trope of the Jewish *Schieber* in Weimar society was that of suspect morals and consorting with women of ill repute, in particular in big cities like Berlin, the spreading of immorality, greed, and hedonism that threatened the health and virtue of the *Volk*. One essay by journalist Thomas Wehring in 1920 on the swelling

⁴⁴⁸ The narrative has been connected by historians to diplomatic and labor failures, as well as improper maintenance of the controlled economy to diverse political ends within Weimar society. See Belinda Davis, *Home Fires Burning: Food, Politics, and Everyday Life in World War I Berlin* (Chapell Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000). Wilhelm Deist, *Militär, Staat und Gesellschaft: Studien zur preussisch-deutschen Militärgeschichte* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1991). Gerald Feldman, “War Economy and Controled Economy: the Discrediting of ‘Socialism’ in Germany during World War I,” in Hans-Jürgen Schröder ed., *Confrontation and Cooperation. Germany and the United States in the Era of World War I, 1900-1924* (Providence: Berg, 1993): 229-252.

numbers of sex workers in Berlin after the war for instance highlighted this notion of profiteers turning their backs on the nation and instead creating Germany's significant rise in sex work after the war. "It is obvious that the profiteers who had no time to enlist and take part in the fighting ended up trafficking in women as well."⁴⁴⁹ To Wehring what was particularly offensive was the making of *bourgeois* women into sex workers and who had the influence to achieve this. These perceived internal enemies imperiled bourgeois respectability, what at least elite Carnivalists fought to maintain in their official Carnival events. Already in 1920 election posters of the conservative nationalists (DNVP), the frequent enemies of Carnival and immoral forms of play during the Weimar years, likewise showed war cannons pointed at French submarines shooting the two most important enemies to the party, Schiebers and Bolsheviks.⁴⁵⁰ No clearer can the connection between accusations about Carnival and the inevitable scapegoating of those problems in the figure of the *Schieber* be seen than in the manifesto of International Women's Day published in *Die Kommunistin* in 1921: "You and yours are ground down by toil and drudgery, you and yours starve and suffer. Next to you, however, usurers, racketeers, speculators, profiteers of war and revolution, capitalist exploiters of every type and color squander and waste immensurable riches in absurd, disgusting sexual frenzies."⁴⁵¹ This language about the profiteer in Weimar society completely mirrored the

⁴⁴⁹ Thomas Wehring, "Berlin is Becoming a Whore," 1920, trans. and reprint in *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, eds. Anton Kaes, Martin Jay and Edward Dimendberg (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 721-722.

⁴⁵⁰ Election poster of the DNVP from 1920.

⁴⁵¹ *Die Kommunistin*, "Manifesto for International Women's Day," 1921, trans. and reprint in *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, eds. Anton Kaes, Martin Jay and Edward Dimendberg (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 198-199.

dominant narratives about Carnival and its immoral elements. Moreover, it was shared by the far right as well the far left, seen in the juxtapositions above.

On both the pro and anti side of debate about Carnival, critics easily deflected blame for social problems onto the *Schieber* as the *real* German enemy. Both the presence and absence of Carnival to critics signaled the success of *Schiebertum* in society. Many of the themes already introduced were likewise connected to the perceived problem of German *Schiebertum*. In response to official reasoning for the original nationwide ban in 1921, that the suffering economy precluded the possibility of the holiday, the Association of Hall and Concert Venue Owners of Germany argued that inflation and economic issues didn't have anything to do with Carnival, rather that the blame for these problems in society was *Schiebertum*.⁴⁵² The black market was actually quite robust in the context of ongoing economic crisis during the Weimar years, that a black market supplied Germany's ailing population with much-needed meat and bread for often staggering prices doesn't come into question. However, the populace often applied antisemitic tropes to visions of black market profiteers, as well as notions of war or revolution profiteers, the latter being much more a myth pushed by Germany's conservative and militarist right.⁴⁵³ The following year the Aachen coalition protesting the absence of Carnival, at its "Congress of Rhenish Carnival Societies," argued that the state had banned Carnival unconstitutionally, while immoral activities of the *Schieber*—

⁴⁵² "Verwahrung gegen ein beabsichtigtes allgemeines Karnevalsverbot," Letter Bund der Saal- u. Konzertlokal-Inhaber Deutschlands E.V. in Berlin to the Preußische Ministerium in Berlin, 23 November 1921, Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

⁴⁵³ For a discussion of the black market on foodstuffs, see Gerald Feldman, *The Great Disorder: Politics, Economics, and Society in the German Inflation, 1914-1924* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

cabarets, alcoholism, and sex work—spread unchecked.⁴⁵⁴ Rather ironically these vices attributed to the *Schieber* by Carnivalists were similar forms of immorality to what haunted the reputation of bourgeois Carnivalists' events during the Kaiserreich. The organization complained how the *Schieber*, presumably in Berlin, enjoyed gaiety in cabarets while all others knew serious times. On the anti-Carnival side as well, many critics used a shorthand for characteristics of the *Schieber* trope, namely in invocations of “greed, indifference,” or being “enterprising.” Thus in response to the perceived scandal of active New Years Eve celebrations in Berlin in 1926, the *Kölnische Zeitung* criticized these celebrations for how they displayed “greed, indifference, and politics.”⁴⁵⁵ In 1924 the same press had complained how the “nouveau riche” enjoyed festivities in Berlin.⁴⁵⁶ In 1930 archbishop Faulhaber described contemporary Carnival in Germany as an “enterprising” one presented in opposition to historical traditional Carnival seen as “native heritage.”⁴⁵⁷ The figure of the *Schieber* in Carnival debate was thus made into a foreign element as well. One Carnival association in Mainz following the end of Weimar foreign occupations seemed to also implicitly chide this form of Carnival perceived to occur in Berlin by the *Schieber* class and other unsavory circles, when the group maintained that “occupation Carnival (*Fasching*) is passé but the national Carnival

⁴⁵⁴ “Abschrift I 3104,” Vereinigung zur Erhaltung der rheinischen Volksfeste und Gebräuche E.V. in Aachen, 21 April 1922, R/1501 Reichsministerium des Innern. 11 March 1922 to 24 February 1925, Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde.

⁴⁵⁵ “Üble Eindrücke aus Deutschland,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, Nr 63, 25 January 1924. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

⁴⁵⁶ “Der Luxus in Berlin,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, Nr 43, 18 January 1924. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

⁴⁵⁷ “Der Rheinische Volkscharakter: Gegen den geschäftstuechtigen, nicht bodenständigen Karneval,” *Kölnische Volkszeitung*, Nr 64, 4 February 1930. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

(*Fasching*) outside of the Rhineland deserves to be stigmatized.”⁴⁵⁸ Thus the issue of *Schiebertum* emerged as one significant space of agreement in Carnival prohibition, that a major bulwark to society was this particular strain of activity in Berlin that urgently needed to be suppressed.

This image of immoral vice by the *Scheieber* class and other questionable elements in other cities like Berlin were then constructed in opposition to moral and good heritage Carnival in Cologne, as can be clearly seen in one article on the “Pleasure Hoopla” (*Vergnügungsrummel*) in the Cologne periodical *Volk und Heimat: Paper for Catholic and German Nationhood (Volkstum)*, a paper first published in 1926 as the foreign occupations were ending. The article denounced the widespread pleasure seeking and unchristian behavior of Berliners in comparison to the unfair treatment of those properly Christian inhabitants suffering under the measures governing Carnival observance.⁴⁵⁹ The author condemned the “particularly festive and hard” celebrations for New Years that year, which entailed precipitous costs and fully booked venues across the city. The police authorities had lifted the mandatory closing hours for the holiday that year as well. Where did the Berlin Prussian Interior Minister, SPD politician Albert Grzesinski who had stepped in suddenly on account of Severing falling ill, get the justification then, given such pleasure shindigs permitted in Berlin, to prohibit official Carnival traditions in the Rhineland? “If there was anything from Rhineland Carnival still

⁴⁵⁸ Anton Keim, *11 mal politischer Karneval: Weltgeschichte aus der Bütt. Geschichte der demokratischen Narrentradition vom Rhein* (Mainz: von Hase & Koehler, 1981): 168.

⁴⁵⁹ “Vergnügungsrummel,” *Volk und Heimat*, Nr 2, 1 January 1927. Volume 2, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 2 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 Januar 1927 to 31 December 1936, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

impeccable and folksy, then it was the Rose Monday parade that took off in broad daylight.” The article goes on to juxtapose the wholesomeness of traditional Carnival in the day with the treacherous Carnival of Berlin in the night. “Instead Berlin celebrates already its Carnival since November in the most awesome manner, not in the daylight by rather in the night.” The author alleged that Rhenish Carnival had to be repressed by the incompetent Prussian authorities in Berlin despite the “protesting bishops”—the religious authorities in Berlin and elsewhere—so that the “great Babel” in Berlin of “naked dancing” in the Berlin revues can take place.

The rationale behind the departure of old Carnival, the introduction of excess, the presence of national enemies in the nation (*Volk*), and unabated immorality in the cities all dovetailed in these two ideas about Carnival and the nation, namely that Carnival hullabaloes were occurring somewhere else and were a problem that needed to be suppressed, and that the good German heritage needed to be recovered and revived in turn. Such ideas could be understood as clear projections of deeper anxieties about social destabilization and the loss of an old regime. Moreover, as many of the dominant narratives necessitating Carnival’s suppression in previous years went away—the occupation and presence of foreign groups, pressing debates over the possible mitigation of the Versailles Treaty, the possibility of civil war, hyperinflation and the collapsed economy—these stringent moralizing narratives about national character in Weimar society persisted as “problems” that Weimar society was unable or unwilling to “solve.” Unlike the presence of foreign troops or the value of the German currency, the perception of spreading immoral excess elsewhere proved more difficult to measure and thus these concerns seemed to carry a much greater dynamism and reinforced popularity within

Weimar society over time. This chapter closes with a discussion of the critical language on all sides of the debate about, first, the perception of immoral Carnivals occurring elsewhere, and secondly, how diverse critics across the debate used *Volk*-based arguments.

On all sides of debate, circles perceived a prevalence of new Carnival with harmful effects elsewhere. This was a space of agreement in Carnival narratives, although the circles against the return of Carnival used such an idea to motivate critiques of the legitimacy of the Weimar administration, while the circles that sought its restoration used it to argue that hometown Carnival wasn't immoral but rather the Carnival in cities like Berlin was. In 1921 then, the Aachen protest of the Association for the Preservation of Rhenish Folk Festivals and Customs together with the United Aachen Carnival Societies criticized the efficacy of Prussian governance, arguing that Rhenish populations and industries involved in the Carnival market are singled out to suffer through Carnival prohibition while such measures leave other similar forms of play unaffected.⁴⁶⁰ Representatives from industries involved in the production of Carnival wares made similar arguments. The Sonneberg branch of the German Toy Association argued that year that the money that would have gone to Carnival industries instead goes to “damaging pleasures” elsewhere.⁴⁶¹ One unique case involved the argument that Carnival had happened elsewhere, albeit still within the Rhineland, and that no issues with

⁴⁶⁰ “Abschrift I 3104,” Vereinigung zur Erhaltung der rheinischen Volksfeste und Gebräuche E.V. in Aachen, 21 April 1922, R/1501 Reichsministerium des Innern. 11 March 1922 to 24 February 1925, Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde.

⁴⁶¹ Letter Deutscher Spielwarenverband Verbandsgeschäftsstelle Sonneberg S.-M. to the Reichsministerium des Innern in Berlin, 10 November 1921, Series R/1501 Reichsministerium des Innern 11 March 1922 to 24 February 1925, Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde.

occupation forces or cases of rioting had resulted. According to a protest document from the Association of Hall and Concert Owners of Germany, in the previous year, when

the organization of Carnival sessions, cap fests (*Kappenfesten*), etc. were forbidden, nevertheless, costume festivals and cap festivals in bazaars and miscellaneous events, partially even under active involvement of official organs occurred, which differed from miscellaneous Carnival festivals in no way and rather gave absolutely no inducement to frictions with the occupation troops.⁴⁶²

This aforementioned case however still aligned with the dominant idea of undermining Prussian legitimacy and underscored the goodness of Rhenish Carnival that caused none of the issues the administration had been concerned about. In 1922 Carnival supporters labeled the prohibitions as unconstitutional, as protestors in Düsseldorf saw the ban as a violation of the Weimar constitution's rights to public assembly and freedom of trade (*Gewerbefreiheit*).⁴⁶³ Again Carnival critics engaged liberal democratic formulations in their cultures of public celebration. The group maintained that Carnival was unconstitutionally suppressed while other immoral activities—*Schiebertum*, cabarets, sex work—spread unchecked. Another industry affected by Carnival prohibition, the Association of German Mask and Paper Toy Factory Owners decried how the government restricted “harmless” Carnival articles in 1921 while other “frequently harmful indulgences” take place in big cities in the night, taking in “much higher

⁴⁶² “Verwahrung gegen ein beabsichtigtes allgemeines Karnevalsverbot,” Letter Bund der Saal- u. Konzertlokal-Inhaber Deutschlands E.V. in Berlin to the Preußische Ministerium in Berlin, 23 November 1921, Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

⁴⁶³ “Bericht über die öffentliche Protest Versammlung 13. 1. 22. Hotel Rheinhof,” 13 January 1922, Series R/1501 Reichsministerium des Innern 11 March 1922 to 24 February 1925, Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde.

amounts” of revenue.⁴⁶⁴ The United Carnival Societies in Düsseldorf also took up this line of argumentation again in 1925, when they protested how the Rhenish populations suffer “extra ordinances,” and how Rhinelanders are denied their “folk festival here, which is permitted in other German states.”⁴⁶⁵ Finally, the Association of German Mask and Paper Wares Factory Owners in Leipzig took up similar language in early 1926, when the group lamented the wholly uneven application of Carnival bans taking place, the work of Prussian officials who arbitrarily applied the recommendation of the Interior Minister in Berlin.⁴⁶⁶

On the anti-Carnival side of debate by contrast, there was a much stronger focus on how immoral those Carnivals elsewhere were, although even these narratives implied government incompetence as well. A Dr. Schulze of the Saxon Ministry of the Interior in Dresden in 1921 wrote about Carnival events that had been permitted in neighboring territories in Saxony, which had led to “detrimental effects,” although what exactly remained unclear.⁴⁶⁷ He did identify such places however as nearby “border districts.”⁴⁶⁸

⁴⁶⁴ Letter, Verband Deutscher Masken- & Papierspielwarenfabrikanten, e.G.m.b.H. Sitz Leipzig, December 1921, Series R/1501 Reichsministerium des Innern 11 March 1922 to 24 February 1925, Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde.

⁴⁶⁵ Letter, Vereinigte Carnival-Gesellschaften Düsseldorf to Minister of the 19 December 1924. Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

⁴⁶⁶ Letter, Verband Deutscher Masken- und Papierwarenfabrikanten in Leipzig to Minister des Innern des Freistaates Preussen in Berlin, 13 January 1926. Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

⁴⁶⁷ “Abschrift. 4527 II A. zu 2544 a 61. Dresden,” Letter to the Staatsministerium des Innern in Munich, 30 November 1921, Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid.

There seemed to be a similar case in Grossauheim near Frankfurt, where the Association of Catholic Youth and Young Men complained in 1923 about the Carnival revelers who flocked to their town, where Carnivals were less strictly restricted than elsewhere in the Rhineland. The organization described the innumerable jazzy Carnivals taking place there as widespread moral degeneration, activities that were “desolate” and “scandalous.”⁴⁶⁹ Many officials throughout the years of Carnival prohibition, in particular in Prussian cities and cities with sizable Protestant majorities, consistently argued for more lenient regulations on Carnival activities in their locations. They argued that Carnival was not as consequential there as it was elsewhere. Groups thus continued to censure these perceived carnivals elsewhere well into the more prosperous years of the republic. In 1926 a Committee Against Alcohol protested the spread of Carnival events popping up in Düsseldorf as elsewhere as evidence of official incompetence.⁴⁷⁰ This was one case in which the group, affiliated with the Düsseldorf Synod, spoke about its own city in addition to other German cities—namely Berlin. Finally, an article in the Volkish Catholic paper from Cologne *Volk und Heimat* took up similar narratives in the context of New Years celebrations in Berlin, at the same time that Cologne was preparing for its first official permitted Weimar Carnival. The author wrote how the officials needed to “open their eyes” about immoral activities in Berlin in contrast to the moral ones in

⁴⁶⁹ Letter from the Katholische Jugend- und Jungmännerverein in Grossauheim to the Minister für Wissenschaft, Kunst und Volksbildung in Berlin, 18 January 1923, Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

⁴⁷⁰ “Ausschusses gegen den Alkoholismus,” Correspondence, Vorsitzender des Düsseldorfer Synodal in Düsseldorf to Pr. Minister des Innern in Berlin, 1 February 1926. Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

Cologne.⁴⁷¹ Jazzy carnivals took place in Berlin while the “impeccable” Rose Monday parade kept being prohibited.⁴⁷²

Beyond agreement in Carnival narratives about these problematic jazzy carnivals elsewhere, there was also agreement about the importance of Carnival and its regulation to *Volk* morality and the health of the *Volk* after the war. In other words, the Carnival debates about morality were inflected by popular ideas about the nation and national health, which sometimes also entailed blatant eugenicist language and racialized notions of the national community. As this chapter has already shown, ideas about the *Volk* were interwoven into all the diverse sets of arguments introduced above. On the pro-Carnival side of debate, *Volk* arguments about Carnival saw heritage Carnival as the key to *Volk* healing and the Weimar government and its permitted Carnivals in Berlin as the central problem. This was in slight opposition to the anti-Carnival narratives, which saw Carnival domestically as elsewhere as degenerative, a sign of *Volk* illness. In a letter to the editors of the *Kölnische Zeitung* in protest of the paper’s support of the ban, an Aachen dentist maintained that the “gluttony (*Schlemmertum*) and waste (*Prassertum*)” of Carnival to many now could not be encouraged or created by a “true German, in particular a Rhinelander.”⁴⁷³ The Association of Hall and Concert Venue Owners of

⁴⁷¹ “Vergnügungsrummel,” *Volk und Heimat*, Nr 2, 1 January 1927. Volume 2, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 2 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 Januar 1927 to 31 December 1936, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

⁴⁷² Ibid.

⁴⁷³ Aachener Dentist Bolkenius writing to the editor of the *Rheinischen Herold*, 18 October 1920 in response to article in the *Kölnische Zeitung*. Quoted in: Martin Schlemmer, “*Los von Berlin*”: *die Rheinstaatbestrebungen nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2007): 520.

Germany described German suffering in 1921 as the “lasting condition” of the *Volk*.⁴⁷⁴ Criticizing the philistine policies of the Weimar state the association maintained that, “our sick racial corpus can take it no longer when all kinds of quack doctors believe they can muck about with it.”⁴⁷⁵ The Carnival protest assembly in Düsseldorf in 1922 argued that Carnival supporters were “Cologne *Volk* following the ways of the Fathers” who in turn were being “exterminated” for this.⁴⁷⁶ The 1922 Aachen protest of the United Aachen Carnival Societies and the Association for the Preservation of Rhenish Folk Festivals and Customs described how officials were “systematically” removing the “*Volk* festivals of the Fathers,” although Carnival was constructed as timeless *Volk* heritage, celebrated “for centuries.”⁴⁷⁷ The group maintained that neither “oppressive taxes” nor “ordinances or illegal actions of the authorities” would lead to the extinguishing of *Volk* festivals in the Rhineland.⁴⁷⁸ One Carnival industry again argued for the importance of Carnival mirth to the “soul of the *Volk*.”⁴⁷⁹ Carnival organizations saw agitation for the holiday as the demand for the restoration of public life and local heritage. In the

⁴⁷⁴ “Verwahrung gegen ein beabsichtigtes allgemeines Karnevalsverbot,” Letter Bund der Saal- u. Konzertlokal-Inhaber Deutschlands E.V. in Berlin to the Preußische Ministerium in Berlin, 23 November 1921, Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁶ “Bericht über die öffentliche Protest Versammlung 13. 1. 22. Hotel Rheinhof,” 13 January 1922, Series R/1501 Reichsministerium des Innern 11 March 1922 to 24 February 1925, Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde.

⁴⁷⁷ “Abschrift I 3104,” Vereinigung zur Erhaltung der rheinischen Volksfeste und Gebräuche E.V. in Aachen, 21 April 1922, R/1501 Reichsministerium des Innern. 11 March 1922 to 24 February 1925, Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde.

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁹ “Verwahrung gegen ein beabsichtigtes allgemeines Karnevalsverbot,” Letter Bund der Saal- u. Konzertlokal-Inhaber Deutschlands E.V. in Berlin to the Preußische Ministerium in Berlin, 23 November 1921, Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

permitted Mainz Carnival of 1925, one of the only official permitted Carnivals to occur in the years of prohibition, the motto was set as “Carnival revelry is unity,” arguing here too that healing the *Volk* would come through the reconstruction of Carnival culture in the Rhineland.⁴⁸⁰ Again the Catholic nationalist paper *Volk und Heimat* in Cologne described the Rose Monday parade in 1927 just before its first official Weimar occurrence as “impeccable and folksy.”⁴⁸¹

On the anti-Carnival side by contrast, similar Volk-based arguments took up ideas of a perceived sick racial corpus and Carnival as symptomatic of moral bankruptcy in the nation. The Minister of the Interior who set down the prohibition Adolf Köster stated that “Carnival joy runs in the blood none more than” in the Rhinelanders.⁴⁸² Such claims mirrored similar language about Rhenish blood and Carnival seen even before the war by members of the Carnival elite.⁴⁸³ The Cologne Catholic Centrist press in 1922 argued that for the preservation of “*Deutschtum*” and national dignity that people would have to give

⁴⁸⁰ *Narrheit* translates to “folly” from the figure of the *Narr* or fool. But a *Narr* during Carnival in Mainz as in other cities is an enthusiastic Carnival participant, so here the motto is more like “Carnival revelry – unity!” as opposed to its literal meaning. Keim, *11 mal politischer Karneval*, 156.

⁴⁸¹ “Vergnügungsrummel,” *Volk und Heimat*, Nr 2, 1 January 1927. Volume 2, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 2 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 Januar 1927 to 31 December 1936, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

⁴⁸² Minister of the Interior in Berlin to all state governments, 2 December 1921, Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

⁴⁸³ “Von leitender Stelle des Kölner Karnevals,” *Stadtanzeiger*, Nr. 460, 7 October 1904. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969. “Protest der Leiter des Kölner Karnevals gegen die Angriffe des Pfarrer Hötzel,” *Kölnisches Tageblatt*, Nr 728, 7 October 1904. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

up Carnival.⁴⁸⁴ The author saw the current public life of the *Volk* at that time as terribly perilous and deleterious, a “salad of scorpion tails.” The press also saw the *Volk* as sick after the war, suffering from “a harmful excess.” As part of the broader Weimar moral campaigning to restrict immoral play, the Reich Chancellor himself Wilhelm Cuno organized a rally of women’s and religious groups but also officials in early 1923 just before Carnival that year. In his proclaimed “crackdown on the moral crisis” (*Bekämpfung des sittlichen Notstand*), Cuno and the group committed in the context of such pressing serious times to the purification and Germanification of public life again.⁴⁸⁵ “Our people... can only achieve strength when the private and public life become austere again, pure again, German again.”⁴⁸⁶ To this end, the group vowed in the “hour of need of the German empire” to put all efforts in for “the renewal of our national life (*Volksleben*).”⁴⁸⁷ Such language was not expressly eugenicist but invoked important languages or symbols of the nation, definitions of a national community, and an underlying commitment to save the folk, nation, or race perceived as imperiled. This language would later be assimilated in the service of explicit racial ideologies, and the popularity of this language proliferated to the extreme over time.

Such language proceeded across the phases of Weimar society. In Düsseldorf in 1926, the Düsseldorf Synod saw opposition to Carnival as a sign that one “cherish[es] the

⁴⁸⁴ “Deutsche Not und deutsche Freude,” *Kölnische Volkszeitung*, 8 January 1922. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

⁴⁸⁵ Abschrift. Der Reichsminister des Innern. Berlin, den 8. Februar 1923. I. 1207. Eilt! (urgent!) An den Herrn Preussischen Minister des Innern. Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde. R43I/1199: Akten betreffend Branntweinhandel u. Maßnahmen geg. Alkoholismus (28 Okt 1920-31 Dez 1923).

⁴⁸⁶ “Die Bekämpfung des sittlichen Notstands,” *Kölnische Volkszeitung*, Nr. 86, 3 February 1923, Abend-Ausgabe. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid.

moral wellness of the *Volk*.⁴⁸⁸ Taking part in Carnival was symptomatic of moral illness within the *Volk* that needed to be suppressed. The Cologne confederated women's organizations from Cologne configured Carnival immorality as making a mockery of the people's community (*Volksgemeinschaft*) and *Volk* morality (*Volksittlichkeit*), an injury to the German woman's essence, and a waste of the *Volk*'s wealth (*Volksvermögen*).⁴⁸⁹ Here the language is expressly eugenicist and taking up racialized language that National Socialists would later nationalize through their racial ideology. The DNVP statesmen Lothar Steuer likewise argued in 1929 that Carnival after the war was excessive, "injured the religious feeling of wide circles of the *Volk*," and damaged "the reputation of the *Volk*."⁴⁹⁰ Even though the DNVP statesmen were the most vehement opponents of Weimar Carnival and play, their narratives were more nationalist than eugenicist. The Association of Evangelical Teachers in Barmen implicitly argued on behalf of *Volk* health in 1925 when its representatives wrote of school children at Carnival, the future generation that need not be inhibited, that they "suffer greatly" from exposure to

⁴⁸⁸ Copy "Protestsversammlung gegen den Carneval, Düsseldorf, 2.2.26," in "Ausschusses gegen den Alkoholismus," Correspondence, Vorsitzender des Düsseldorfer Synodal in Düsseldorf to Pr. Minister des Innern in Berlin, 1 February 1926. Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

⁴⁸⁹ "Frauenstimmen zum Karneval," *Kölnische Volkszeitung*, 5 February 1926. Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

⁴⁹⁰ "Herr Steuer besiehlt: es darf nicht mehr getanzt werden! Die Deutschnationalen wollen sogar den Karneval verbieten!," *Nationalzeitung*, Nr 46, 24 February 1929. Volume 2, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 2 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 Januar 1927 to 31 December 1936, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

Carnival, in particular due to the “dirty sexual aberrations” that take place.⁴⁹¹ Such appeals were likewise seen in the *Kölnische Zeitung*, which in 1924 ran an article of disdain for the reintroduction of public Carnival festivities in Vienna, within which the anonymous author made a more explicit argument about eugenics by describing the celebrations of Carnival revelers as “degeneration” that threatened to bring the “edge of doom” through the holiday’s restoration.⁴⁹² This was a far cry from the prewar language of the Cologne paper, which represented the holiday as everything to everyone in Cologne.

In one particular article one clearly sees the convergence in Carnival narratives about the *Schieber*, jazzy Carnivals elsewhere, *Volk* arguments, and solutions to these perceived problems. Shortly after New Years Eve in 1924, the *Kölnische Zeitung* scorned displays in Berlin. New Years Eve or Silvester was the critical day in the Carnival calendar that involved masquerade balls and parties that gave way to an entire day of Carnival assemblies to begin the Carnival season. One journalist for the national Cologne press criticized the “sick impressions” given to Americans by the immense costs and over-the-top displays of “New Years gluttony” that year, at which according to the article “500,000 dollars in Berlin alone was squandered on New Years (*Silvester*) evening.”⁴⁹³

Such reports went off “like a bomb,” leaving American authorities in particular with an

⁴⁹¹ “Einspruch gegen die Wiedenzulassung von Karnevalsveranstaltungen,” Letter, Verein Deutscher Evangelischer Lehrerinnen in Barmen to Preußischen Minister des Innern, 2 February 1925. Volume 1, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

⁴⁹² “Sanierungsfasching,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, Nr. 100, 9 January 1924. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

⁴⁹³ “Üble Eindrücke aus Deutschland,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, Nr 63, 25 January 1924. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

“embarrassing impression,” and putting on display the “callous behavior of Berliners on New Years Eve.” If for once, the author argued, the “profiteering landed nobility (*Landjunker*) ceased to withhold his reaping and if for once the gluttonous in the cities behaved differently” —here the language at once even takes up both anti-Prussian critique, given the reference to the Junker class, and capitalist critiques of profiteering and gluttony in Berlin that could potentially be antisemitic —then it would be easy to convince the Americans to provide aid, the article argued. The author then goes on to succinctly disdain about such amusements, who takes part in them, and what they meant, before equating such luxurious practices with the spoils of European pogroms that Germans cannot take advantage of. The author argued that even if the fallout of New Years Eve shindigs wasn’t so dramatic, that the solution in society was to

gradually form a party of the decent people in Germany which advances ruthlessly against the gluttonous vermin, which pillories the loathsome pack of *Schieber* and so undertakes a spring cleaning, which all the more appears necessary the further away from the homeland (*Heimat*) one appears in conditions at home and their effect abroad.

Weimar officials together with social reformers, religious authorities, and others had scathingly criticized enthusiasts of Carnival and alleged profiteers who embraced amusements in the face of broad social plight. But rarely could one find such a chilling articulation of the necessity to form a political party to exterminate such drives and the enemies associated with them. Moreover, such attitudes were in turn linked later in the article to the spoils of antisemitic that could not be enjoyed. “Also the bartering of antisemitic atrocity stories would finally be kept within bounds which in truth do not overly obviously intersect. Poles and Romanians like to treat themselves to the luxury of Jewish pogroms; Germany cannot, particularly not as party political sport.”

As this section has shown, the most persistent and persisting ideas about Carnival in Weimar society dealt with concern for the moral health of the German nation. Moral languages about Carnival represented the only thematic focus within which both pro-Carnival and anti-Carnival proponents took up the same categories and languages. In narratives about the economy and the Rhineland, debate took place as oppositional camps taking up different visions of society and different understandings of Germany's problems. Within moral arguments, the vision was shared. Concern for German moral health in Carnival narratives dealt with the perceived politics of communities, as Carnival discourses shaped polarizing configurations about foreigners and Germans, Prussians and Rhinelanders, enemies and friends, good and bad. Carnival brought tensions over the nature of the national community into sharp relief. Carnival after the war became a catalyst of polarization, sharpening differences, and exacerbating anxieties about German society and the national community. Moreover, unlike with the economy and the Rhineland question, mechanisms never seemed to emerge within Weimar society that were capable of mitigating these concerns, as through until the end of the republic the same languages proliferated about immorality and spreading excess, the dangerous Carnival polluting the nation in Berlin and the wholesome German citizens in Carnival heritage sites unjustly oppressed. In the absence of such a mechanism, the regulation of Carnival emerged as the ramshackle attempt to control a moral geography, as a solution to pointed problems of the here and there, the pure and impure, and the specter of foreign and hostile elements like the *Schieber*.

IV. Conclusion

That Carnival was successfully restricted at the federal level for most of the Weimar years pointed only to the general consensus among officials across the Reich, surprising in its own right, that Carnival shouldn't be allowed in Germany. Yet, during the tenure of the republic hundreds of people from diverse background debated the meaning and uses of Carnival, national debate that formed the subject of this chapter. Indeed those in power agreed that Carnival should stay prohibited for a variety of reasons, explored above, but within those reasons great disagreement proliferated over Carnival and how to mobilize it. This disagreement, primarily over the economic realities of the republic and the dire state of affairs in the Rhineland, was both indicative of deep fissures in German populations and compelled the issues surrounding Carnival over time. In other words, Carnival's necessary restriction represented one policy option within the spectrum of debate—the one that consistently won out—but its lack of universal favor often reinforced the stakes and controversy surrounding Carnival.

At the same time, consensus did result from Carnival discourses, and could clearly be seen within language about Germany's moral health. Within this set of arguments, people on all sides of the debate expressed shared visions about Germany's problems and the source of them. Within these moral languages the debates over the regulation of public order that predominated within the discussions of the economy and the Rhineland were joined by anxiety about hedonism and the spread of immorality in German society. What resulted was a general vision of society that Germany was suffering from some immoral excess and hedonism, linked to problematic and exploitative capitalist activity, both of which in particular spreading as an excess in Berlin, a city configured as degenerate, where the worst sort of people took up Carnival

to harmful ends. When the material conditions of the two first sets of arguments, about the economy and the occupied Rhineland, eased, this set of narratives about German society only intensified over time and did not abate through the end of the republic.

Thus, Carnival discourses dealt significantly with visions and ideas about the nation and *Volk*, as Carnival became wrapped up in the urgent project to recover and heal the German nation. Throughout Carnival regulation one sees arguments about the holiday configured as the route to a strong German nation again or the bulwark that prevented it. In the case of the economic crisis or the politics of the Rhineland, Carnival was more of a mechanism to stimulate recovery or prevent further demise. But in the case of moral arguments about the German nation, pervasive ideas proliferated about Carnival as symptomatic of some underlying national nature or some quality in particular groups. In this way, Carnival after the war became a means of identifying and underscoring difference during the Weimar years. It also became a mechanism of scapegoating, as Carnival discourses identified imagined national enemies or threats in society, and interpretations about their underlying effect on the German nation or *Volk*. As the containment of Carnival seemed to evade German society in the eyes of these audiences, these arguments only intensified and left unresolved great anxiety and bitterness about the health and morality of the German people and the national community at the end of the republic. Pejorative configurations of the *Schieber* as well as select instances of racial ideology and language that would later feature prominently in Nazi racial ideology could be seen in these narratives. But a much more broadly shared vision of Weimar society seen in Weimar Carnival narratives simply included conceptions of a vague unhealthy

nation (*Volk*) not configured racially per se and the desire to heal it through the control of Carnival.

Furthermore, anxieties about Carnival regulation also reflect prewar and ongoing commercialization of the holiday that contributed significantly to its national significance as well as perceived dangers. Before the war, changes to the holiday's organizations and structure took place in line with other processes like urbanization and the development of a modern consumer society in Germany. These changes in modern Carnival were viewed with skepticism before the war, as critics lamented the participation of more tourists or foreigners, the more expressly commercial nature of the celebrations, and the purported immoral activities taking place in new sprawling urban metropolises. The context of Carnival was changing. After the war by contrast, the context had so radically changed that these effects of commercialization and changes in society that began years of German economic prosperity presented extreme exacerbations of these prewar concerns in the crisis years after the war. Handwringing ensued over Carnival's materialism, its perceived issues surrounding authenticity and respectability, as the traditional stewards of the holiday were superseded. And yet, through the history of Weimar Carnival prohibition the commercialization of Carnival persisted, even as that commercialization could be connected to perceived national enemies like the "*Schieber*." Trade groups and local administrations refused to completely give up the holiday as a now-critical element of both city and national economies. The leverage of diverse new legislative measures also intensified the revenue stream of permitted events for local governments in select ways through amusement and Carnival taxes. Trade groups across the nation took up shared arguments about Carnival in their missives to Weimar governments: Carnival was

good for the economy; Germans have a right to joy; Carnival is a local heritage act and it's harmless when done in the right way.

Finally, anxiety over new immoral Carnival in places like Berlin dealt with anxiety over the effects of a new mass consumer society that was consolidated in these years, a consumer society within which Carnival activity proved particularly popular at the same time that it was being suppressed. The circuitous national process of regulating Carnival facilitated both new urban spaces for controversial Carnival activity outside of the holiday's heritage sites as one peculiar outcome of the national ban, taken up more extensively in the next chapter. As has already been shown, it also in turn engendered deep resentment as well as moral panic about a German *Volk* that was sick, panic that only intensified as the Weimar years wore on. This popularity of Carnival activities in Berlin by morally-suspect groups forms the subject of the next chapter. Before taking up how National Socialism "solved" the ostensible problem of Carnival, one must first understand the nature of some of these "jazzy Carnival" cultures that flourished in Berlin and have only been glimpsed here through the eyes of their fervent critics across the country. The next chapter then takes up a cross-section of these unofficial Carnival cultures seen so broadly in debates as immoral, excessive, and a threat to the German *Volk*.

Chapter 5

The Queer Carnival of Weimar Berlin

We Berliners conduct everything a bit seriously. Also the gaiety. And it has cost long years of ardent attempts before one managed to bring such a thing that one at the utmost can denote with the word Carnival. But now we have it. ... [A]nd if it doesn't also leave its mark directly on Berlin's street life, it has rather successfully, in closed rooms of a private and public character, united an always increasing number of proponents under its princely scepter.⁴⁹⁴

Carnival made its way to Berlin. Few would describe its manifestation in the republic's capital as possessed of the "jovialness" characteristic of Cologne Carnival, indeed the stereotype of Berliners as austere, seen in the above depiction from the *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* in 1924, made the widespread popularity of Carnival in the city by the 1920s perhaps surprising. The article's author went on to poke fun at the way Berliners embraced gaiety, describing their dancing as "contrary to nature and grotesque movements of the arms and legs... A bit of humor incidentally couldn't hurt the Berlin Carnival." But as the above account suggests, while Berlin boasted no flourishing Rose Monday parade on public streets as in Cologne, the city's residents increasingly favored Carnival events in closed rooms—not the stuffy assemblies favored by Carnivalist gentleman as in Cologne, but rather the masquerade balls that had grown in popularity, even in Berlin, since the 1880s. This chapter takes up the queer Carnival culture that proliferated in Berlin, the "immoral" nightlife activities much maligned within national Carnival discourses by the Weimar years, as a palpable manifestation within Berlin

⁴⁹⁴ "Berliner Karneval," *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*, 1924. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

culture, seen in select form even before World War I, and as a particularly cherished means of coming together for queer communities in the city.

Within this broader Carnival culture gaining popularity in Berlin, queer Carnival subcultures flourished at the same time that a moral witch-hunt against Carnival raged across the country. Indeed queer subcultures found fertile ground in the Prussian capital in these years for an unprecedented density and scale of community formation through Carnival masquerade ball culture. By the mid-1920s an array of pubs, bars, clubs, and social groups for queer clientele and curious voyeurs alike put on literally hundreds of packed masquerade balls in winter with offerings directed toward all manner of themes and fantasies, and meant to incorporate every sex preference, gender expression, erotic interest, or class background. As the mainstream story about Carnival and its associations at the national level revealed modern Carnival's capacity underscore regional, social, and political tensions after the war, quite the opposite occurred for queer groups in Berlin. Instead Carnival facilitated community formation for queer men and women as well as so-called transvestites, and was a vehicle both of coming together and of becoming visible in public space in an unprecedented way in modern German society. These Carnival subcultures were subject to moral politics of their own, as the regulation of Carnival found its way even into the homosexual emancipation movement in Weimar Germany. But queer Carnival in Berlin nevertheless opened up new possibilities at the same time that it became linked to immorality and vice due to the increased stigmatization of these populations during the Weimar years combined with the Carnival's associations with immorality and vice throughout these years.

This chapter takes up language like "queer" and "transvestite" in its analysis of

the Carnival subcultures in Weimar-era Berlin, which requires comment. From an historical and analytic perspective, the subject matter and sources taken up here present real linguistic challenges. For starters, and perhaps most importantly, virtually all extant sources on these subcultures elide subjective configurations of identification like “gay,” “lesbian,” “homosexual,” or “trans,” which in the absence of ego documents makes such labels unhistorical. Language about Germans of non-normative sexual orientations and gender expressions were also extremely varied between the turn of the twentieth century and the end of the republic, both within the study of these groups by specialists and within the language used by historical actors themselves. Labels used by specialists and critics, like Third Sex, sexual abnormal, sexual invert, Uranier, Tribaden, girlfriends, the special, etc. were matched by a host of slangs for gender orientation or sex preferences used by queer and trans groups themselves—for queer women alone for instance, bubis, madis, Garçonne, Dodo, *Titus-Kopf*, *Gamin*, Bachelorettes, Hansis, Girlfriends, Hot Sisters, Ladies, Little Men, Sweet Mommies, Sharpers, *Skorpion*, Gougnettes, Tadpoles, Daddies (*Vatis*).⁴⁹⁵ This lack of coherence makes a reduction to convenient umbrella categories from contemporary society, themselves subject to constant change and critique, unwise. Furthermore, categorization itself was undermined in particular by Carnival practices within these spaces. Great fluidity and play took place within Carnival spaces, as it often did within mainstream official public Carnival cultures as well, within which such displays frequently challenged easy categorization about sex, gender, and

⁴⁹⁵ For a relatively comprehensive list of these types and their descriptions, see: Mel Gordon, *Voluptuous Panic: the Erotic World of Weimar Berlin* (Port Townsend: Feral House, 2006): 104. Gordon takes most of this list from the descriptions of proprietors and club regulars found in: Ruth Margarete Röllig, *Berlins lesbische Frauen* (Leipzig: Gebauer: 1928).

sexuality. In other words, cross-dressing, gender queer displays, and homoerotic acts were common at public Carnival celebrations and cannot be used thus as evidence of subjective identification, even as queer and trans groups homed in on these possibilities at Carnival. Finally, while the club scenes of Carnival practice were approximately divided according to sex with an additional but also overlapping scene for so-called transvestites, as discussion will show, attendance at these events could be highly varied and spanned every demographic. Because of the nature of displays, rhetoric, and demographics in attendance then, this chapter defers to a more capacious and less exact language of queer Carnival, as well as queer men, queer women, and so-called transvestites when discussing the Berlin club scenes in this chapter.⁴⁹⁶ Highly diverse demographics gathered together in subcultural Carnival spaces in Berlin that were queer in nature. More important to this work than defining their subjectivities is the common interests and goals that brought them together, the communities created by these practices and their draw during the Weimar years.

Where relevant this chapter also makes reference to “transvestites” as well, a term devised by psychologists and sexologists from the late nineteenth century on to describe a rather broad category of sex and gender experience.⁴⁹⁷ For instance, renowned sexologist

⁴⁹⁶ Indeed scholar Susan Stryker described such an approach to this dilemma as such: “Sometimes I use ‘queer’ to describe many different kinds of people who come together in the same space for a common cause... because I don’t want to say ‘gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, drag, and butch individuals, along with male and female prostitutes who might well be heterosexual’ every time I need to refer to the group collectively. ...[M]any kinds of people might in fact have something in common with one another in their opposition to an oppressive situation. I also want to avoid heading down the rabbit hole of historical nitpicking.” Susan Stryker, *Transgender History* (Berkeley: Seal Press, 2008): 23-24.

⁴⁹⁷ On the now expanding work on the history of transvestites in Weimar society, see Laurie Marhoefer, *Sex and the Weimar Republic: German Homosexual Emancipation*

and early queer and trans activist Magnus Hirschfeld's conception of the "Third Sex," later configured as the "transvestite" encompassed what would today be understood as transgender, transsexual, intersex, nonbinary, gender queer, and gender nonconforming individuals.⁴⁹⁸ According to Hirschfeld's case studies and descriptions in *Berlins Third Sex* the term could be used simply for homosexuals as well. And yet, there were queer scenes in Berlin organized around queer men, queer women, and so-called transvestites during these years—as well as emancipation movements for these groups. Such language is taken up here because historical actors, both the people themselves and those experts studying them, took it up and applied it to descriptions of the Carnival scenes. It is reproduced here then despite its limits when it's taken up in the sources themselves. Despite the obvious tension between deferring to "queer" people and practices on the one hand and the maintenance of categories like "men," "women," and "transvestites," the scenes themselves were historically divided and described as such and must be discussed in this way to bring out the tensions and competing valences of each scene. It takes up both queer men and queer women as well as, where relevant, the experiences of so-called transvestites or members of the "Third Sex" in order to analyze the unique simultaneous and competing significance and significations of Carnival events to these demographics.

This chapter analyzes the queer Carnival subcultures in Berlin in three sections,

and the Rise of the Nazis (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015). Katie Sutton, "'We Too Deserve a Place in the Sun': the Politics of Transvestite Identity in Weimar Germany," *German Studies Review* 35, No. 2 (May 2012): 335-354. Rainer Herrn, *Schnittmuster des Geschlechts: Transvestitismus und Transsexualität in der frühen Sexualwissenschaft* (Gießen: Psychosocial-Verlag, 2005). Katie Sutton, *The Masculine Woman in Weimar Society* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011): 111-125.

⁴⁹⁸ Magnus Hirschfeld, *Berlins Drittes Geschlecht* (Subach: Kindle Edition): 48. Originally published in Berlin in 1904. See also Magnus Hirschfeld, *Die Transvestiten: ein Untersuchung über den erotischen Verkleidungstrieb mit umfangreichem casuistischen und historischen Material* (Berlin: Pulvermacher, 1910).

which collectively represent both synthetic historical work and a significant intervention in the history of queer life in Weimar Berlin. First, it briefly takes up the notion of a “Berlin Carnival” or “queer Berlin Carnival” in Weimar Germany. The notion of Weimar and in particular Berlin as especially carnivalesque or favorable toward queer Carnival cultures may surprise few as metaphors and language of the carnivalesque together with images of Weimar queerness predominate in both historical and contemporary ways of seeing and imagining Weimar. Numerous historical works invoke a world of disorder and the carnivalesque in their treatments of Weimar society, tied to either the German economy or gender subversion of the Weimar era.⁴⁹⁹ Contemporaries shared such language too. In Klaus Mann’s words from his post-World War II memoir *The Turning Point*, “let’s enjoy the Carnival of inflation.”⁵⁰⁰ Likewise artist Horst Naumann depicted the violence and political rupture of the era in a 1928 work titled “Weimar Carnival” (*Weimarer Fasching*). Beyond metaphors to disorder and a Carnival world or carnivalesque analytic frameworks though, extant scholarship does not take up Carnival discourses and Carnival cultures themselves. Likewise, in scholarship explicitly about the queer and trans Weimar Berlin, virtually all scholarship references the club scenes and

⁴⁹⁹ See for instance Gerald Feldman’s description of the Weimar economy as the “great disorder,” or Martin Geyer’s analysis of the navigation of rupture by Munich’s residents as a “world turned upside down” (*Verkehrte Welt*). Other scholarship like that of Katie Sutton’s uses the “politics of Carnival” as an analytical framework to analyze subversive gender displays like cross-dressing and drag in Weimar culture. Relatedly, Barbara Ulrich treated all of winter carousal in Weimar Berlin as *Fasching* or Carnival events there for the subversive practices of Berlin’s purported “hot girls.” Gerald Feldman, *The Great Disorder: Politics, Economics, and Society in the German Inflation, 1914-1924* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993). Martin Geyer, *Verkehrte Welt: Revolution, Inflation und Moderne, München 1914-1924* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998). Katie Sutton, *The Masculine Woman in Weimar Society* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011): 129. Barbara Ulrich, *The Hot Girls of Weimar Berlin* (Los Angeles: Feral House, 2002).

⁵⁰⁰ Klaus Mann, *The Turning Point* (New York: Fischer, 1942): 85.

their popularity, and often includes references to Carnival; yet, within this scholarship too neither the club scenes themselves nor their Carnival subcultures are taken up broadly in their own right. Some scholarship even outright derides it as evidence of escapism and distance from real politics.⁵⁰¹ The second and third sections of this chapter fill this gap then by turning to the queer Carnival subculture for men in Berlin and then the respective one for women—by assimilating what ordinarily makes up anecdotal asides into an actual history of Berlin’s robust queer subcultures that took place under the heading of Carnival. Despite significant overlap in development and community formation effects, the groups are taken up separately because of their actual historical distance from each other. Not only did the subcultures have divergent histories but the club scenes were also separate. A treatment of queer Carnival in Weimar Berlin collectively reveals the ways that these demographics appropriated and gave meaning to Carnival practices alongside the national vilification of the holiday taking place at the same time. Contrary to the implicit—and indeed at times explicit—assumption within extant scholarship that queer leisure in Carnival was trivial, not the serious business of Weimar sexual politics, this chapter against the backdrop of national Carnival debates situates these subcultures at the center

⁵⁰¹ James Steakley’s landmark work on the Weimar homosexual emancipation movement is part of a trend, even maintained by lesbians themselves in the period after World War II, of seeing the tendency toward social clubs on the part of queer women as unpolitical. In Steakley’s words “it was far easier to luxuriate in the concrete utopia of the urban subculture than to struggle for an emancipation which was apparently only formal and legalistic.” Recent scholarship though, like Martie Lybeck’s has shown that alignment with the work of the men’s emancipation movement—and such political organizing was largely spearheaded by men—could lead one to be branded a sell-out of the queer women’s cause. Marhoefer has also challenged the assumption that the women’s clubs were “apolitical.” James Steakley, *The Homosexual Emancipation Movement in Germany* (New York: Arno Press, 1975): 81. Martie Lybeck, *Desiring Emancipation: New Women and Homosexuality in Germany, 1890-1933* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2014): 165. Laurie Marhoefer, *Sex and the Weimar Republic: German Homosexual Emancipation and the Rise of the Nazis* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015): 58.

of national concerns over morality and health in fervent debates over the survival of the nation. This chapter takes up Carnival as a manifestation of Weimar culture in Berlin, at once a space of new possibilities to some while part of the worst threats posed by Carnivals to those critics already seen within the national Carnival debate.

I. Weimar Carnival in Berlin

Before taking up the practices themselves though, an explanation of “queer Carnival in Berlin” is necessary. How can one even speak of Weimar Carnival in Berlin? After all, as a Prussian capital city in the Protestant German North, Berlin boasted no famed Carnival heritage with traditions imagined to stretch back to medieval feudal life as was the case in Cologne. Berlin hadn’t experienced a rich building up of the holiday as part of nineteenth-century German nationalisms from the middle of the century onward either. The city enjoyed a number of masquerade ball traditions like the Alpine balls (*Alpenbälle*) as part of a new modern masquerade ball pantheon in winter from around the turn of the century. Alpine balls, first emergent in Berlin in 1885, were a sort of half traditional *Tracht* holiday that included traditional attire and yodeling together with the mark of Berlin society balls increasingly popular from the turn of the century.⁵⁰² These balls, like the popular Carnival masquerade balls seen in Cologne and especially in

⁵⁰² See a description for instance in Helen Josephy and Mary Margaret McBride, *Beer and Skittles: A Friendly Guide to Modern Germany* (1932). See also Nils Grosch, “*Im weißen Rößl*” *Kulturgeschichtliche Perspektiven* (Munster: Waxmann, 2016): 114. Franka Schneider, “Die temporäre Verdorfung Berlins. Der Alpenball als urbane Vergnügungspraxis um 1900,” in Anna Littmann, Johanna Niedbalski, and Tobias Becker, eds., *Die tausende Freunden der Metropole: Vergnügungskultur um 1900* (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2011).

Düsseldorf and Bonn, were highly popular and took place loosely at the same time as the Carnival season from November to February or early March. But many lawmakers did not see such traditions in Berlin as part of Carnival. In delineating how the national Carnival ban would affect events in the city in 1922, the Prussian Minister of the Interior, Social Democrat Carl Severing, affirmed that “[c]ostume festivals, for instance the so-called Alpine balls, which have been held constantly in every winter in Berlin and other large cities for decades, should not be hit by the aforementioned prohibition.”⁵⁰³

Nevertheless, outside of bureaucrats and officials, many contemporaries did see masquerade balls and queer masquerades as linked to Carnival, and actually even Carnival societies and organizations were founded to organize these events in Brandenburg and Berlin from the late nineteenth century onward.⁵⁰⁴ Indeed Berlin Carnival did exist, for Rhenish Carnivalists who lived in Berlin, for leaders and affluent figures in the city who embraced grand public masquerade ball practices, and for Berlin’s queer communities who had favored Carnival since at the mid-nineteenth century.

Although there are a number of compelling comparative reasons to make the case for bringing masquerade balls in winter and Carnival into the same analytical frame as happens here, this chapter uses a language of “Berlin Carnival” and “queer Carnival

⁵⁰³ “Sofort! Auf Anordnung des Herrn Ministers,” Letter, Minister des Innern Berlin to the Pressestelle des Staatsministeriums, 7 January 1922. Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 1 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 December 1921 to 31 December 1926, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

⁵⁰⁴ See a discussion of the Carnival associational culture in Berlin and Brandenburg in: Hans Schubert, *Fastnachtliche Bräuche in Brandenburg und Berlin – von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* (Berlin: Pro Universitate Verlag im Berliner Wissenschafts-Verlag, 2012).

balls” in Berlin primarily because contemporaries used a language of Carnival themselves.⁵⁰⁵

The entire season of mainstream masquerade balls in Berlin could be seen referred to by the late 1920s simply as “Carnival.” This was the case regardless of whether the event included costumes or if the ball’s theme related to traditional Carnival practices. For instance, a fictional letter published in *Die Dame*, the glossy it-magazine for the modern woman from press powerhouse Ullstein, reported how the entire season of diverse nightlife events in Berlin was known simply as “Carnival.”⁵⁰⁶ Although *Die Dame* was published in Berlin and made primarily for a wealthy and modern female elite there, such an article was published in a “Carnival issue” of the magazine. The letter was alleged to be from a Central African girl living in Berlin who wrote to her mother, astounded by the excessive season of costumed and not costumed ball partying in the city, which stretched for longer than six months. Such an account raised rich inversions of supposed exoticism and Otherness—at the same time that modernists obsessed over the exoticness of African art, supposed Africans themselves pointed to the *real* exotic

⁵⁰⁵ Select scholarship also refers to these practices in Berlin as “Carnival.” See for instance Barbara Ulrich’s chapter on “Awake in a Dream,” in: Barbara Ulrich, *The Hot Girls of Weimar Berlin* (Los Angeles: Feral House, 2002). Her descriptions however, which construct Berlin Carnival during the Weimar era as no different from what went on in other German regions, fails to capture the regional history of official Carnival at this time. Other scholars like Cornelia Limpricht though have conveyed, albeit in passing, the persuasive idea that during the Weimar era “Cologne Carnival” served as a “motto” or guiding “concept” for homosexuals in Berlin. Cornelia Limpricht, “‘Für eine Nacht Seligkeit’: Homosexuelle im Kölner Karneval” in Cornelia Limpricht and Jürgen Müller eds., *“Verführte” Männer: das Leben der Kölner Homosexuellen im Dritten Reich* (Cologne: Volksblatt, 1991): 26.

⁵⁰⁶ “Von der Tanzfesten der Weissen: Aus einem Breif der siebzehnjährigen Alikunda an ihre Mutti in Ingra-Takuinyo, Zentral-Afrika,” *Die Dame: illustrierte Mode-Zeitschrift* (Berlin: Ullstein Verlag), Issue 9 (“Karneval Heft”), 2. Januarheft 1930. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

happenings at Berlin's Carnival. Still other contemporaries in Berlin like journalists, writers, artists, and advertisers refer specifically to Berlin's queer masquerade ball practices during the Weimar years as Carnival. In Franz Hessel's 1931 *flânerie* short story *In Berlin: Day and Night in 1929*, Hessel remarks of the persistent stamina for masquerade balls over months in Berlin. "It's admirable how they master Berlin's *Karneval*, which notoriously doesn't end with Shrove Tuesday and Ash Wednesday, but goes on for weeks uninterrupted."⁵⁰⁷ German and Hungarian journalist and author Eugen Szatmari in 1927 described the practice as possessing the externalities of Carnival but none of the exuberance.⁵⁰⁸ Indeed descriptions often took up Berlin's Carnival culture as hardcore bustle more so than community exuberance. This invocation of warmth, exuberance, or mirth was a reference to the prized qualities of Rhenish people put on display by contrast at Carnival celebrations in the Rhineland. Organizers of the queer masquerade balls themselves included explicit references to Carnival in the themes to their balls as well. Already in 1921 the Club of [Male and Female] Friends (*Klub der Freunde und Freundinnen*), a queer social group in Berlin, put on a "Great Carnival Masked Costume Ball" on March 5th in Kreuzberg, weeks after Carnival week that year, a Berlin city district especially popular for the city's queer and trans communities.⁵⁰⁹ The lesbian magazine *Liebende Frauen* for instance included advertisements in 1927 and 1928 to not just a "Carnival in Cologne," but also a "Rhineland Winter Fest" and "mardi

⁵⁰⁷ Franz Hessel, *In Berlin: Day and Night in 1929* (Berlin: Readux Books, 2013): 87.

⁵⁰⁸ Eugen Szatmari, *Das Buch von Berlin* (Munich: Piper, 1927): 186.

⁵⁰⁹ *Die Freundschaft*, 1921, Nr. 7. Cited in: Jens Dobler, *Von anderen Ufer: Geschichte der Berliner Lesben und Schwulen in Kreuzberg und Friedrichshain* (Berlin: Gmünder, 2003): 120.

gras” there as well.⁵¹⁰ Within lesbian magazines in Berlin like *Girlfriend* (*Die Freundin*) published for queer women’s communities in Berlin too authors took up stories of their amusements in winter as “Carnival” in Berlin as literary pieces about queer love and community. Such accounts could be found in L. Wölk’s “Carnival” (*Karneval*) from 1931, as well as Lu Leistenschneider’s “Carnival” (*Fasching*) from 1929.⁵¹¹ Finally, even in art from the era one saw the comparison of queer masquerade balls in Berlin to Carnival. German painter and illustrator Jeanne Mammen, well known for paintings of urban nightlife in Weimar Berlin, produced numerous works on queer displays at Berlin masquerade balls in the 1920s and 1930s in Berlin. Many of her paintings took up gender subversion by women as masquerades during these years. Although many of her works on the Berlin masquerades are simply titled “Masked Ball,” one 1931 painting is instead titled “Carnival” although the depictions vary in no significant way.

A language of Carnival about Berlin’s masquerade ball practices could likewise be found in varied accounts and rumors of contemporaries. Already early into the Weimar years, accounts of the excessive “Carnivals” taking place in the German capital could be seen from diverse sources. In her memoir of life with her theologian husband as they navigated the avant-garde of Berlin in the 1920s, Hannah Tillich referenced “Fasching” parties in Berlin in winter during these years.⁵¹² German journalist and author Sebastian Haffner in his memoir about Berlin from the late Weimar to early Nazi eras extensively referenced “Carnival in Berlin” as this ball culture in the metropolis, full of

⁵¹⁰ *Liebende Frauen*, issues from 1927 and 1928. Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv und Bibliothek Berlin.

⁵¹¹ L. Wölk, “Karneval,” *Freundin*, 1931, Nr. 5. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin Preußischer Kulturbesitz. Lu Leistenschneider, “Fasching,” *Freundin*, 1929, Nr. 10. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

⁵¹² Hannah Tillich, *From Time to Time* (New York: Stein and Day, 1974).

“bustle” and “organization,” but again, lacking the “spontaneous warmheartedness” of Carnival festivities in Munich.⁵¹³ Indeed Haffner includes a more extensive description of Berlin Carnival balls as such:

A Carnival ball in Berlin is like a large, colorful, well-organized love raffle, with winning tickets and duds. You take your chance, join up with a girl, kiss and cuddle her, and go through all the preparatory stages of a love affair in a single night. The usual end is a taxi drive at daybreak and the exchange of phone numbers. By then you usually know whether it is the start of something that you would like to take further, or whether you have just earned yourself of hangover. It all takes place in a wild, garish environment (the ‘bustle’), with the clashing noise of several dance bands, in a building decorated with colored paper chains and lanterns, accompanied by as much alcohol as you can afford. You are packed in like sardines with several thousand other young couples all doing the same thing, not bothering about anyone else.⁵¹⁴

He would later describe merriment at a Carnival ball in Berlin as an act of defiance against the Nazi politicization of all of life—“lets see if the Nazis can stop me enjoying the carnival....”⁵¹⁵ In Aachen one Rhenish nationalist and pro-Carnival group, the Association for the Preservation of Rhenish Folk Festivals and Customs, decried in 1922 how “the jazziest Carnival is celebrated” in Berlin.⁵¹⁶ Evidence of the excessive nature of Carnival seasons came from conservative nationalist officials during the Weimar era like DNVP parliamentarian Lothar Steuer as well, who proposed legislation in February 1929 to restrict the Carnival season temporally so that it didn’t continue to exceed into Easter.⁵¹⁷ Such a “season” again lines up with that of the masquerade ball season in

⁵¹³ Sebastian Haffner, *Defying Hitler: a Memoir* (New York: Pfarrer, Straus and Girous: 2003): 111.

⁵¹⁴ Haffner, *Defying Hitler*, 111-112.

⁵¹⁵ Haffner, *Defying Hitler*, 110. For a picture of Haffner at a “Carnival in Berlin” in the 1920s even, see Haffner, *Defying Hitler*, 118.

⁵¹⁶ “Abschrift I 3104,” Vereinigung zur Erhaltung der rheinischen Volksfeste und Gebräuche E.V. in Aachen, 21 April 1922, R/1501 Reichsministerium des Innern. 11 March 1922 to 24 February 1925, Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde.

⁵¹⁷ “Herr Steuer besieht: es darf nicht mehr getanzt werden! Die Deutschnationalen wollen sogar den Karneval verbieten!,” *Nationalzeitung*, Nr 46, 24 February 1929.

winter, from approximately October to April, more than official Carnival that truly began in January and ended at the latest in early March. In a 1927 article in the Cologne periodical *Volk und Heimat: Paper for Catholic and German Nationhood (Volkstum)* the author likewise made a distinction between moral and prohibited Carnival in the traditional Rhineland and the immoral nightlife Carnival in Berlin. The article, on “Pleasure Hoopla” in the city, juxtaposed the wholesomeness of traditional Carnival in the day with the treacherous Carnival of Berlin in the night. “Instead Berlin celebrates already its Carnival since November in the most awesome manner, not in the daylight but rather in the night.”⁵¹⁸ Other such ideas about perverse morality at Berlin’s Carnival hooplas were seen in art. The Berlin communist artist Hans Baluschek whose work frequently put on display the results of rampant poverty in the city produced a work in 1923, in the midst of Weimar’s worst hyperinflation, a “portrait of a carnival prostitute” (*Rummelnutte*). Reference to a new national Carnival presumably in the Weimar capital city’s nightlife could likewise be found within actual Carnival festivities as well. One Carnival association in Mainz following the end of Weimar foreign occupations also implicitly chided this form of Carnival perceived to occur in Berlin, when the group maintained that “occupation Carnival (*Fasching*) is passé but the national Carnival

Volume 2, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 2 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 Januar 1927 to 31 December 1936, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

⁵¹⁸ “Vergnügungsrummel,” *Volk und Heimat*, Nr 2, 1 January 1927. Volume 2, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 2 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 Januar 1927 to 31 December 1936, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

(*Fasching*) outside of the Rhineland deserves to be stigmatized.”⁵¹⁹ A Cardinal Faulhaber from Munich who in a speech warned against the immorality of the coming Carnival season likewise in 1922 proclaimed that “[m]ore shameful than the black shame in the occupied areas are the negro dances in the unoccupied areas.”⁵²⁰ Finally, an excessive Carnival to take place in Berlin was actually reported in the press in 1929 by the Berlin City Fair, Traffic, and Foreigners Office, in which it was reported that a weeklong Carnival in Berlin was being planned in January.⁵²¹ This prompted reprimand from the Reich Minister of the Interior, Centrist Joseph Wirth in Berlin, to all the minister presidents in Berlin and especially Prussian Minister of the Interior Severing, that the “Carnival” would jeopardize economic negotiations over the Dawes dealings.⁵²²

Thus a language of Carnival in Berlin existed during the Weimar years and could be seen across diverse audiences both inside and outside of Berlin. This label was used primarily to describe the winter masquerade balls in particular and was more frequently used in the case of queer masquerade balls than costume festivals like the Alpine balls. In the case of queer masquerade balls in Berlin, the practice was frequently labeled as Carnival even before the war. Contemporaries used the label of “Carnival” to describe the popular culture of same-sex balls that were a “Berlin specialty” by the early twentieth century according to sexologist and advocate of so-called sexual abnormalities Magnus

⁵¹⁹ Anton Keim, *11 mal politischer Karneval: Weltgeschichte aus der Bütt. Geschichte der demokratischen Narrentradition vom Rhein* (Mainz: von Hase & Koehler, 1981): 168.

⁵²⁰ Quoted in: Gerald Feldman, *The Great Disorder: Politics, Economics, and Society in the German Inflation, 1914-1924* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993): 574.

⁵²¹ “Karneval in Berlin,” Letter, Reichsminister des Innern in Berlin to Preußischen Ministerpräsidenten in Berlin, 26 Nov 1928. Volume 2, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 2 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 Januar 1927 to 31 December 1936, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

⁵²² Ibid.

Hirschfeld.⁵²³ This claim of same-sex balls being a specialty of Berlin is likewise echoed in other works, including a book on German vice and virtue from 1900. Even the oldest known account of a same-sex masquerade ball in Berlin includes an allusion to events as Carnival custom. In 1868, Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, a prominent lawyer and early outspoken advocate of same-sex desire, published an account of a “costumed Urning ball” that took place privately but in a public venue in mid-February.⁵²⁴ Carnival Tuesday fell on February 25th that year. After he recounted a prank that took place during the event’s proceedings, he described how one of those in attendance remarked that it was “just a Carnival hoax.” Similarly, French playwright and novelist Oscar Méténier referred to a “Berlin Carnival” already in 1900 by which he meant this proclivity for same-sex balls that occurred frequently during the entire winter season from October to Easter.⁵²⁵ By the Weimar years though the nationalization of Carnival discourse implicated queer masquerade balls in activities viewed with suspicion and seen as immoral vice. This led officials to attempt to legislate against the masquerade balls in Berlin in similar ways to Carnival in Cologne. Masquerade balls like those at Carnival were explicitly targeted by the Weimar officials as part of the same anxiety over the moral health of the German people and Reich Chancellor Wilhelm Cuno’s “relentless” offensive against vice and immoral forms of play after the war—what the latter termed “creeping evils” on 8

⁵²³ Magnus Hirschfeld, *Berlins Drittes Geschlecht* (Subach: Kindle Edition): 48. Originally published in Berlin in 1904.

⁵²⁴ Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, *Memnon: Die Geschlechtsnatur des mannlienden Urnings, eine naturwissenschaftliche Darstellung* (Schleiz: C. Hübscher, 1868): 78.

⁵²⁵ Oscar Méténier, *Les Berlinois chez euz: vertus et vices allemands* (Paris: Michel, 1900).

February 1923 just a few days before Carnival's onset that year.⁵²⁶ This was a critical similarity with official Carnival. As part of the federal campaign to combat "gluttony and alcoholism" in Weimar society, the Interior Minister set down a bundle of measures in the height of the winter ball season, on 11 January 1923, the "Laws Against Gluttony and Alcohol Misuse," that were meant to restrict immorality and vice in urban play. One of the measures actually made dancing in public illegal. Chancellor Cuno in a memo to state governments actually singled out "masquerade balls" as a critical target, the only event singled out in the lengthy memo and its discussion of each term of the bundle of measures. Moreover, the other measures, like the regulation of a curfew, the suppression of secret venues used for nightlife activities, the restriction on the trade in brandy, and the setting of a national drinking age all implicated masquerade balls and specifically queer subcultural masquerade balls in their targeting. Some contemporaries like Curt Moreck in his 1931 salacious guide to the Berlin nightlife, *Guide to Immoral Berlin*, jocularly remarked on the ineffectiveness of such measures in Berlin, how "not once does one feel restricted by the Dance Prohibition."⁵²⁷ However, masquerade balls emerged as a critical site of public concern to the extent that the republic was willing to attempt to suppress *dancing* in public, even singling out "masquerade balls" in the original legislation's wording, and this harsh commitment to "crackdown" on masquerade balls clearly

⁵²⁶ "I. 1207.." Letter, Reichsminister des Innern in Berlin to Herrn Preussischen Minister des Innern, 8 February 1923. Series R43I/1199 Reichsministerium des Innern Akten betreffend Branntweinhandel u. Maßnahmen geg. Alkoholismus (28 Okt 1920-31 Dez 1923). 11 March 1922 to 24 February 1925, Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde. "Betrifft Schlemmerei und Alkoholmissbrauch,"

⁵²⁷ Curt Moreck (pseudonym for Konrad Haemmerling), *Führer durch das „lasterhafte“ Berlin* (Leipzig: Verlag Moderner Stadtführer, 1931): 150.

matched the government's approach to Carnival as well.⁵²⁸ Due to problems of bureaucratic consistency and enforcement such measures were largely ineffective in Berlin though. Together with the loosened censorship laws ushered in by the republic, what resulted instead was an outpouring of queer masquerade ball practice across the city, helped along by new attitudes and new media in the Weimar capital.

Importantly, mainstream Carnival and queer Carnival masquerading cultures thrived in Berlin during the Weimar era, yet were separate cultures. Although both were derived from older traditions from before the war and became tied to Carnival and immorality after it, there were major distinctions between them, just as there were for instance between official Carnival in Cologne and the appropriation of Carnival cultures during the occupations after World War I. Most generally, mainstream Carnival balls in Berlin were more public and while controversial, much more respectable than the queer subcultures. Mainstream Carnival balls could still be society events and were often privileged events, attended by state officials, press magnates, local elites—similar then to the elite society events of Cologne Carnival's official culture before the war. The social capital and scale surrounding annual mainstream balls in Berlin at this time is well-captured in the following account, of events quite separate from the exclusivity and reputé of the queer balls that were of quite a different nature:

The essential rootlessness of Berlin society is to be seen in the role of the subscription balls, which, together with entertainments offered by the embassies, formed the backbone of reputable Berlin social life. The two tennis clubs Blue White and Red White, the Rowing Club, the cinema industry all gave annual balls. But the most prestigious, glamorous and important of the lot was the Press Ball. I asked Professor

⁵²⁸ Letter, Reichskanzler in Berlin to the Landesregierungen, 17. Januar 1923. Series R43I/1199 Reichsministerium des Innern Akten betreffend Branntweinhandel u. Maßnahmen geg. Alkoholismus (28 Okt 1920-31 Dez 1923). 11 March 1922 to 24 February 1925, Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde.

Reiff what for him had made Berlin golden in the ‘golden twenties,’ and he replied unhesitatingly: the annual Press Ball. Held in the Grosses Marmorsaal opposite the Eden Hotel, it was the great social occasion of the year. There were six thousand or more guests, and tickets could only be obtained through the personal recommendation of a member of the Press Club. A meeting place for ‘*tout Berlin*,’ it had a strange blend of the intimate and the formal. In 1924 a woman lit a cigarette in the dancing hall. The press commented unfavorably upon her action the next day, but, presumably to spare her feelings, turned her into a man as they reported her action. Everybody attended the ball, from press barons such as the Ullstein brothers to the mayor of Berlin and the chancellor himself, together with his government. The prestige connected with the Press Ball indicates better than anything that shift away from a conventional establishment which is so characteristic of the social and political life of Weimar. The void left by an old aristocracy and civil service had been filled by a motley crowd of intellectuals, journalists and film stars. The occasion became a symbol of Weimar society, and the last Press Ball of the republic, held on January 28, 1933, was to symbolize its end.⁵²⁹

By contrast, the queer masquerading subcultures were much less respectable, even to the leadership of the homosexual and transvestite emancipation movements, tied as they were to sexual deviance and often the working classes as well, as the club scene developed around working-class neighborhoods and the sex worker district around the Kurfürstendamm or “KuDamm.” It was also much more closed off, visited by the public more as slumming than the politics of seeing and being seen. Although both cultures became part of “Berlin Carnival” during the republic, queer masquerade balls actually appear to have always been tied to Carnival and ideas about it. The earliest references to such subcultural practices take up the language of Carnival, unlike for instance prewar Berlin masquerade ball practices that were much more the nature of European fancy-dress traditions. This accounts for the immediate exclusion of the Alpine balls in Berlin, traditions from the turn of the century, from the Carnival prohibition’s breadth. Although this section established the salience of “Berlin Carnival,” which included these two

⁵²⁹ W. Kiaulehn, *Berlin Schicksal einer Weltstadt*, 1958: 535. Reproduced in Alex de Jonge, *The Weimar Chronicle: Prelude to Hitler* (New York: Paddington Press, 1979): 132.

cultures, the rest of this chapter homes in on these queer Carnival subcultures, in essence the most damning Carnival cultures in the republic to broad audiences as well as the queer and trans emancipation leadership, that existed before the war but flourished in the Weimar era.

II. Queer Men's Carnival Subcultures in Weimar Berlin

In 1919 amidst the loosened censorship laws ushered in by the republic, film director Richard Oswald released his film *Different from the Others* (*Anders als die Andern*), the first depiction of gay men in German cinema. It was part of a new genre of “enlightenment films” meant to educate the public on important social issues including homosexuality, venereal disease, sex work, and abortion. Oswald produced the film with guidance from sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld, who already for decades had worked to study and advocate for “sexual abnormalities” in Berlin like those depicted in the film. The work even featured a cameo of Hirschfeld as a sexologist who proclaimed the “valuable contributions to humanity” that could be made by those possessed of this particular “inclination.” Hirschfeld had long experience with queer communities in Berlin including with the queer and same-sex masquerade balls of the prewar years. This fact likely explains the film’s inclusion of a same-sex masquerade ball for men. The same-sex masquerade ball scene is featured prominently, and compels the narrative arc of the film as well as sets up the central conflict that the gay protagonist faces. It not only made reference to the same-sex masquerade ball history in Berlin already prolific before the war, events Hirschfeld frequented and documented in numerous of his published

works.⁵³⁰ But the scene also raised the contemporary issues of gay sociability, visibility, voyeurism, and the dangers facing emergent male same-sex-attracted communities during the Weimar years.

The film takes up the story of a respectable piano virtuoso Paul Körner, a closeted queer gentleman who meets a suitor at this same-sex masquerade ball and becomes entrapped in an extortion racket by the blackmailer Franz Bollek. The extortion was a clear reference to the dangers presented to gay men by Paragraph 175 of the German penal code, which made sex acts between men illegal. The paragraph effectively made oral and anal sodomy between men illegal, but not mutual masturbation. The exact words of the paragraph's terminology was: „Die widernatürliche Unzucht, welche zwischen Personen männlichen Geschlechts oder von Menschen mit Tieren begangen wird, ist mit Gefängnis zu bestrafen; auch kann auf Verlust der bürgerlichen Ehrenrechte erkannt werden.“⁵³¹ Once embroiled in this crisis of blackmail, a desperate Körner attempts in vain to rid himself of his homosexuality through the aid of a hypnotist; when this fails, Körner discusses his predicament with the film sexologist played by Hirschfeld, recounting the masquerade ball at which he met Bollek. The film fades to a flashback of a same-sex masquerade ball for men. While other contemporary film depictions of masquerade balls, like those found in *I Don't Want to be a Man* (*ich möchte kein Mann sein*, 1918) and *The Prince of Pappenheim* (*Der Fürst von Pappenheim*, 1927), figured Weimar balls as chaotic whirlwinds of debauchery and disarray, in line with literary and

⁵³⁰ Magnus Hirschfeld, *Berlins drittes Geschlecht* (Berlin: Seemann, 1904). Magnus Hirschfeld, *Die Transvestiten: ein Untersuchung über den erotischen Verkleidungstrieb mit umfangreichem casuistischen und historischen Material* (Berlin: Pulvermacher, 1910).

⁵³¹ Ivan Bloch, *Das Sexualleben unserer Zeit in seinen Beziehungen zur modernen Kultur* (Berlin: Marcus, 1907): 571.

press accounts as well, Oswald's event was contained, classy, presenting an almost inconceivably staid affair. Same-sex pairs dance a choreographed number in a circle, dressed in innocuous and fairly conservative and traditional fancy-dress costumes like a clown or a cowboy. The scene featured no obvious participants in drag, and the viewer is therefore led to believe that such events are of a reserved and seemly character. Such choices were intentional, as the emergent Homosexual Emancipation Movement rallied around bourgeois notions of respectability—and Körner in this regard made the ideal protagonist. The leading organizations of the homosexual emancipation movement drew their membership from the respectable German bourgeoisie and defined collective citizenship and rights through appeals to bourgeois notions of respectability.⁵³² Likewise, the emergent transvestite emancipation movement took appealed to similar ideals in their collective organization attempts as well.⁵³³ As the refined and impeccable but foggyish pairs of costumed men dance customarily, Bollek in a priest's costume gently and almost coyly greets Körner. The latter wears a floor-length black hooded cape but his exact costume remains unclear. From a "respectable" gathering Körner takes Bollek to his home and at the inception of Körner's advances, Bollek initiates his devastating and ongoing extortion, threatening to ruin Körner's successful and respectable career and life.

⁵³² On the bourgeois politics of the homosexual emancipation movement see Laurie Marhoefer, *Sex and the Weimar Republic: German Homosexual Emancipation and the Rise of the Nazis* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015). Glenn Ramsay, "The Rites of Artgenossen: Contesting Homosexual Political Culture in Weimar Germany," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 17, No. 1 (2008): 85-109. Marti Lybeck, *Desiring Emancipation: New Women and Homosexuality in Germany, 1890-1933* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2014).

⁵³³ See also Katie Sutton, "'We Too Deserve a Place in the Sun': the Politics of Transvestite Identity in Weimar Germany," *German Studies Review* 35, No. 2 (May 2012): 335-354.

Just as the scene of the same-sex masquerade ball for men in *Different from the Others* was a flashback to an earlier time for the protagonist, so too did the depiction harken back to the rich culture of queer and same-sex masquerade balls in Berlin that had developed during the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century. During this time, the city had seen the growing popularity of same-sex masquerade and Carnival balls in Berlin as a dominant form of sociability and community building for emergent queer communities before the war.⁵³⁴ Just as after the war contemporaries used languages and rituals of traditional Carnival to describe these practices,⁵³⁵ before the war queer men too organized private and public masquerade balls configured as Carnival in nature that were broadly tolerated by the police in Berlin. This arrangement of the Berlin police's tolerant stance toward the events is consistently cited across varied primary sources, including the anonymous 1886 work of the Berlin underground, *The Criminal World of Berlin*, as well

⁵³⁴ See for instance references to the popularity of Carnival or same-sex masquerade balls to queer audiences in Berlin during the nineteenth and early twentieth century in the following: Richard von Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia sexualis: eine klinisch-forensische Studie* (Stuttgart: Enke, 1886). Helmut Fritz, *Die erotische Rebellion: Das Leben der Franziska Gräfin zu Reventlow* (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1980): 12-18; 72. Albert Moll, *Die conträre Sexualempfindung: mit Benutzung amtlichen Materials* (Berlin: Fischer, 1891): 84. Hans Ostwald, *Männliche Prostitution (Das Berliner Dirnentum)* (Leipzig: Fiedler, 1907): 64. Oscar Méténier, *Les Berlinois chez eux: vertus et vices allemands* (Paris: Michel, 1900). Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, *Memnon: Die Geschlechtsnatur des mannlienden Urnings, eine naturwissenschaftliche Darstellung* (Schleiz: C. Hübscher, 1868): 77-78. Anonymous, *Die Verbrecherwelt von Berlin* (Berlin: Guttentag, 1886): 175. Magnus Hirschfeld, *Berlins drittes Geschlecht* (Berlin: Seemann, 1904). Magnus Hirschfeld, *Die Transvestiten: ein Untersuchung über den erotischen Verkleidungstrieb mit umfangreichem casuistischen und historischen Material* (Berlin: Pulvermacher, 1910).

⁵³⁵ See examples of a language of Carnival to describe queer masquerade ball practice in Berlin before the war in: Magnus Hirschfeld, *Berlins Drittes Geschlecht* (Subach: Kindle Edition): 48. Originally published in Berlin in 1904. Oscar Méténier, *Les Berlinois chez eux: vertus et vices allemands* (Paris: Michel, 1900). Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, *Memnon: Die Geschlechtsnatur des mannlienden Urnings, eine naturwissenschaftliche Darstellung* (Schleiz: C. Hübscher, 1868): 78.

as Hirschfeld's seminal work on so-called transvestites, *The Transvestites* from 1910.⁵³⁶

Indeed the story of queer Carnival in Berlin is not exclusively a Weimar one, rather greater attention within the media and in journalism turned to this subculture in Berlin that already thrived before the war broke out. This was particularly the case in the years before the Eulenburg Affair of the first decade of the twentieth century.⁵³⁷ At the same time an array of new clubs for queer clientele emerged in the city, which continued to draw community attention and popularity for their themed Carnival events after the war. Awareness of such practices spread through the attentions of Hirschfeld and other sexologists or psychologists, combined with the documentation published in criminological or salacious journalistic works like *The Criminal World of Berlin* and

⁵³⁶ Anonymous, *Die Verbrecherwelt von Berlin* (Berlin: Guttentag, 1886): 175. The Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin lists the anonymous work as authored by the engineer Gustav Otto (1881-1926), however Otto would have been too young to author the work during the year of its publishing. According to historian of gay prosecution Jens Dobler, a judicial counselor (*Justizrat*) Dr. Gustav Otto also lived at the time but "whether he was the author remains unclear." Jens Dobler, *Zwischen Duldungspolitik und Verbrechensbekämpfung: Homosexuellenverfolgung durch die Berliner Polizei von 1848 bis 1933* (Frankfurt: Verlag fuer Polizeiwissenschaft Dr. Clemens Lorei, 2008): 216. According to a contemporaneous work on male prostitution by Hans Ostwald, the text was authored by an "A.E." Hans Ostwald, *Männlichen Prostitution* (Leipzig: Fiedler, 1907): 10. Magnus Hirschfeld, *Transvestites: the Erotic Drive to Cross-Dress* (Berlin: Pulvermacher, 1910)

⁵³⁷ For additional secondary work on the many dimensions of the Eulenburg Affair and how it affected German society and culture, see: Isabel Hull, *The Entourage of Kaiser Wilhelm II, 1888-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982). James Steakley, "Iconography of a Scandal: Political Cartoons and the Eulenburg Affair in Wilhelmin Germany," in *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past*, ed. Martha Vicinus, Martin Duberman, and George Chauncey (New York: Meridian, 1989), 233–63. Norman Domeier, *Der Eulenburg-Skandal: Eine politische Kulturgeschichte des Kaiserreichs* (Frankfurt: Campus, 2010). Edward Ross Dickinson, *Sex, Freedom, and Power in Imperial Germany, 1880-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014): 170-172.

Manly Prostitution.⁵³⁸ By the release of *Different from the Others* in 1919 then, Oswald's scene made reference to a rich culture of queer Carnival in Berlin that stretched back to at least 1868, the year of the first published account of a Carnival ball for queer men in Berlin, and this culture had been growing in popularity, public nature, and significance throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century.⁵³⁹

Although Oswald's depiction of the same-sex Carnival for men was a comparably tepid depiction, it stood in stark juxtaposition to contemporary accounts that followed. Queer masquerades in other new and popular salacious city guides to Berlin were raucous affairs of lascivious fantasy and subversive display. Moreover, other contemporaries did not see or remember such events as entirely respectable or seemly. Writing about the film in his postwar memoirs Christopher Isherwood recounted this scene as one of the three most memorable ones in the film overall, scenes still stuck in his memory nearly fifty years after having seen the film at Hirschfeld's Institute for Scientific Research.⁵⁴⁰ The scene "is a ball at which the dancers, all male, are standing fully clothed in what seems about to become a daisy-chain [a slang in gay culture for when a group of men form a circle so that they can perform oral sex on one another].⁵⁴¹ It is here—at the same-sex masquerade—that the character played by Veidt meets the blackmailer who seduces and then ruins him." Although the sexologist in the film played by Hirschfeld assured a despondent Körner that gay love is "pure and noble," as well as totally normal within all

⁵³⁸ Anonymous, *Die Verbrecherwelt von Berlin* (Berlin: Guttentag, 1886). Hans Ostwald, *Männliche Prostitution (Das Berliner Dirnentum)* (Leipzig: Fiedler, 1907).

⁵³⁹ Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, *Memnon: Die Geschlechtsnatur des mannlienden Urnings, eine naturwissenschaftliche Darstellung* (Schleiz: C. Hübscher, 1868)

⁵⁴⁰ Christopher Isherwood, *Christopher and his Kind, 1929-1939* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1975): 32-33

⁵⁴¹ Ibid.

social strata, the protagonist in the end commits suicide, unable both to rid himself of his “ailment” through the aid of a hypnotist, or to shake the persistent oppression of his blackmailer.

Körner’s story as well as the story of the film itself represented to broad German audiences the dominant tensions surrounding queer masquerade ball practice in Berlin after the war. The Weimar years saw vibrant community activity together with intense voyeuristic interest in such activity that continued to build over the Weimar years. Such public visibility and interest grew at the same time that such activity became supercharged by moral language proliferating across the country. Moreover, as a film, *Different from the Others* was part of a host of new cutting-edge media after the war that significantly broadened awareness of such practices beyond select published sources. It drew attention to Berlin as the city where such practices took place at the same time that the city rapidly became known as a hotbed of immoral vice and salacious nightlife—both to the horror of broad German audiences and the interests of tourists and thrill-seekers alike. The distribution of these new media alongside the growth of new queer clubs in Berlin after the war thus points to the ongoing intensification of both queer masquerade ball activity and the simultaneous interest in it as the Weimar years wore on—activity and public interest that was increasingly understood as controversial, immoral, and damaging to the nation to broad German audiences across the country. Discussion will turn now then to the other forces that publicized the Berlin queer masquerade ball scene and how such attention shaped the history and politics of Berlin’s queer male subcultures during the Weimar years.

The film caused such a controversy that it was quickly banned,⁵⁴² and yet it was only one source that spread the word about such practices and established Berlin as a hub of queer Carnival balls. Indeed a veritable industry of salacious tour guides to Berlin's nightlife emerged during the Weimar years as well, which informed tourists and thrill-seekers about the perverse offerings of Berlin's subcultures. With journalistic works like *Berlin's Lesbian Women*, the *Guide to Immoral Berlin*, and *The Book of Berlin*, one could get "educated" on the pantheon of queer subcultural clubs around the city and the queer masquerades that were a specialty at them.⁵⁴³ The latter, part of the *What's Not Included in Baedeker (Was nicht im Baedeker steht)* series published between 1927 and 1931, made reference to the successful commercial travel guidebooks pioneered in Germany by the Karl Baedeker Verlag beginning in the early nineteenth century. Several authors and journalists like Eugen Szatmari, who featured queer Carnival balls in Berlin in his *The Book of Berlin* in 1927, attempted to capitalize on this industry in Berlin by offering a look into this subcultural underground of Berlin, with a particular focus on the queer communities, their secret bars or clubs, and the sites of sex work around the city. The popularity of this trade stimulated a tourist industry of sorts, as numerous sources implicated bars, clubs, and brothels in Berlin's must-see perverseness. Despite the attempts through organizations and film to construct queer Carnival as respectable, the

⁵⁴² For more on the history of the film's censorship and resulting scandal, see Wolfgang Theis, "Anders als die Andern. Geschichte eines Filmskandals," in Michael Bollé ed., *Eldorado: Homosexuelle Frauen und Männer in Berlin, 1850-1950: Geschichte, Alltag und Kultur* (Berlin: Frölich & Kaufmann, 1984): 28-30.

⁵⁴³ Ruth Margarete Röllig, *Berlins lesbische Frauen* (Leipzig: Gebauer: 1928): 71. Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv und Bibliothek Berlin. Curt Moreck (pseudonym for Konrad Haemmerling), *Führer durch das „lasterhafte“ Berlin* (Leipzig: Verlag Moderner Stadtführer, 1931). Eugen Szatmari, *Das Buch von Berlin* (Munich: Piper, 1927).

dominant depictions were of an illicit and titillating Carnival underground separate from the mainstream Carnival bustle that was more reputable by comparison.

So successful were these “enlightenment” works at spreading awareness about Berlin’s emergent queer communities during these years that some of the queer clubs catered performances to the new demands of this tourist market—or in some cases made efforts to shelter the community from the effects of it. The Eldorado was a popular club of mixed queer clientele that organized regular queer masquerade balls and was particularly well known to tourists. At Eldorado one was promised the spectacle of a queer clientele whose gender one could never quite be sure about. One postwar quip about the Eldorado then remarked that “it really was possible to mistake some of the *habitués* for beautiful women until you found yourself standing beside one in the *pissoir*.”⁵⁴⁴ The club maintained a sensational reputation and many queer men and women as well as so-called transvestites became rather jaded about the club by the early 1930s.⁵⁴⁵ This was similarly the case with the *Salomé*, which largely played host to tourists cruising Berlin’s masquerade scene during the Weimar years. Christopher Isherwood described the *Salomé* in his *Goodbye to Berlin*, lamenting how in the winter of 1932/1933 “[t]he *Salomé* turned out to be very expensive and even more depressing than I had imagined. A few stage lesbians and some young men with plucked eyebrows

⁵⁴⁴ Alex De Jonge, *The Weimar Chronicle: Prelude to Hitler* (New York: Paddington Press, 1978): 140.

⁵⁴⁵ Depictions of the alleged “bedlam” on offer at Eldorado could be found for instance in Franz Hessel’s 1931 flânerie short story *In Berlin: Day and Night in 1929* as well as in an account published in Alex de Jonge’s *The Weimar Chronicle*. Franz Hessel, *In Berlin: Day and Night in 1929* (Berlin: Readux Books, 2013): 146. Originally published as “Der Verdächtige” and „Von der Lebenslust“ in *Spazieren in Berlin in 1929* (Leipzig: Epstein, 1929). Alex de Jonge, *The Weimar Chronicle: Prelude to Hitler* (New York: Paddington Press, 1978): 140.

lounge at the bar, uttering occasional raucous guffaws or treble hoots — supposed, apparently, to represent the laughter of the damned.”⁵⁴⁶ In his semi-autobiographical work *Christopher and His Kind*, Isherwood recounted a similar account of the more upscale clubs in Western Berlin that sometimes played to this tourist demand. “In the West End there were also dens of pseudo-vice catering to heterosexual tourists. Here, screaming boys in drag and monocled Eton-cropped girls in dinner-jackets play-acted the high jinks of Sodom and Gomorrah, horrifying the onlookers and reassuring them that Berlin was still the most decadent city in Europe.”⁵⁴⁷ By the late 1920s, certain companies like the Cook Traveling Party even took visitors effectively on slumming tours of the queer Carnival sites, only heightening public awareness about queer men’s masquerade balls and other queer practices. The men then at times simply chose to avoid putting their “inclinations” on show according to guidebook author Curt Moreck.⁵⁴⁸ At least in one case, that of Johnny’s Night Club in the Schöneberg district, the community attempted to implement adaptive strategies to discern who truly belonged to the community.⁵⁴⁹ This was meant as a protection against both the possibility of entrapment as well as the prying eyes of voyeuristic tourists. At other times when tourist groups visited, the spectators allegedly expecting to see an orgy, such events would instead be kept “harmless,” another response to the attention according to Moreck.⁵⁵⁰

⁵⁴⁶ Christopher Isherwood, *Goodbye to Berlin* (London: Vintage, 1998): 465.

⁵⁴⁷ Christopher Isherwood, *Christopher and his Kind, 1929-1939* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1975): 29-30.

⁵⁴⁸ Curt Moreck (pseudonym for Konrad Haemmerling), *Führer durch das „lasterhafte“ Berlin* (Leipzig: Verlag Moderner Stadtführer, 1931): 133.

⁵⁴⁹ Curt Moreck (pseudonym for Konrad Haemmerling), *Führer durch das „lasterhafte“ Berlin* (Leipzig: Verlag Moderner Stadtführer, 1931): 149-150.

⁵⁵⁰ Curt Moreck (pseudonym for Konrad Haemmerling), *Führer durch das „lasterhafte“ Berlin* (Leipzig: Verlag Moderner Stadtführer, 1931): 133.

Berlin thus gained a national and international reputation in these years through film and other new media for its perverse queer displays. The popularity of and demand for queer clubs and subcultural displays and practices during the Weimar years can also clearly be seen then in the sheer number of such sites in Berlin. In 1914 on the eve of the war, there had already been 38 pubs for queer clientele across Berlin, with a heavy concentration of sites in the southwest of the city.⁵⁵¹ By 1922, on the other side of the war and amidst ongoing plight and the national fight against Carnival, this number had swelled to between 90 and 100 queer institutions according to Hirschfeld, approximations corroborated by other accounts of queer nightlife in Berlin.⁵⁵² After the war by contrast, Berlin boasted a seemingly massive community of queer men, estimated by a police commissioner in 1922 to be more than 100,000, not including the roughly 25,000 teenage male sex workers not considered "authentic homosexuals." By 1930 this number was alleged to encompass more than 350,000.⁵⁵³ The attention and voyeuristic desire to see such displays and practices promoted by the industry of salacious publications about queer nightlife in Berlin increased awareness and public scrutiny at the same time that it enabled and compelled dense community formation within the subcultures themselves—not necessarily for the respectable bourgeois leadership of the homosexual emancipation movement leadership awkwardly positioned vis-à-vis such events, but for broad swaths of Berlin's queer populations all the same.

⁵⁵¹ Magnus Hirschfeld, *Die Homosexualität des Mannes und des Weibes* (Berlin: L. Marcus, 1914): 682.

⁵⁵² Stefan Micheler, *Selbstbilder und Fremdbilder der "Anderen": Eine Geschichte Männer begehrender Männer in der Weimar Republik und der NS-Zeit* (Konstanz: UVK Gesellschaft: 2005). Mel Gordon, *Voluptuous Panic: the Erotic World of Weimar Berlin* (Los Angeles: Feral House, 2006).

⁵⁵³ Mel Gordon, *Voluptuous Panic: the Erotic World of Weimar Berlin* (Los Angeles: Feral House, 2006): 93.

The extent of density as well as its constant interwoven relationship between the scene and new public voyeurism or tourist interest in Berlin can be seen in a brief review of queer spaces for men by the mid-1920s. Berlin's robust network of queer bars, pubs, and clubs for men were largely concentrated in the city districts of Mitte, Schöneberg, and Kreuzberg. The regular events that the institutions organized occurred alongside exclusive private events in residences or rented-out venues. The most successful of the public institutions included Adonis-Diele, Monte-Casino, Dé Dé, The Magic Flute (*Zauberflöte*), Bruno and Bobby, Voo-Doo, Silhouette, Mikado, Central Pub (*Zentral-Diele*), and Bürger Casino. In addition to these sites, there were also the Eldorado as well as the Topfkeller, the most mainstream and publicized clubs routinely cited across sources about Berlin's nightlife. Additionally, there was Köhler's Party Halls (*Köhler's Festsäle*), a dance hall highly popular among the men.⁵⁵⁴ Many of these sites organized regular, weekly, or even tri-weekly masquerades, some of which are recounted in the guidebooks as well as in queer memoirs and post-World War II accounts of the Weimar years. Some similar clubs that put on queer Carnival events developed elsewhere, as in the case of the Sleeping Beauty (*Dornröschen*) in Cologne, but no city rivaled Berlin for such offerings in any real way. Only one club for queer masquerades in Cologne has been found, within which similar events of "Carnival" throughout the Weimar years are

⁵⁵⁴ One can find references to many other such bars and clubs in Berlin, for instance in theater studies scholar Mel Gordon's work *Voluptuous Panic*. Here such sites and the discussion of them are restricted to those ones that organized masquerades (with some source documentation of them, as the practice of organizing them was actually quite common). Mel Gordon, *Voluptuous Panic: the Erotic World of Weimar Berlin* (Los Angeles: Feral House, 2006).

described.⁵⁵⁵ Although Hamburg saw some such clubs, in Munich the robust far right successfully repressed this culture early in the Weimar era, shuttering queer clubs of Carnival, a culture of which that had developed before the war.⁵⁵⁶

At the Central Pub, a bar located in Berlin's Kreuzberg district, this otherwise quite calm queer hangout would be transformed on Saturdays into a completely packed "Sailor Boy Party" (*Matrosenfest*), a type of party especially popular among both queer men and women within their respective scenes.⁵⁵⁷ A fascination with sailors was a mainstay of Berlin's queer scene stretching back to at least the years preceding the First World War, as Berlin boasted an obsession with sailors and officers. An account by sexologist Iwan Bloch from 1907 had detailed the specialty in Berlin of the "soldier pubs" (*Soldatenkneipe*), "where the soldiers are kept unobstructed from the homosexuals and establish relationships with them." Likewise this appeal had been rooted in the popularity of a "soldier strip" (*Soldatenstrich*), where queer men could cruise for soldiers on offer.⁵⁵⁸ While for queer women the sailor parties pointed more to cross-dressing and gender subversion, for queer men sailors had been a prewar symbol of queer male community. Just a few streets away, at Voo-Doo, another of Berlin's many regular haunts or *Stammlokale* for queer men, one could indulge in the bar's "Exotic Nights," at which

⁵⁵⁵ Cornelia Limpricht, "'Für eine Nacht Seligkeit': Homosexuelle im Kölner Karneval" in Cornelia Limpricht and Jürgen Müller eds., *"Verführte" Männer: das Leben der Kölner Homosexuellen im Dritten Reich* (Cologne: Volksblatt, 1991): 26.

⁵⁵⁶ Bernhard Rosenkranz, *Hamburg auf anderen Wegen: die Geschichte des schwulen Lebens in der Hansestadt* (Hamburg: Lambda, 2005). Stefan Heiß, "Die Polizei und Homosexuelle in München zwischen 1900 und 1933" in: Michael Farin, *Polizei Report München 1799-1999* (Munich, 1999).

⁵⁵⁷ Curt Moreck (pseudonym for Konrad Haemmerling), *Führer durch das „lasterhafte“ Berlin* (Leipzig: Verlag Moderner Stadtführer, 1931): 136.

⁵⁵⁸ Iwan Bloch, *Das Sexualleben unserer Zeit in seinen Beziehungen zur modernen Kultur* (L. Marcus: 1907): 568.

“everything that is imagined as exotic is constructed” for the costumed guests.⁵⁵⁹

Whereas some guests at times allegedly found the setting less than exotic, others purportedly spoke with great enthusiasm about the success of the nights.⁵⁶⁰ Furthermore, the “Friendship Balls” organized by the Association of Friends (*Vereinigung der Freunde*) remained in high demand.⁵⁶¹ The organization put on these highly coveted ball nights at Köhler’s Party Halls in Berlin’s midtown district (*Mitte*) according to Moreck.⁵⁶² On Thursdays, Saturdays, and Sundays, the popular venue exclusively invited queer populations for the organization’s “days of the like-natured” masquerade parties. Moreck remarked that these events were so profoundly popular that “not once does one feel restricted by the Dance Prohibition,” referencing the Weimar federal restriction that made dancing in public illegal—a prohibition that expressly singled out “masquerade balls” in its language—in an attempt to restrict immoral forms of leisure.⁵⁶³ Instead of such events being restricted at Köhler’s, the rooms were always so packed with dancers and costumed revelers as to make simply moving between tables and chairs an act of

⁵⁵⁹ Curt Moreck (pseudonym for Konrad Haemmerling), *Führer durch das „lasterhafte“ Berlin* (Leipzig: Verlag Moderner Stadtführer, 1931): 130; 138.

⁵⁶⁰ Curt Moreck (pseudonym for Konrad Haemmerling), *Führer durch das „lasterhafte“ Berlin* (Leipzig: Verlag Moderner Stadtführer, 1931): 138-139.

⁵⁶¹ Curt Moreck (pseudonym for Konrad Haemmerling), *Führer durch das „lasterhafte“ Berlin* (Leipzig: Verlag Moderner Stadtführer, 1931): 139.

⁵⁶² Ibid.

⁵⁶³ Letter, Reichsminister des Innern in Berlin to Herrn Preussischen Minister des Innern, 8 February 1923. Series R43I/1199 Reichsministerium des Innern Akten betreffend Branntweinhandel u. Maßnahmen geg. Alkoholismus (28 Okt 1920-31 Dez 1923). 11 March 1922 to 24 February 1925, Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde. “Betrifft Schlemmerei und Alkoholmissbrauch,” Letter, Reichskanzler in Berlin to the Landesregierungen, 17. Januar 1923. Series R43I/1199 Reichsministerium des Innern Akten betreffend Branntweinhandel u. Maßnahmen geg. Alkoholismus (28 Okt 1920-31 Dez 1923). 11 March 1922 to 24 February 1925, Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde. Curt Moreck (pseudonym for Konrad Haemmerling), *Führer durch das „lasterhafte“ Berlin* (Leipzig: Verlag Moderner Stadtführer, 1931): 150.

“acrobatic adroitness.”⁵⁶⁴ Dé Dé, the “night bar of men” located in Berlin’s seedy area around the Kurfürstendamm, would also host its own ball evenings simply in the offices of a social organization or advocacy group of same-sex-attracted men.⁵⁶⁵ Due to their cramped rooms, Dé Dé organized its “Society Balls” in Mitte on the premises of the Society for Friends (*Gesellschaft der Freunde*). Here one sees the attempt to host queer events as permissible approximations of the mainstream corollary denied the men, as queer Carnival events remained the closed-off and less respectable version of Berlin’s mainstream Carnival balls. Finally, the Topfkeller was one of the popular queer clubs in the city at which one found an odd assemblage of male clientele at its masquerades. One post-World War II account described those in attendance as “gemütlich fifty-year olds, salt of the earth, with rounded bellies and threadbare evening clothes (from mother’s chest) wiping the foam of Pilsener from their citizenly mustaches, asking another mustache in evening dress for a dance, to glide across the room in a polka.”⁵⁶⁶ It was in the author’s words a veritable “mixture of fancy-dress-ball sexual pathology and ‘Families may brew their own coffee on the premises,’”

In contrast to the queer women’s scene, which was at times able to operate more privately and exclusively than the clubs for men, the threat of exposure as well as the mere popularity of queer Carnival balls in Berlin at the time shaped an eroticism and “craziness” surrounding disguising, masking, illicitness, exposure, and play during an already particularly tumultuous era in German history. This “craziness” could be seen

⁵⁶⁴ Curt Moreck (pseudonym for Konrad Haemmerling), *Führer durch das „lasterhafte“ Berlin* (Leipzig: Verlag Moderner Stadtführer, 1931): 150.

⁵⁶⁵ Curt Moreck (pseudonym for Konrad Haemmerling), *Führer durch das „lasterhafte“ Berlin* (Leipzig: Verlag Moderner Stadtführer, 1931): 146.

⁵⁶⁶ Alex De Jonge, *The Weimar Chronicle: Prelude to Hitler* (New York: Paddington Press, 1978): 139.

referenced in post-World War II interviews with gay men in East Germany, as was the case with one unskilled laborer identified as Erich who had also worked as a male sex worker during these years. In his account of the Weimar scene, Erich recalled that

[i]n the Twenties, there was scarcely an occupational group that was not represented at the famous drag balls in the big Berlin ballrooms. We ‘simple lads’ came dressed as Asta Nielsen or Henny Porten [European film stars] and let ourselves be served champagne by coarse, cursing taxi drivers or manservants. It was part of the craziness of the setting that these tough servants and taxi drivers exchanged their gear next morning for the judge’s robe or the doctor’s white coat. It even happened that an ‘Asta’ would be sent to the clink for shoplifting a week later by her “manservant.”⁵⁶⁷

Carnival’s potential to undermine social differences and structures in society in subversive ways was thus an attractive feature of Weimar queer masquerades for men that shaped queer play in the context of Weimar’s dramatic flux and tumult. In such an account one sees too how respectable queer men who may have taken part either in mainstream Carnival culture in Berlin or in the bourgeois homosexual emancipation movement ranks might still be attracted to the unique freedoms on offer at these Carnival events, as queer men likewise had in official Carnival events before the war. Stated differently, more respectable queer men might themselves take part in queer Carnival slumming in Berlin even as they maintained public order and respectability in their everyday lives. Queer erotics for men became wrapped up in these more traditional Carnival politics of social inversion and free play, as Weimar’s inherent “craziness” doubled with the threat and craziness of the men’s lives played out in super-charged leisure practices.

Nevertheless, while what the men did at queer masquerades in Weimar Berlin seemed to vary rather little from many historical Carnival practices of the prewar years, it

⁵⁶⁷ Jürgen Lemke and John Borneman, *Gay Voices from East Germany* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991): 17.

attained new controversy during the Weimar years due to new associations. Appropriated Carnival practices included the common satire of class and gender play combined with temporary permissible erotic and sexual liberties made available through the structure of events. The attraction of excessive or topsy-turvy subversive practices at the queer Berlin balls also included the popular Carnival practice of cross-dressing, together with excessive displays of wealth or waste. However, this occurred at a time when such ideas in connection to masquerade or play were seen as particularly problematic or immoral across the country. An account from Isherwood then detailed some of this excessive subversive activity that before the war may have been seen as harmless Carnival joking.

During the Christmas season, a great costume ball was held in one of the dance-halls of In Den Zelten; a ball for men. Many of them wore female clothes. There was a famous character who had inherited a whole wardrobe of beautiful family ball-gowns, seventy or eighty years old. These he was wearing out at a rate of one a year. At each ball, he encouraged his friends to rip his gown off his body in handfuls until he had nothing but a few rags to return home in.⁵⁶⁸

Such practices thus included excessive financial displays as well as practices that to broad Weimar audiences would be seen as indulgent or wasteful—to say nothing of the threat of men in drag in Weimar society. Such a description, of a queer man with privilege enough to have an inheritance literally destroying resources at a time when broad swaths of the population were want for food and clothing smacked off the prewar preposterously lobbied against by the socialist critics. While a clearly playful and exciting account that may have been less controversial before the war among Carnival circles, after the war as broad audiences grappled with the problems of widespread poverty and the question of how to supply clothing among other necessities to German

⁵⁶⁸ Christopher Isherwood, *Christopher and his Kind, 1929-1939* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1975): 32-33.

people, the possible controversy surrounding such an account beyond the sexual orientation or gender subversion of the account is obvious. Moreover, the ongoing tension surrounding queer subcultural community, immoral vice, visibility, illicit activity, and scrutiny wasn't just a subject for the national stage, on which moral panic surged; it played out within the politics of queer men's communities in Berlin themselves.

Indeed queer male masquerading and what it could represent entailed too much controversy for the politics of respectability at the forefront of the men's emancipation movement at the same time.⁵⁶⁹ The queer men's ball scene presented an alternative social vision and community corollary to the dominant advocacy work of queer men themselves, as the emancipation movement of the time attempted to bolster respectability—namely through the hardening of a discernible community of gender-conforming men—within mainstream society for men persecuted under German law.⁵⁷⁰ The Men's Emancipation Movement emerged after the war in Germany and was characterized by advocacy for homosexual men through respectability and an appeal to science and eugenics.⁵⁷¹ The advocacy work of Hirschfeld and his Scientific Humanitarian Committee (*Wissenschaftlich-humanitäres Komitee*) founded in 1897 sought primarily to establish that homosexuality was natural and that homosexuals made

⁵⁶⁹ Of the works on the homosexual emancipation movement see Laurie Marhoefer, *Sex and the Weimar Republic: German Homosexual Emancipation and the Rise of the Nazis* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015).

⁵⁷⁰ For more on the hardening of such boundaries as well as this brokering for rights through respectability see: Stefan Micheler, *Selbstbilder und Fremdbilder der "Anderen": Eine Geschichte Männer begehrender Männer in der Weimar Republik und der NS-Zeit* (Konstanz: UVK Gesellschaft: 2005). Laurie Marhoefer, *Sex and the Weimar Republic: German Homosexual Emancipation and the Rise of the Nazis* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015).

⁵⁷¹ Laurie Marhoefer, *Sex and the Weimar Republic: German Homosexual Emancipation and the Rise of the Nazis* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015).

valuable contributions to society in an attempt to advocate for the abolishment of Paragraph 175. While the aims of queer men and women did not always align with that of Hirschfeld's—who for instance promoted the idea that “sexual abnormals” should be allowed to exist but not seek out normative family orientations or procreation—the men's emancipation groups also shared this aim of overturning Paragraph 175 by informing the public about the respectability of bourgeois homosexual men in Germany. A palpable tension existed then between the popular practice of masquerade balls in Berlin for queer men and the aims of organizations like the Society of the Special (*Gemeinschaft der Eigene*) of prominent German publisher Adolf Brand, the League for Human Rights (*Bund für Menschenrechte*) led by publisher Friedrich Radszuweit, and the German Friendship Association (*Deutscherfreundschaftsverband*) closely linked to Hirschfeld's circles. These groups often looked unfavorably on cross-dressing, with the exception of Hirschfeld who still stressed the importance of segregation, due to its connection to effeminate men and so-called transvestites, with whom little sympathy or solidarity existed. They did not publically embrace the popular club scene and its offering of excessive and wild masquerade ball practices due to the subversive activities and the clubs' nature as institutions of ill-repute. This marked a stark contrast with the work of the queer women's social groups at the same time, groups for queer women that formed in the absence of a more political corollary to the men's emancipation associations. These organs not only organized masquerade balls and advertised them in their publications, but they also published articles about so-called transvestites and included them in their social events in a way not present either in the men's emancipation movement or in the queer men's masquerade ball scene.

The navigation of politics and community surrounding Paragraph 175 thus dominated the shaping of queer men's community and its subcultural practices during the Weimar era. Around the time in the Weimar era that saw the greatest number of masquerade balls, during the more prosperous years of the so-called Weimar "golden age" from 1924 to 1929, there was also the greatest number of Paragraph 175 convictions in Germany since the turn of the century at over a thousand in both 1925 and 1926. In 1925 the number of convictions was 1107, and 1926 it was 1040.⁵⁷² Likewise, Weimar's liberal experiment and experience of the purported queer and sexually emancipated 1920s still was characterized by about 800 cases against men per year for violations of Paragraph 175.⁵⁷³ Some queer men's clubs, like with the queer women's clubs and masquerade balls, insisted on discretely carving out privacy or discretion, as this "sure exclusivity" according to Moreck provided a "necessary... bulwark against the hostile outdoors."⁵⁷⁴ Another strategy seen in the organization of such events was to attempt to organize more respectable bourgeois events in order to distance possibly controversial practices and displays from claims of immorality and controversy. These effects were absolutely linked not just to gender, but also class and morality. One post-World War II account by Christopher Isherwood for instance referenced his attendance at a ball, at which he dressed "in some clothes lent him by a boy from the Cosy Corner," Isherwood's favorite and regular bar, a nondescript and unadvertised queer bar within the working-

⁵⁷² "Statistisches Reichsamt", Jürgen Baumann: *Paragraph 175*, Luchterhand, Darmstadt 1968. Collected in: Hans-Georg Stümke and Rudi Finkler, *Rosa Winkel, rosa Listen: Homosexuelle und "Gesundes Volksempfinden" von Auschwitz bis heute* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1981): 262.

⁵⁷³ For more on the prosecution processes of Paragraph 175 violations, particularly in the Third Reich, see forthcoming work by Matthew Conn.

⁵⁷⁴ Curt Moreck (pseudonym for Konrad Haemmerling), *Führer durch das „lasterhafte“ Berlin* (Leipzig: Verlag Moderner Stadtführer, 1931): 149.

class district near Hallesches Tor.⁵⁷⁵ He wore “a big sweater with a pair of sailor's bellbottomed trousers” together with “[a] little make-up applied by Francis took the necessary five years off his age.”⁵⁷⁶ This disguise—of a less reputable young working-class boy or sailor, which Isherwood described as a “erotic thrill to masquerade thus as his own sex partner” was outright scandalous to another guest in attendance, who later protested “... that [Christopher's friend] had really gone too far—bringing a common street hustler into this respectable social gathering.”⁵⁷⁷ Even within the masquerade scene for queer men then, some men within the scene attempted to maintain a critical politics of respectability at the same time that the emancipation movement did so as well, by employing conservative notions of gender, class, and health. The bourgeois Carnival circles before the war of course took up the same strategy of dealing with moral controversy as well.

It is no surprise then that Carnival and masquerade ball practices in Weimar Berlin facilitated community for queer men as a unique holdout of one of Carnival's historical functions in the years before the war. Nevertheless, it also contributed to tension within the community itself as well as at the national level over morality and respectability due to a broader national crisis over German morality taking place at the time. While the development of queer men's masquerade events facilitated a form of contested community formation that was highly valued and instrumental for some, such practices remained embroiled in controversy both within and outside the community. Weimar society facilitated both new possibilities for queer male subcultures seen in the

⁵⁷⁵ Christopher Isherwood, *Christopher and his Kind, 1929-1939* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1975): 32-33.

⁵⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid.

development of a rich Carnival ball scene after the war, at the same time that that development intensified national awareness and public scrutiny of those communities. After the war the flourishing queer masquerade ball culture in Berlin became the popular bedrock for queer sociability but also a tourist attraction and signification of what was wrong with German morality in the capital city both to nationwide critics and members of the homosexual emancipation movement themselves. Thus Weimar society created unique cleavages for an historical coming-out of unprecedented scale, seen as queer Carnival for men in Berlin, at the same time that that possibility generated rife tensions within and new threats to the men themselves. Discussion will now turn to the varying history of masquerade balls amongst queer women's subcultures and the related but divergent history and valences that resulted.

III. Queer Women's Carnival Subcultures in Weimar Berlin

The Weimar Republic ushered in a flourishing Carnival scene for queer women as well, emergent both from the new women's social groups that developed in Berlin in the absence of a formal emancipation movement together with the pantheon of new social groups and nightclubs for queer women. Women did attempt to found a women's homosexual emancipation organization to rival the successful men's ones. Lotte Hahm created the League for Ideal Women's Friendship (*Bund für ideale Frauenfreundschaft*) in 1930, but it never took hold.⁵⁷⁸ Such clubs began emerging before the war but this growth accelerated considerably after it. Queer women saw dense and unprecedented

⁵⁷⁸ Lotte Hahm and Friedrich Radszuweit, "Bund für ideale Frauenfreundschaft," *Die Freundin*, 7 May 1930.

community formation in Berlin in these years as well, although the nature of the subcultures and the issues facing them varied from that of queer men at the same time. Weimar Berlin boasted numerous influential social groups for queer women, including the Violetta, the Monbijou, the Girlfriends Club, and the Scorpion Ladies Club among others. Many of the groups began publishing their own magazines like *Girlfriend* (*Die Freundin*) and *Women in Love* (*Liebende Frauen*, after 1928 *Garçonne*) alongside other forms of influential new media in the Weimar years, which alongside popular lesbian novels like *The Scorpion* broadened awareness of queer women's masquerading practice in Berlin. The women's groups facilitated community formation through these publications, which also advertised for varied social events, foremost among them the hundreds of diverse masquerade balls for queer women that took place at the new nightclubs around the city. Already in 1927, in only its second year of publication, more than 80% of advertisements in *Women in Love* were for these themed masquerade ball events at Berlin's queer clubs.⁵⁷⁹ Alongside the queer clubs and venues that played to a mixed clientele, alternating nights for men, women, and so-called transvestites, including the Köhlers Fest Halls, Magic Flute, Topfkeller, Eldorado, Mikado, Silhouette, and Dorian Gray, there were also popular queer clubs whose patronage was exclusively made up of queer women, primarily clustered in Berlin's Schöneberg district, including the Violetta, Mali und Igel, Café Hohenzollern, Café Domino, Monocle Bar, Café Oh La La, Meyer Stube, Auluka Lounge (*Auluka-Diele*), Verona Lounge (*Verona Diele*), Geisha

⁵⁷⁹ *Liebende Frauen*, issues from 1927 and 1928. Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv und Bibliothek Berlin. Write-up on *Die Zauberflöte* found in: Ruth Margarete Röllig, *Berlins lesbische Frauen* (Leipzig: Gebauer: 1928): 71. Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv und Bibliothek Berlin.

Bar, Princess Café, and Taverne.⁵⁸⁰ Other clubs and venues that organized queer masquerade balls for women about which relatively little is documented included the Society Club of the West, the Andreas Festival Theater, and the Silver Spider Social Club (*Gesellige Vereinigung Die Silberne Spinne*).⁵⁸¹

The masquerade ball events of these social groups and nightclubs made up the dominant calendar for the women especially in winter. They were publicized like in the case of queer men through the aid of new media after the war, through these new lesbian magazines, which the women could purchase under the table at news kiosks around the city. One lesbian of the Weimar era identified as Branda described in a post-World War II interview how she would sneak off to kiosks where no one would recognize her in order to, for 40 or 50 Pfennig,⁵⁸² buy an issue of the lesbian magazine *Girlfriend* that had

⁵⁸⁰ This list was generated on the basis of tracking the geographical descriptions for queer women's clubs in the journalistic work of Ruth Röllig, as well as by the rich map of nighttime venues generated by theater studies scholar Mel Gordon. Several of the clubs listed by Gordon as those for "homosexuals" as opposed to "lesbian" here, including the Magic Flute, in addition to clubs listed as "transvestite" including the Eldorado and Monocle Bar, were actually mixed clubs that catered to differing clienteles on different nights in the week including nights for queer women. Ruth Margarete Röllig, *Berlins lesbische Frauen* (Leipzig: Gebauer: 1928): 50. Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv und Bibliothek Berlin. Mel Gordon, *Voluptuous Panic: the Erotic World of Weimar Berlin* (Port Townsend: Feral House, 2006): 256-259.

⁵⁸¹ *Liebende Frauen*, issues from 1927 and 1928. Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv und Bibliothek Berlin. Write-up on Die Zauberflöte found in: Ruth Margarete Röllig, *Berlins lesbische Frauen* (Leipzig: Gebauer: 1928): 71. Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv und Bibliothek Berlin.

⁵⁸² Post-World War II lesbians Marta X and Branda remembered the price of *Die Freundin* differently in these interviews, the former as 40 Pfennig and the latter as 50 Pfennig. Nevertheless, most of the women recounted that it was not always affordable to the many working-class women, often the members of the Ladies Club Violetta most associated with the magazine's production. They also all recount how it had to be bought from under the counter. Ilse Kokula, *Jahre des Glücks, Jahre des Leids: Gespräche mit älteren lesbischen Frauen* (Kiel: Frühlings Erwachen, 1990, first edition 1986): 74, 95.

been circulating since 1925.⁵⁸³ According to another lesbian interviewee identified as Marta X, nearly everything happening in the scene was printed in the magazine.⁵⁸⁴ By the period of relative Weimar stability these social groups organized hundreds of annual masquerade balls for queer women of highly varied nature, advertised for in these new press organs of the queer women's social groups. The events catered to all manner of interest. In a single winter season from 1927 to 1928, for instance, the ladies club Violetta hosted all of the following masquerade balls: Boys Ball, Indian Love Night, Beach Fest at the Wannsee, Pajama Fest, Kids Fest with Balloon Fight, Apache Ball, Servants Ball, Rhineland Winter Fest, Bavarian Oktoberfest, Fall Ball, A Night in the Orient, Barge Ball, Bachelors Ball, Backwards Ball, Gypsy Ball, Students Ball, Bad Boys Ball, A Night on the Island of Lesbos, Great Christmas Celebration, New Years' Greatest Costume Ball, Viennese Masked Ball, Bavarian Bock Beer Shindig (*Bockbier-Rummel*), and Carnival in Cologne.⁵⁸⁵ Other women's social groups organized diverse costume balls in winter too, including for instance the Students Ball, a Bell Fest, and a Night in the Moulin Rouge at the Magic Flute in 1928, the New Years Eve costume ball "Costume Festival at the Home of the Princess on the Moon" organized by the Silver Spider Social Club in 1927, or the "Night in the Gold Rush" ball of the Girlfriends Club on 15 February

⁵⁸³ Interview with Branda (pseudonym) in: Ilse Kokula, *Jahre des Glücks, Jahre des Leids: Gespräche mit älteren lesbischen Frauen* (Kiel: Frühlings Erwachen, 1990, first edition 1986): 95.

⁵⁸⁴ Interview with Marta X in: Ilse Kokula, *Jahre des Glücks, Jahre des Leids: Gespräche mit älteren lesbischen Frauen* (Kiel: Frühlings Erwachen, 1990, first edition 1986): 68.

⁵⁸⁵ *Liebende Frauen*, issues from 1927 and 1928. Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv und Bibliothek Berlin. Write-up on Die Zauberflöte found in: Ruth Margarete Röllig, *Berlins lesbische Frauen* (Leipzig: Gebauer: 1928): 71. Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv und Bibliothek Berlin.

1928, the week before Carnival that year.⁵⁸⁶ Already in 1921 the Club of [Male and Female] Friends (*Klub der Freunde und Freundinnen*), a queer social group in Berlin, put on a “Great Carnival Masked Costume Ball” on March 5th in Kreuzberg, a Berlin city district especially popular for the city’s queer and trans communities.⁵⁸⁷

As in the case of queer male masquerading, the rich queer subcultures for women’s Carnival that flourished in Weimar Berlin found their roots in the prewar history of the city, a history that wasn’t without controversy. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, there were also mainstream Carnival and masquerade ball attractions that appealed to queer women like the same-sex balls in Berlin. In the years leading up to the Eulenburg Affair, these specialties of Berlin in winter could be regularly seen at the great Berlin ballrooms, as women attended their own popular same-sex balls to rival that of the men. According to Hirschfeld, “nearly every week” there was “an analogous ball evening for [female] Uranier,” at which “[o]ne can year-round see most of the homosexual women in one place and time at one of the costume festivals organized by one of the Berlin ladies.”⁵⁸⁸ Even before the war, there was some evidence of increasing controversy surrounding such events and their connection to women in drag,

⁵⁸⁶ Advertisement for “Ein großes Kostümfest bei der Prinzessin auf dem Mond” for 31 December 1927 in *Liebende Frauen* 2. Jahrgang, Nummer 52 (Dec 1927): 11. Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv und Bibliothek Berlin. Advertisement for “Eine Nacht im Goldrausch” for Wed 15 February 1928 in *Liebende Frauen* 3. Jahrgang, Nummer 6 (Feb 1928): 11. Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv und Bibliothek Berlin. *Liebende Frauen*, issues from 1927 and 1928. Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv und Bibliothek Berlin. Write-up on Die Zauberflöte found in: Ruth Margarete Röllig, *Berlins lesbische Frauen* (Leipzig: Gebauer: 1928): 71. Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv und Bibliothek Berlin.

⁵⁸⁷ *Die Freundschaft*, 1921, Nr. 7. Cited in: Jens Dobler, *Von anderen Ufer: Geschichte der Berliner Lesben und Schwulen in Kreuzberg und Friedrichshain* (Berlin: Gmünder, 2003): 120.

⁵⁸⁸ Magnus Hirschfeld, *Berlins Drittes Geschlecht* (Berlin: Seemann, 1904): 49.

practices by women at Carnival, and female homosexuality.⁵⁸⁹ Already in the 1890s at least one court case occurred in which a husband cited his wife's proclivity for wearing pants at masquerade balls as evidence for her alleged homosexuality.⁵⁹⁰ Many of these accounts and others were taken up and analyzed in emergent sexological and psychological works, which made explicit connections between cross-dressing and deviant sexualities. The first decade of the twentieth century saw numerous measures to restrict such activities then. In 1906, a new prohibition made it illegal for women to wear men's attire on the stage or on the street after 11 PM.⁵⁹¹ This prohibition was likely a response to the Eulenburg Affair as well as a means of suppressing select immoral practices of Carnival and masquerade balls before the war. Likewise, the same-sex balls in public ballrooms were prohibited in 1907, a provision lifted a few years later. Finally, in 1909, salacious accounts of the "homosexual women" of the new queer women's clubs in Berlin were published in the press, by the minor Berlin newspaper *Große Glocke*.⁵⁹² In a failed attempt to restrict this increasingly public information about the practices of same-sex-attracted women through the publication, one woman initiated a libel court case about the claims of the paper, but it resulted in the judge siding with the publisher.⁵⁹³

⁵⁸⁹ Katie Sutton has persuasively argued, as this chapter does about queer women, that the heightened politics of cross-dressing during this period also raised the visibility of and controversy surrounding transvestites at this time. Katie Sutton, "'We Too Deserve a Place in the Sun': the Politics of Transvestite Identity in Weimar Germany," *German Studies Review* 35, No. 2 (May 2012): 335-354.

⁵⁹⁰ Eugen Isolani, *Die Frau in der Hose: ein Beitrag zur Kultur der Frauenkleidung* (Berlin: W. Borngräber, 1911): 90.

⁵⁹¹ Claudia Schoppmann, *Days of Masquerade: Life Stories of Lesbians During the Third Reich* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996): 58.

⁵⁹² Felix Wolff, "Homosexuelle Frauen," *Große Glocke*, 28 April 1909.

⁵⁹³ "Ein Damenklub vor Gericht," *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, 22 April 1909. Discussed in: Marti Lybeck, *Desiring Emancipation: New Women and Homosexuality in Germany, 1890-1933* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2014).

Already before the war then one could see the general trend of queer women keeping the queer Carnival subculture for women more underground as well as the growing public awareness of and possible controversy within same-sex masquerade balls. The more private nature of the women's subcultures shaped then a more closed-off community centered on supportive and inclusive community ties by the Weimar years. Whereas queer men were threatened with possible legal action, queer women struggled in different ways, namely for an independent income and out of fear of discrimination in employment and housing. These values are seen reflected in the experience of the Carnival ball scene in Weimar Berlin.

In an article from 1976 on the women's clubs, German lesbian Gertrude Sandmann described the clubs and their events as "coming home."⁵⁹⁴ Obviously influenced by the experience of both the Third Reich's persecution and the lack of tolerance for queer communities in post-World War II Germany, Sandmann still aligned with other contemporary accounts of the clubs and their events that stressed the inclusiveness and integration of diverse queer women in Berlin. This was despite club and event divisions that frequently occurred along class lines and gender expressions or sex preferences. Such divisions according to class background or gender expressions are consistently detailed in the descriptions of clubs found within Ruth Röllig's *Berlin's Lesbian Women*. Likewise in the post-World War II interview of a Weimar lesbian identified as Marta X, she points out as the descriptions of clubs that follow do as well that there were separate queer club scenes in Berlin based around class, largely influential and upper-class clubs located in the West, mostly around the KuDamm area, and the

⁵⁹⁴ Gertrude Sandmann, "Anfang des lesbischen Zusammenschlusses: die Clubs der Zwanziger Jahre" (*Unsere Kleine Zeitung* 7/8/1976): 6.

more alternative, dodgy, or lower-class clubs or “dives” around the North in Prenzlauer Berg and the area around Hallesches Tor. She was a dancer who had worked at the mixed queer club The Magic Flute.⁵⁹⁵ Indeed Sandmann described the clubs as inclusive, at which the spaces presented a “classless society... namely that of the homosexual.”⁵⁹⁶ About the mixed queer club Topfkeller, for instance, Sandmann recounted how the club truly catered to a clientele that spanned all classes, occupations, and backgrounds.⁵⁹⁷ In contrast to the queer men’s emancipation movement, which distanced itself from effeminate men and often saw its interests as divergent from that of both queer women and so-called transvestites, this frequent inclusiveness of the queer women’s social clubs of the 1920s extended both to women of all demographics as well as alleged “transvestites.”⁵⁹⁸ In short, the politics of respectability played into the politics of all the queer and transvestite communities during these years, but queer women’s social groups integrated Berlin’s transvestites into their community organization more. Between 1927 and 1930 the leading associations of the homosexual emancipation movements founded groups for transvestites, which represented critical support and advocacy for Berlin’s

⁵⁹⁵ Ruth Margarete Röllig, *Berlins lesbische Frauen* (Leipzig: Gebauer: 1928): 58-59. Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv und Bibliothek Berlin. Interview with Marta X in: Ilse Kokula, *Jahre des Glücks, Jahre des Leids: Gespräche mit älteren lesbischen Frauen* (Kiel: Frühlings Erwachen, 1990, first edition 1986): 66, 72.

⁵⁹⁶ Gertrude Sandmann, “Anfang des lesbischen Zusammenschlusses: die Clubs der Zwanziger Jahre” (*Unsere Kleine Zeitung* 7/8/1976): 6.

⁵⁹⁷ Gertrude Sandmann, “Anfang des lesbischen Zusammenschlusses: die Clubs der Zwanziger Jahre” (*Unsere Kleine Zeitung* 7/8/1976): 7.

⁵⁹⁸ Indeed as historian Laurie Marhoefer has pointed out, the homosexual emancipation organization the Scientific Humanitarian Committee’s (*Wissenschaftlich-humanitäres Komitee*) main initiative remained the abolition of Paragraph 175 and made little attempt to incorporate women into their discussions or membership. Similarly, the League for Human Rights (*Bund für Menschenrechte*) centered on Paragraph 175. Laurie Marhoefer, *Sex and the Weimar Republic: German Homosexual Emancipation and the Rise of the Nazis* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015).

transvestites. According to historian Katie Sutton, these groups struggled to maintain membership due to fear of being outed and the social consequences that would result. By contrast women's social clubs like the Violetta had overlapping membership, and arguably more overlapping interests and orientations, which I argue facilitated greater collaboration between the two communities. The queer women's magazines introduced columns exclusively for transvestite issues from 1924 to the end of the republic. Sutton has argued that this "was probably a concession to financial realities as well as reflecting a degree of structural crossover between transvestite and female homosexual organizations."⁵⁹⁹ The queer women's social groups published articles on transvestite issues in their publications, and involved them in their social event calendars including in the hundreds of annual masquerade balls of highly diverse natures that they organized. Queer women's Carnival events, while also subject to issues of respectability in this era of early advocacy for queer communities, entailed greater accommodation and inclusion, as well as more cohesion in community formation and the maintenance of privacy. It also always operated under the radar more, as privacy and discretion remained more protected and available to queer women in their subcultures in Berlin. Whether accommodation and inclusion meant in turn greater acceptance or solidarity across the class spectrum of queer women or between them and Berlin's transvestite community remains unclear from the sparse sources of the era. All these demographics share though the scene's attempt to deliver a protected "home" for groups that experienced a lot of isolation at this time.

⁵⁹⁹ Katie Sutton, "'We Too Deserve a Place in the Sun': the Politics of Transvestite Identity in Weimar Germany," *German Studies Review* 35, No. 2 (May 2012): 335-354: 339.

Queer women like Sandmann then later identified this isolation—what Branda described as a “mental or psychological desert” (*Seelische Wüste*)—as well as the suffering and problems with self-acceptance as the lasting condition of same-sex-attracted women during the Weimar years.⁶⁰⁰ A contemporary account of this struggle could likewise be seen then in the popular lesbian novel of the Weimar years, Anna Elisabet Weirauch’s *The Scorpion*, which prominently featured a queer Carnival ball.⁶⁰¹ The title of the work was a reference to the popular contemporary term for a lesbian. Like in the case of *Different from the Others*, the novel was highly significant to the community and featured a masquerade ball as a dominant narrative force within its storyline. Weirauch’s account takes up the story of a young respectable bourgeois lesbian Myra and her journey of self-inquiry and confusion over her desires. She eventually meets an artist circle, which is how Myra ends up rather hesitantly at a queer masquerade ball. Myra is also heartbroken and introverted at this time, as her female amour has committed suicide, and she navigates the dizzying displays at the masquerade ball as she simultaneously attempts to embrace the possibility of a new love interest as well as the confrontation of her own sexual nature. After weeks of sorrow and feeling lost, she is invited to attend this masquerade ball. An outsider throughout the tale—as an orphan, an “Abnormal,” and a naïve aristocratic girl unfamiliar with this artist scene—Myra experiences the ball as transitions from outsider to insider and back to outsider status

⁶⁰⁰ Gertrude Sandmann, “Anfang des lesbischen Zusammenschlusses: die Clubs der Zwanziger Jahre” (*Unsere Kleine Zeitung* 7/8/1976): 4-8. Interview with Branda in: Ilse Kokula, *Jahre des Glücks, Jahre des Leids: Gespräche mit älteren lesbischen Frauen* (Kiel: Frühlings Erwachen, 1990, first edition 1986): 96.

⁶⁰¹ Weirauch released the first two installments of her lesbian novel *The Scorpion* in 1919 and 1921, and it was her final installment from 1930 that she featured the queer masquerade ball. Anna Elisabet Weirauch, *The Scorpion* (New York: Arno Press, 1975).

again, a mirroring of the contemporary experience of Carnival balls for many queer women. She experiences the subversive liberation and empowerment at the event, most clearly symbolized in the elderly and disabled organizer of the ball who is transformed into a regal queen holding court. Finally for a brief moment Myra too can be free there: “She no longer seemed to see the bright room with its throngs of people and strange faces as through panels of glass.”⁶⁰² After much time of isolation and suffering, she sees her new love interest Gisela and embraces what the masquerade offers, telling herself repeatedly that ““I will love life, I will love life.””⁶⁰³ She and Gisela then have a conversation at the ball about a sense of belonging and a feeling of being at home in a community.⁶⁰⁴ While the thrust of the novel is about Myra’s disorientation about her nature and uncomfortable journey of self-discovery and self-acceptance, at the masquerade she too despite her significant class difference from most of the guests in attendance stressed this sense of coming home or being part of a community. Another such account of within queer women’s literature is likewise found in *Schöne Maske*.⁶⁰⁵ Other accounts of Carnival, like the short stories printed in the Berlin lesbian magazines, took up the same theme but of stories of permitted desire and affection in the unique spaces of Carnival balls. Two accounts in *Girlfriend* from 1929 and 1931, both published

⁶⁰² Anna Elisabet Weirauch, *The Scorpion* (New York: Arno Press, 1975): 159-160.

⁶⁰³ Anna Elisabet Weirauch, *The Scorpion* (New York: Arno Press, 1975): 164.

⁶⁰⁴ Anna Elisabet Weirauch, *The Scorpion* (New York: Arno Press, 1975): 165-167.

⁶⁰⁵ Lu Leistenschneider, “Schöne Maske,” *Freundin*, 1930, Nr. 1. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

for a Berlin audience, detailed queer women's affection through the permitted cross-dressing and anonymous homoeroticism at mainstream Carnival balls.⁶⁰⁶

Coming together as a community also occurred through the queer women's social groups in other ways too, which connected to the effects of the balls themselves. The queer women's Ladies Club Violetta (*Damenklub Violetta*), with its 400 members by 1926, organized lectures and events in opposition to the proposed extension of Paragraph 175, as it did for instance at one of its "Authors Evenings" in 16 November 1927. The club, like its less successful but equally active corollary the Girlfriends Club (*Klub der Freundinnen*), was a major organizer of Carnival balls for queer women as well as so-called transvestites. With its highly masculine-presenting Lotte Hahm at the helm, and its persistent commitment to the cause of so-called transvestites, the club regularly organized speaker sessions to educate women on varied political and social questions. It likewise spearheaded the uniting of queer women in other cities with less community, opening chapters in Chemnitz, Königsberg, Düsseldorf, and Leipzig, German cities in which it was substantially more difficult for queer women to find each other.⁶⁰⁷ Violetta also established a chapter in Vienna, a city with a slightly different configuration for queer women, as the Austrian version of Paragraph 175 had been extended to include sexual acts between women already in 1852, a year after the first German drafting of a provision that would later become Paragraph 175. Women in such cities were particularly cut off from each other as a result and through Violetta's and other organizations' efforts, and

⁶⁰⁶ L. Wölk, "Karneval," *Freundin*, 1931, Nr. 5. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin Preußischer Kulturbesitz. Lu Leistenschneider, "Fasching," *Freundin*, 1929, Nr. 10. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

⁶⁰⁷ *Liebende Frauen*, issues from 1927 and 1928. Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv und Bibliothek Berlin.

through the recent allowance of masquerades again in 1927, were better positioned to develop a local queer community as well. Not just in Düsseldorf was this a challenge. Munich experienced substantial legal and police pursuance of queer institutions that organized masquerade and Carnival events, targeting these institutions successfully as early as 1923.⁶⁰⁸ Alongside the Carnival ban, which was particularly broadly enforced across Bavaria—compared to its narrow application in Berlin—queer sociability proved formidable to establish in these traditional Carnival regions. Queer Carnival subcultures in Berlin thus rivaled the rich associational culture of official Carnival societies and clubs themselves not underground, albeit as a much less reputable and more closed-off culture. Such community building initiatives could be seen at the balls themselves as well, as in the case of the “Purple Nights” of the Ladies Club Violetta. The club featured a matchmaking service for the women alongside the mainstays of mainstream masquerade balls in those years like costume contests and featured prizes.⁶⁰⁹ The social groups also organized group travels and activities.⁶¹⁰ The high number of available queer clubs by the late 1920s did this work as well. Of the numerous institutions that catered to Berlin’s queer women’s clientele by the late Weimar years, the most prominent included the Eldorado, Salome, Magic Flute, Dorian Gray, Monocle Bar, Geisha Bar, Silhouette, Mikado, Café Hohenzollern, Mali und Igel, Café Domino, Café Olala, Toppkeller, Verona-Lounge, Meyer Stube, Auluka-Diele, Ladies Club Violetta, Club Monbijou,

⁶⁰⁸ Stefan Heiß, “Die Polizei und Homosexuelle in München zwischen 1900 und 1933” in: Michael Farin, *Polizei Report München 1799-1999* (Munich, 1999).

⁶⁰⁹ Write-up on the Damenklub Violetta found in: Ruth Margarete Röllig, *Berlins lesbische Frauen* (Leipzig: Gebauer: 1928): 58-59. Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv und Bibliothek Berlin.

⁶¹⁰ *Liebende Frauen*, issues from 1927 and 1928. Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv und Bibliothek Berlin.

Princess Café, Society Club of the West, and Taverne. Accounts indicated other ways that the ball scene facilitated family bonds and community as well. An Anneliese W who went by “Johnny” in the late Weimar years, recounted how the discovery of the club scene in the early 1930s led to other forms of queer sociability like group outings. “Through the Magic Flute,” a popular mixed queer club, “I joined a lesbian bowling club, ‘The Funny Nine’ We went bowling once a week, and once a month we rented a really big room in a dance hall on Landsberger Strasse [in the Northeast Berlin city district of Prenzlauer Berg where the Girlfriends Club was also based].”⁶¹¹ Outside of the formal ball spaces too the trend toward inclusivity continued, as Johnny recounted the broad spectrum of age groups represented at such happenings. “It was really nice, young and old together, fifty- to sixty-year-olds, the rest around twenty, and I was always the youngest.”

Although Violetta proved more popular, another influential club, the Girlfriends Club did similar work to facilitate community formation, eagerly committed to social and political organization for queer women as well as Carnival balls as the dominant form of community sociability. Formed as a response to the League for Human Rights (*Bund für Menschenrechte*) founded for the political representation of Berlin’s queer men, the Girlfriends Club organized two to three weekly masquerade balls from standard “costume balls” to themed nights like “A Night in the Gold Rush,” alongside sporting activities, educational lectures, or travel outings.⁶¹² Its members also wrote political articles for the

⁶¹¹ Claudia Schoppmann, *Days of Masquerade: Life Stories of Lesbians During the Third Reich* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996): 44.

⁶¹² Write-up on the Klub der Freundinnen found in: Ruth Margarete Röllig, *Berlins lesbische Frauen* (Leipzig: Gebauer: 1928): 55-56. Advertisement for “Eine Nacht im

Journal for Human Rights (Blätter für Menschenrecht).⁶¹³ The group was again wedded to secrecy, as it kept itself restricted to closed society.⁶¹⁴ Unlike Violetta, which was responsible for the publishing of the lesbian magazine *Girlfriend*, the Girlfriends Club only sparsely advertised its events in the lesbian magazines, although the organizers began advertising more in 1928.⁶¹⁵ Despite this less publicized nature, the society derived its membership from “simpler circles” who were “less ambitious in regards to [the] location and layout of its meeting rooms.”⁶¹⁶ According to journalist and queer advocate Ruth Röllig, some criticized the group for not throwing the best balls—the club allegedly suffering from a bit of “North German stiffness.”⁶¹⁷ Despite the widespread popularity of the wild “Tyrolean choo choo” and the mysterious “Wash waltz” at their masquerades, the club organized many of its events in Berlin’s Northeastern district of Prenzlauer Berg, which ultimately may have made it less popular due to its distance from the KuDamm area where most of Berlin’s well-patroned women’s clubs were located.

Queer women’s community formation thus occurred in Weimar Berlin through rich community-building initiatives alongside a broadly shared notion of protected

Goldrausch” for Wed 15 February 1928 in *Liebende Frauen* 3. Jahrgang, Nummer 6 (Feb 1928): 11. Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv und Bibliothek Berlin.

⁶¹³ Mel Gordon, *Voluptuous Panic: the Erotic World of Weimar Berlin* (Port Townsend: Feral House, 2006): 110.

⁶¹⁴ Write-up on the Klub der Freundinnen found in: Ruth Margarete Röllig, *Berlins lesbische Frauen* (Leipzig: Gebauer: 1928): 55-56. Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv und Bibliothek Berlin.

⁶¹⁵ *Liebende Frauen*, issues from 1927 and 1928. Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv und Bibliothek Berlin.

⁶¹⁶ Write-up on the Klub der Freundinnen found in: Ruth Margarete Röllig, *Berlins lesbische Frauen* (Leipzig: Gebauer: 1928): 55. Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv und Bibliothek Berlin.

⁶¹⁷ Write-up on the Klub der Freundinnen found in: Ruth Margarete Röllig, *Berlins lesbische Frauen* (Leipzig: Gebauer: 1928): 55-56. Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv und Bibliothek Berlin.

exclusivity and community inclusion. Many sources on queer women's masquerading in the Weimar years take up similar language of being at home or "amongst themselves" (*unter sich*) about this experience of safe and inclusive community about queer masquerade balls. At exactly the time that critics lamented that official Carnival in the Rhineland was no longer possible because Rhenish cities, given the severe post-war geopolitical fragility and international attention, were no longer "amongst themselves," a queer Carnival subculture for women thrived in Berlin within which women and critics celebrated its successful exclusivity and protected nature. Broad audiences after the war felt that the Rhineland and its people were no longer "amongst themselves" but rather had become, in the words of the Cologne press in 1923, the most important "focal point of world interest."⁶¹⁸ Hirschfeld himself encouraged the idea of the women staying amongst themselves. Hirschfeld maintained in the introduction to Röllig's journalistic exposé on the women and their scene *Berlins Lesbian Women (Berlins lesbische Frauen)* that because the inherited drive toward being a member of Third Sex ultimately would predominate in any case of having a family or offspring, it would be best socially as well as politically for the women "to stay better amongst themselves."⁶¹⁹ Although women challenged this idea, they themselves still frequently created spaces of being amongst themselves and safe in the club scene and masquerade spaces. Two accounts from Röllig, namely of the Club Monbijou of the West (*Klub Monbijou des Westens*) and the Ladies Club Monbijou (*Damenklub Monbijou*) include references to the importance of being in exclusive company at such events. In reference to the former, Röllig described the stage

⁶¹⁸ "Mehr Ernst und Würde," *Kölnische Zeitung*, Nr. 75, 31 January 1923. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

⁶¹⁹ Preface by Magnus Hirschfeld in: Ruth Margarete Röllig, *Berlins lesbische Frauen* (Leipzig: Gebauer: 1928): 8. Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv und Bibliothek Berlin.

of a masquerade ball given by the club as not able to bring anything “more appealing and quirky” but that nevertheless “one was indeed ‘amongst themselves,’” by which is meant here the exclusivity of having only women in attendance.⁶²⁰ Likewise of the Ladies Club Monbijou, the club that gave “the great festival of the season in the Scala in Berlin!,” Röllig quotes a Berlin press report of the renowned masquerade ball event simply titled, “women amongst themselves.”⁶²¹ In one of Berlin’s most significant ballrooms, “[l]ovely laughter enticed [the guests] into floating [a] feeling of the moon in order to speak in sapphic rhythm.” Röllig’s work like the salacious guidebooks to Berlin published detailed accounts of what purportedly occurred at the clubs, which gives some further indication of the spectrum of events for queer women in the club spaces despite the more exclusive attendance more shut off from the public eye.

The KuDamm on a Saturday night in the late 1920s played host to at least six masquerade balls for women, all within blocks of one another. Indeed women could enjoy the choice of several regular masquerade balls at varied clubs throughout the week, in particular on Tuesday (at Society Club of the West), Wednesday (at Violetta, and Girlfriends), Thursday (at Princess Café, Magic Flute, Taverne, and Society Club of the West), Friday (at Dorian Gray, Society Club of the West, and Princess Café), Saturday (at Magic Flute, Violetta, Taverne, and Princess Café), and Sunday (at Violetta, Princess Café, and Taverne). These were only even the offerings advertised within the lesbian magazines, which at least in the case of *Girlfriend* catered to the more working-class

⁶²⁰ Write-up on the Klub Monbijou des Westens found in: Ruth Margarete Röllig, *Berlins lesbische Frauen* (Leipzig: Gebauer: 1928): 65. Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv und Bibliothek Berlin.

⁶²¹ Report on the Winter 1927 Scala Ball given by Damenklub Monbijou. Write-up on the Klub Monbijou des Westens found in: Ruth Margarete Röllig, *Berlins lesbische Frauen* (Leipzig: Gebauer: 1928): 64. Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv und Bibliothek Berlin.

demographic of the Violetta Club. At Violetta, one saw highly varied masquerade balls throughout the year. The articulated goal of the club was to create a type of home for the women who were no queer intellectuals but rather largely derived from younger blue-collar and white-collar demographic: “clerks, saleswoman, hand workers, and small merchants.”⁶²² Despite this clientele, the club was often “extraordinarily versatile.” Although journalist Ruth Röllig described the club as specializing in transvestite nights and sailor fests, during which the women would play tug-of-war, the club also organized hundreds of events the year round in its attempt “to wear a bit of glee in existence.” Here the word for mirth (*Frohsinn*) is the classic term used to describe the exuberance or mirth at a traditional Carnival. It hosted a weekly transvestite night as well.

Many of the clubs worked hard to provide a safe and home-like space for its queer clientele. The Café Dorian Gray, taking its name from the Oscar Wilde protagonist, regularly organized balls by the late 1920s, purportedly not as successfully as in previous years. The mixed club alternated women’s and men’s evenings. Friday nights were often a “variety night” (*Bunter Abend*) for women during which the music was periodically interrupted for lectures of varied natures.⁶²³ A lot of effort was given at the club to “bring a little beauty to the everyday” for the clientele.⁶²⁴ Matching masquerade themes to the different times of year, as other clubs like Violetta and the Scorpion Ladies Club did, Café Dorian Gray’s masquerades included Bavarian Alpine Fests, Rhineland Winter

⁶²² Write-up on the Damenklub Violetta found in: Ruth Margarete Röllig, *Berlins lesbische Frauen* (Leipzig: Gebauer: 1928): 57. Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv und Bibliothek Berlin.

⁶²³ Write-up on the Café Dorian Gray found in: Ruth Margarete Röllig, *Berlins lesbische Frauen* (Leipzig: Gebauer: 1928): 33-35. Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv und Bibliothek Berlin.

⁶²⁴ Write-up on the Café Dorian Gray found in: Ruth Margarete Röllig, *Berlins lesbische Frauen* (Leipzig: Gebauer: 1928): 34. Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv und Bibliothek Berlin.

Fests, as well as themed nights like “Three Days in the Wild West.”⁶²⁵ The club boasted no fixed clientele, but featured a constantly changing and diverse series of patrons, which made it a particular draw for some. The Princess Café was also a major organizer of Carnival balls for queer women by the mid-to-late 1920s in Berlin. Also located near the KuDamm area, in the Schöneberg square of the Winterfeldplatz, the Princess Café regularly organized themed events variously held on Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. Röllig only included brief descriptions of the club’s interior decorations and two female transvestite regulars Irmchen and the barmaid Liselotte in her report.⁶²⁶ Princess Café hosted highly varied balls, which within a year included a Tie Festival, Balloon Fest, Rhineland Winter Festival, Monocle Fest, Original Weekend Fest, and a Comfortable and Intimate Stay.⁶²⁷ Unlike Violetta, however, the café usually set the theme for an entire week (or sometimes even two weeks). Participants then celebrated the same masquerade ball theme over all three of its parties within the week’s time. Likewise sparsely documented was the Society Club of the West (*Gesellschaftsklub Westen*). Located in the KuDamm area, this club organized numerous themed events throughout the week, with a ladies-only night on Tuesday during which men’s entry was strictly forbidden. This suggests that the club also played host to mixed nights as it likely did on Thursday, when it sometimes organized a beauty pageant evening. By contrast, some Fridays were a transvestite night during which only transvestites and perhaps some queer

⁶²⁵ Write-up on the Café Dorian Gray found in: Ruth Margarete Röllig, *Berlins lesbische Frauen* (Leipzig: Gebauer: 1928): 34-35. Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv und Bibliothek Berlin.

⁶²⁶ Write-up on Der Pfeifeclub in Café Prinzess found in: Ruth Margarete Röllig, *Berlins lesbische Frauen* (Leipzig: Gebauer: 1928): 67-68. Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv und Bibliothek Berlin.

⁶²⁷ *Liebende Frauen*, issues from 1927 and 1928. Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv und Bibliothek Berlin.

women would be permitted.⁶²⁸ Their events included themes like its “Ball in Paradise” (advertising the promise that Adam and Eve themselves would be personally present).⁶²⁹

A rather different clientele made up the patrons of the posh and luxurious Club Monbijou (*Klub Monbijou des Westens*), whose members were linked to the lesbian magazine *Women in Love*.⁶³⁰ It was an exclusive club meant for queer society ladies, most of them so-called *garçonnes*.⁶³¹ According to Röllig, due to the demands of high society these women “dexterously carried the burden of feeling different without compromising themselves.”⁶³² They attended the mainstream masquerades of the annual social calendar, the Berlin society balls within the more respectable mainstream culture, alongside the corresponding queer masquerades in secret. Alongside annual mainstream masquerades of mixed participants, those wealthy members of the Club Monbijou organized their own, in the renowned ladies nightclub Mali und Igel, the name taken from the two proprietors of the institution.⁶³³ During each year, the club, whose exclusive membership from the wealthiest society queers numbered around 500 to 600, had its regular club fests throughout the year in addition to two large, particularly extravagant

⁶²⁸ Advertisement for weekly events at the Gesellschaftsklub Westen for Tues 20 Sept 1927, Thurs 22 Sept 1927, and Friday 23 Sept 1927 in *Liebende Frauen* 2. Jahrgang, Nummer 38 (Sept 1927): 11. Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv und Bibliothek Berlin.

⁶²⁹ Advertisement for “Ball im Paradies Adam und Eve persönlich anwesend” for Thurs 17 November 1927 in *Liebende Frauen* 2. Jahrgang, Nummer 46 (Nov 1927): 11. Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv und Bibliothek Berlin.

⁶³⁰ Mel Gordon, *Voluptuous Panic: the Erotic World of Weimar Berlin* (Port Townsend: Feral House, 2006): 112.

⁶³¹ Mel Gordon, *Voluptuous Panic: the Erotic World of Weimar Berlin* (Port Townsend: Feral House, 2006): 111.

⁶³² Write-up on the Klub Monbijou des Westens found in: Ruth Margarete Röllig, *Berlins lesbische Frauen* (Leipzig: Gebauer: 1928): 64. Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv und Bibliothek Berlin.

⁶³³ Ruth Margarete Röllig, *Berlins lesbische Frauen* (Leipzig: Gebauer: 1928): 49. Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv und Bibliothek Berlin.

costume festivals, usually at the Scala. Tickets to these events were extremely coveted and hard won.⁶³⁴ They were likely the most expensive and large-scale queer Carnival event in Berlin each year. Very strict about permitting only women's entry, although many women attended in drag, these balls were massive displays of class, luxury, beauty, and "phantasmagoria."⁶³⁵ As with the smaller and less well-funded queer women's balls, however, the event was ultimately about allowing the women to feel amongst themselves.⁶³⁶ Despite the intention to exclude the press from even these high-profile balls hosted by Club Monbijou at the Scala, the Berlin press often sought entry and the ability to cover the exclusive members-only events in the daily papers, as they successfully did in one Berlin daily in 1927.⁶³⁷ Such extravagant spending by those who had expendable income after the war in Berlin combined with such published accounts of exclusive queer patronage and subversive play surely bolstered spreading national impressions of rampant immorality and vice within the German capital.

The clientele of the Monbijou overlapped somewhat with that of the Magic Flute. A multistory mixed club in Mitte near the Spittelmarkt, the Magic Flute frequently organized themed balls for women as well as men, sometimes even simultaneously on separate floors. Located in an "American dance palace" (although marketed as an

⁶³⁴ Mel Gordon, *Voluptuous Panic: the Erotic World of Weimar Berlin* (Port Townsend: Feral House, 2006): 110.

⁶³⁵ Write-up on the Klub Monbijou des Westens found in: Ruth Margarete Röllig, *Berlins lesbische Frauen* (Leipzig: Gebauer: 1928): 66. Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv und Bibliothek Berlin.

⁶³⁶ Write-up on the Klub Monbijou des Westens found in: Ruth Margarete Röllig, *Berlins lesbische Frauen* (Leipzig: Gebauer: 1928): 65. Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv und Bibliothek Berlin.

⁶³⁷ Report on the Winter 1927 Scala Ball given by Damenklub Monbijou. Write-up on the Klub Monbijou des Westens found in: Ruth Margarete Röllig, *Berlins lesbische Frauen* (Leipzig: Gebauer: 1928): 64. Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv und Bibliothek Berlin.

“oriental casino”⁶³⁸), its specialty among queer women was *Bubis* (“young lads”) and *Madis* (from *Mädchen*, meaning “girls”). The club hosted some events at which this gendered division was an official distinction mandatory for attendance at some of its nights, organizing games and play around particular roles for one or the other. However, the Magic Flute also hosted events like its Bad Boys Balls, which emphasized only *Bubis*, giving out prizes for the best young lads and babies.⁶³⁹ Bad Boys Balls were particularly popular in Berlin and several of the queer clubs organized them annually, providing prizes to those in the best lads attire. Some of the club’s other annual events included a Students Ball, “where there are caps and ties [and where] dance duets and chants are performed,” a Bell Fest (*Glockenfest*), and a “Night in the Moulin Rouge.”⁶⁴⁰ Some organizations would also host their masquerades at the Magic Flute, as the The Silver Spider Social Club did on New Years Eve in 1927, when it threw its themed masquerade ball “Costume Festival at the Home of the Princess on the Moon.”⁶⁴¹ At midnight the balcony would be opened to allow for an “ascent to the moon.” The Girlfriends Club also hosted their Carnival ball of 15 February 1928 there, the night

⁶³⁸ Advertisement for “Großer Böser-Bubenball” for Saturday 21 January 1928 in *Liebende Frauen* 3. Jahrgang, Nummer 3 (Jan 1928): 11. Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv und Bibliothek Berlin.

⁶³⁹ Advertisement for “Großer Böser-Bubenball” for Saturday 21 January 1928 in *Liebende Frauen* 3. Jahrgang, Nummer 3 (Jan 1928): 11. Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv und Bibliothek Berlin.

⁶⁴⁰ Write-up on Die Zauberflöte found in: Ruth Margarete Röllig, *Berlins lesbische Frauen* (Leipzig: Gebauer: 1928): 71. Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv und Bibliothek Berlin.

⁶⁴¹ Advertisement for “Ein großes Kostümfest bei der Prinzessin auf dem Mond” for 31 December 1927 in *Liebende Frauen* 2. Jahrgang, Nummer 52 (Dec 1927): 11. Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv und Bibliothek Berlin.

heading into the Women's Carnival or Carnival Thursday that year, based on the theme "A Night in the Gold Rush."⁶⁴²

One remaining club and organization for queer women was particularly significant to the masquerade scene at the time and that was the Scorpion Ladies Club (*Damenklub Skorpion*). It hosted numerous events and themed balls at the secret club Taverne. Of a slightly different nature than the other clubs, the Taverne was sequestered near the Alexanderplatz area, far away from the KuDamm, and required secret knowledge to gain entry. In the darkened alley of the Georgenstraße that was otherwise quiet and empty, one would find a single light glimmering from a window. Upon knocking on the door, one would gain entry by flashing a secret signal through the briefly uncovered window. Promoting an even more "closed society" than some of the other clubs, at least to avoid any unwanted attention from the police, the Scorpion Ladies Club still advertised some of its weekly balls in the lesbian magazines. But one would still need to know how to get in.⁶⁴³ Those patrons who just wanted to drink would stay in the front room. The hall in the back by contrast was the seat of a great deal of bawdy antics, and it remained exclusively reserved for women. The patrons congregating in the hall were often coarse and crude, prone to fist fights or territorial acts of machismo according to Röllig.⁶⁴⁴ The Taverne clientele consisted of mostly lower-class women, which made the 30-Pfennig entry on any night a burden for many, especially after the stock market

⁶⁴² Advertisement for "Eine Nacht im Goldrausch" for Wed 15 February 1928 in *Liebende Frauen* 3. Jahrgang, Nummer 6 (Feb 1928): 11. Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv und Bibliothek Berlin.

⁶⁴³ Write-up on Taverne found in: Ruth Margarete Röllig, *Berlins lesbische Frauen* (Leipzig: Gebauer: 1928): 46. Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv und Bibliothek Berlin.

⁶⁴⁴ Write-up on Taverne found in: Ruth Margarete Röllig, *Berlins lesbische Frauen* (Leipzig: Gebauer: 1928): 47-48. Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv und Bibliothek Berlin.

crash. And yet, the Scorpion Ladies Club promised everything from lesbian love to purported “sadistic orgies.” It remains unclear whether Röllig, a journalist herself, traded in the sensationalism of her colleagues who favored salacious journalism, when she wrote these accounts, or if she indeed is referencing kink and BDSM practices. The Scorpion Ladies Club threw a great number of highly successful themed masquerades: a Bock Beer Hubbub (*Bockbiertrubel*), and Beach Festival, in addition to numerous masked balls, costume festivals, mardi gras balls, and New Years balls.⁶⁴⁵ Friday nights were reserved for its transvestite clientele, but the club put on balls every Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday. Whereas the club was allegedly more prone to fighting and sexual debauchery, the only rule at Taverne was that anything and everything was permitted to the women free from judgment. At the Scorpion Ladies Club, “one is indeed ‘closed society’—and besides that one is without doubt fully under the mysterious influence of the ominous horoscope of Scorpio.”⁶⁴⁶ Taverne and the Scorpion Ladies Club mirrored the approach of the famous and more public Eldorado nightclub, which featured a sign on which was printed that at Eldorado “everything is right.”⁶⁴⁷ Through Röllig’s accounts of this more exclusive masquerading scene for queer women then, the ripe new possibilities available under the republic come through as does the exclusivity and privacy that was more common among queer women than queer men.

⁶⁴⁵ Write-up on Taverne found in: Ruth Margarete Röllig, *Berlins lesbische Frauen* (Leipzig: Gebauer: 1928): 48. Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv und Bibliothek Berlin. *Liebende Frauen*, issues from 1927 and 1928. Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv und Bibliothek Berlin.

⁶⁴⁶ Write-up on Taverne found in: Ruth Margarete Röllig, *Berlins lesbische Frauen* (Leipzig: Gebauer: 1928): 48. Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv und Bibliothek Berlin.

⁶⁴⁷ The sign hanging inside the Eldorado, that says, “here everything is right” (*hier ist alles richtig*) is referenced in: Write-up on the Eldorado found in: Ruth Margarete Röllig, *Berlins lesbische Frauen* (Leipzig: Gebauer: 1928): 50. Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv und Bibliothek Berlin.

One explanation for the differences in experiences and values within the queer men's and women's Carnival scenes likely stemmed from the central issues facing the subcultures. Although the German government twice tried to propose the extension of Paragraph 175 to women, which briefly aligned queer women with the interests of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century feminist movement as is elaborated below, the law continued to apply only to men during the Weimar years and thus continued to shape queer men's issues. While men's concerns centered on the effects of Paragraph 175, the women grappled with questions of work and subsistence much more than queer men. It was a liability of a different sort for the women to be identified as queer, which led many to embrace the Weimar queer scene as a certain freedom and tolerance that nevertheless fulfilled the requirement of anonymity in their lives. This desire for anonymity was of course not without reason, as most of the women struggled to maintain success in work and fought moreover then to not endanger this success when acquired.⁶⁴⁸ The clubs provided support and respite for women who found their way to them, as for many the dominant experience remained over their livelihoods, seeking to find ways to provide for themselves and live independently despite familial and social pressure to enter into marriages. Reference to the struggle to find work as well as the type of work queer women would choose in Berlin can be found in the journalistic account by Ruth Roellig, in which Roellig indicates that "...they frequently pursue careers, the masculine lesbians pursuing careers like being a manager, office superintendent, photographer, editor, writer, actress, and for the more feminine lesbian seamstress, masseuse,

⁶⁴⁸ See for instance accounts of these years found in: Ilse Kokula, *Jahre des Glücks, Jahre des Leids: Gespräche mit älteren lesbischen Frauen* (Kiel: Frühlings Erwachen, 1990, first edition 1986): 93.

saleswoman, or embroiderer or in a beauty salon, where they would then have the opportunity to meet and learn to recognize women.”⁶⁴⁹ Käthe Kuse, a lesbian who lived through the Weimar years in Berlin, remarked in a post-World War II interview that in the early 1930s she even desired a sex change just so that she could live her life with her girlfriend; this was her response when she found out at Hirschfeld’s institute that doctors could declare her legally a man.⁶⁵⁰ In Kuse’s words, she wished “to wear men’s clothing. (This, in order to finally be able to go with my girlfriend to a dance hall, ball, or the like without any fuss.).”

The struggle for unmarried women, like women who desired other women, to obtain adequate work or to escape persecution due to a failure to conform to traditional norms of work and family, often aligned queer women with feminist aims of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. As a result, at various moments in this period, queer women and feminists briefly came together in collective struggle, as was seen in 1909 in regards to the proposed extension of Paragraph 175 to women that followed the events of the Eulenburg Affair.

The Reichstag’s statement on its plans, the “Scheme for a German Penal Code” from 1909, stated that, “the danger to family life and to youth is the same. The fact that there are more such cases in recent times is reliably testified. It lies therefore in the interest of morality as in that of the general welfare that penal provisions be expanded

⁶⁴⁹ Introduction in: Ruth Margarete Röllig, *Berlins lesbische Frauen* (Leipzig: Gebauer: 1928): 21-22. Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv und Bibliothek Berlin.

⁶⁵⁰ Interview with Käthe Kuse in: Ilse Kokula, *Jahre des Glücks, Jahre des Leids: Gespräche mit älteren lesbischen Frauen* (Kiel: Frühlings Erwachen, 1990, first edition 1986): 25.

also to women.”⁶⁵¹ As a result of these public plans, a broad swath of German feminists as well as women’s organizations across Germany held meetings and vocally protested such legislation. They came to the aid of the emergent queer women’s community, not solely in the service of same-sex-attracted women but also due to the effect such legislation would have on working women in cities. As the League for the Protection of Mothers argued in its Berlin meeting of February 10, 1911, the law’s extension would open women up to the threat of blackmail, as had been the case for men since the law’s ratification.⁶⁵² But it would also cause the persecution of working women who were unmarried but living together out of necessity in the German cities. Instead of passing a prohibition that would subject diverse women to shame and scrutiny, the group recommended the consultation of medical experts, in particular sexologists and psychologists. Whereas a similar provision already extended to women in Austria, the broad organization of women’s groups across Germany successfully defeated the attempt to extend Paragraph 175 to women in Germany as well, as it would a decade and a half later when the Weimar government proposed an extension again around 1927 (also with significant support from Social Democrats). Despite the defeat of this and subsequent attempts, the vast majority of queer women remained under pressure through the end of the Weimar years to establish a traditional nuclear life, and in the absence of this to maintain employment and personal security. Even securing an independent income

⁶⁵¹ “Vorentwurf zu einem deutschen Strafgesetzbuch” (E1909), Reichstag 1909. Hans-Georg Stümke, *Homosexuelle in Deutschland: eine politische Geschichte* (München: Beck, 1989): 50.

⁶⁵² *Vorwärts* (not the SDP paper of later years) article from February 1911.

remained challenging despite the consistent rise in women's representation in the work force during these years, a shift that began in the decades preceding World War I.⁶⁵³

The German government twice attempted to extend Paragraph 175 to women, once around 1909 and again around 1927. Both attempts failed, largely due to collective efforts of women's groups as well as advocate work by organizations like Magnus Hirschfeld's Scientific Humanitarian Committee (*Wissenschaftlich-humanitäres Komitee*). Even in the Scientific Humanitarian Committee's first years as an organization, Hirschfeld already advocated publically on behalf of queer people in the fight against Paragraph 175. Hirschfeld successfully created and distributed a petition in 1897, which gathered 6000 signatures, in favor of removing the legislation from the German penal code. According to Röllig, the women's natures and lives were nevertheless experienced as "dominant condemnation of women of different natures," made even clearer by the contemporaneous federal attempt to extend Paragraph 175 to women.⁶⁵⁴ The women at Violetta already experienced widespread difficulties even without legal threat—"through quarreling with the parental home, hostilities at work, and undervaluation in society."⁶⁵⁵ And they were still frequently subject to work discrimination both as women and homosexuals, especially in the context of ongoing high unemployment rates throughout the whole of the Weimar years. With the threat of Paragraph 175, which would push

⁶⁵³ For a brief discussion of this context as well as a small collection of primary sources in relationship to lesbianism during the fin de siècle and early twentieth century, see: Lillian Faderman and Brigitte Eriksson, eds., *Lesbians in Germany: 1890s-1920s* (Tallahassee: Naiad Press, 1990).

⁶⁵⁴ Write-up on the Damenklub Violetta found in: Ruth Margarete Röllig, *Berlins lesbische Frauen* (Leipzig: Gebauer: 1928): 57. Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv und Bibliothek Berlin.

⁶⁵⁵ Write-up on the Damenklub Violetta found in: Ruth Margarete Röllig, *Berlins lesbische Frauen* (Leipzig: Gebauer: 1928): 58. Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv und Bibliothek Berlin.

many of these women to suicide according to Röllig, Carnival balls went hand-in-hand with the struggle to live. “Therefore the Fight! And near to it, the joy of the dance!”⁶⁵⁶

IV. Conclusion

During the Weimar years, broad audiences across the country expressed pointed anxiety about the “jazziest Carnivals” taking place in Berlin,⁶⁵⁷ or other accounts of Carnival vice and immorality taking place in the night and shadows of Berlin’s underbelly.⁶⁵⁸ To the horror of these groups, queer subcultures in the city did seem to appropriate and give particular meanings to Carnival practices and masquerade balls that stood in stark opposition to the attempted suppression and regulation of Carnival and masquerade balls across the country. Critics were particularly vocal against the Carnival cultures in Berlin in general, and led with claims of the excessive and sexually immoral ones happening in the shadows of the republic’s capital as the most objectionable in order to taint all of Berlin Carnival. But such a slippage disguised the actual distinction between a more respectable and mainstream public Carnival culture in Berlin and the less reputable more closed-off queer Carnival subcultures there. The queer Carnival subcultures in Berlin entailed much of the practices and qualities about which broad

⁶⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁷ “Abschrift I 3104,” Vereinigung zur Erhaltung der rheinischen Volksfeste und Gebräuche E.V. in Aachen, 21 April 1922, R/1501 Reichsministerium des Innern. 11 March 1922 to 24 February 1925, Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde.

⁶⁵⁸ “Bericht über die öffentliche Protest Versammlung 13. 1. 22. Hotel Rheinhof,” 13 January 1922, Series R/1501 Reichsministerium des Innern 11 March 1922 to 24 February 1925, Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde. “Vergnügungsrummel,” *Volk und Heimat*, Nr 2, 1 January 1927. Volume 2, Series 48a Beih. 1 Bd. 2 Akten betr. Karneval und Maskenbälle 1 Januar 1927 to 31 December 1936, I. HA Rep. 77 Ministerium des Innern, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

German audiences were panicked at that time. What resulted then was that a prolific and popular version of Carnival culture developed among Berlin's queer subcultures, for whom these practices delivered one historical function of traditional Carnivals—namely permitted freedoms of sex, class, and gender play, release and relief from one's daily tribulations alongside the bolstering of a community—at the same time that those subcultures carried very different meanings within the national discourses about Carnival because of a shift in interpretations of those functions. Such displays were instead seen as symptomatic of moral bankruptcy in Germany, the presence of internal national enemies and immoral elements, and the ongoing need to heal and save the nation.

The peculiarities of Weimar liberalism clearly come through in the above treatments of both the queer men's and queer women's masquerade ball scenes in Berlin. On the one hand, the new republic ushered in radical new possibilities for Berlin's queer subcultures, as Weimar society in Berlin created cleavages for the flourishing of queer Carnival subcultures that had been developing already before the war but within which rich community formation occurred after the war. On the other hand, the nature of Weimar politics and new media meant broadened public awareness of and voyeurism about such practices, which heightened the public stigma toward these communities, at a time when legal action against them was on the rise, on account of the increased attention to Carnival generally and Berlin Carnival specifically through these salacious works. Even within the women's scene, which maintained greater privacy in these years, the women were unable to fully restrict public knowledge. According to Marta X, who lived publically with her partner Olga in their neighborhood around the KuDamm and Tauntzienstraße, her neighbors all knew they were girlfriends and tolerated it during the

Weimar years without causing any trouble.⁶⁵⁹ Moreover, advocacy efforts like that of sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld and journalist Ruth Röllig while pushing for greater acceptance of queer populations also made public the secret clubs of these subcultures and the purported activities that went on at them. The same could be said of similar advocacy work for queer men alongside the new genre of salacious city guidebooks for Berlin, which led to actual voyeuristic tours of the queer men's venues and ball parties in these years. Moreover, famous media works like the film *Different from the Others* and the lesbian novel *The Scorpion* made known how Berlin was the place for queer Carnival balls and broadened public knowledge of the significance of masquerade balls to these demographics during the Weimar years. Thus by the end of the Weimar era a rich series of queer subcultures existed in Berlin for queer men, women, and "transvestites," that was tied up in queer Carnival culture, at the same time that significant public awareness of these groups and their controversial practices persisted.

⁶⁵⁹ Interview with Marta X in: Ilse Kokula, *Jahre des Glücks, Jahre des Leids: Gespräche mit älteren lesbischen Frauen* (Kiel: Frühlings Erwachen, 1990, first edition 1986): 74.

Chapter 6

Carnival and the Survival of the Volk

Carnival is older than the *Rote Funken* in Cologne; it is even older than the Free and Imperial City itself. The oldest reports, which we have about Carnival, originate from the circles of the church. ... Already from the very early times of German history we have expressions of the church about Carnival. Because Carnival is indeed no invention of modern times, even if its contemporary manifestations developed essentially first in the tenure of the past one hundred years. Carnival came to us both from the Germans and from the Romans. Both elements are mixed in it. Already during the time of Karl the Great, as the Irish missionaries preached Christianity in Germany, they found Carnival customs (*Fastnachtsbräuche*) within the tribes of the Franks and Alemanni.⁶⁶⁰

National Socialism created a new vocabulary to talk about Carnival celebrations, which emphasized *Volk* connections, and eliminated regionalism and to an extent religion as well. The above passage points to this new vocabulary during the Third Reich, already palpable in 1934, within which Carnival, much like the *Volk* itself, was above the state, connected to ancient tribes of Germanic peoples before even Christianity and certainly before organized official city holiday culture. This was a dramatic shift away from Carnival's problems during the Weimar era, toward a Carnival seen as a part of fundamental Germanness, with Carnival a link back through an imagined racial lineage to the earliest traces of the *Volk*. This striking transformation within Carnival culture is the subject of this chapter, which traces first the suppression of queer groups—the *real*

⁶⁶⁰ "Blick in die Geschichte des Karnevals. Christentum und Fasching – Das älteste Dokument über den Karneval im Westen des Reiches." *Westdeutschen Beobachter*, Nr. 33, 26 January 1934. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

problem to the Nazis, as opposed to Carnival—and the sweeping revival of Carnival during the Third Reich in turn that elevated it to a national holiday of the German *Volks*.

On February 23, 1933, the new Nazi Prussian Minister of the Interior in Berlin Hermann Göring passed his Second Directive, which targeted public houses that “are being misused for the spread of immorality.”⁶⁶¹ An early NSDAP member who took part in Hitler’s failed revolutionary coup in 1923, Göring ousted the over-a-decade tenure of Social Democratic statesmen in the position, immediately moved to create the Gestapo that year, and became one of the most powerful officials in realizing the vision of the Third Reich. As it pertained to the clubs of queer Carnival, the “immorality” that Göring referenced in the directive included institutions that “exclusively or predominantly keep the company of people who pay homage to sexual offenses against nature”—in other words, all of them.⁶⁶² Nazi officials saw homosexuals themselves as a problem, as opposed to Carnival or even queer Carnival, which led to measures such as this directive that targeted all queer clubs and people from 1933 onward. By the end of the week §22 of the Public Houses Act (*Gaststättengesetz*) would shutter all the major Berlin clubs of queer masquerades.⁶⁶³ This included many of the most famous sites for queer Carnival balls in Berlin for men, women, and so-called transvestites. Among those closed downs were the Magic Flute, Dorian Gray, Monocle Bar, Geisha, Mali and Igel, Café Hohenzollern, Silhouette, and Mikado.⁶⁶⁴ The closing of queer clubs occurred elsewhere

⁶⁶¹ Zweiter Runderlaß des Preußischen Ministers des Innern vom 23. Februar 1933. Published in: Günter Grau und Claudia Schoppmann eds., *Homosexualität in der NS-Zeit: Dokumente einer Diskriminierung und Verfolgung* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer-Taschenbuch-Verlag, 1993): 56.

⁶⁶² Ibid.

⁶⁶³ *Berliner Tageblatt*, 4 March 1933.

⁶⁶⁴ Ibid. *Pressebericht* 5. March 1933.

in 1933. In Cologne, the Sleeping Beauty (*Dornröschen*), where queer Carnival balls had been put on throughout the Weimar years, was closed on Ash Wednesday in 1933 at the close of massive Carnival celebrations there.⁶⁶⁵ That year Ash Wednesday marked not just a return to sobriety and restraint at the end of the first full Carnival in Cologne since before the war, but the end for many decades of queer Carnival in general. By contrast in Munich, the hub of the far right and of the NSDAP in Germany, such shuttering had already occurred during the Weimar years.⁶⁶⁶ A major difference between Weimar and Nazi policy toward Carnival immorality was a focus on people instead of practices: they focused morality on groups as opposed to Carnival as a moral issue in general. What resulted instead was the targeting of queer groups in general, leading with the queer Carnival sites as the most objectionable, and the full allowance of official mainstream Carnival in Germany. That same week, Carnival week in 1933 and the week during which the Reichstag was sent aflame, Cologne celebrated its first full public celebration of Carnival since 1914. The festivities took place under the banner “Carnival as it once was” (*Karneval wie einst*)—the annual motto might also be understood to mean “the Carnival of old.”⁶⁶⁷ This marked a dramatic reversal of the experience of Carnival in Weimar Germany. It took place weeks into the Third Reich, and wove together elements of the issues surrounding Carnival’s history since the late nineteenth century while simultaneously coupling them with wholly new elements of a new Nazi ideology in Germany.

⁶⁶⁵ Cornelia Limpricht, “‘Für eine Nacht Seligkeit’: Homosexuelle im Kölner Karneval” in Cornelia Limpricht and Jürgen Müller eds., *“Verführte” Männer: das Leben der Kölner Homosexuellen im Dritten Reich* (Cologne: Volksblatt, 1991): 26.

⁶⁶⁶ Stefan Heiß, “Die Polizei und Homosexuelle in München zwischen 1900 und 1933” in: Michael Farin, *Polizei Report München 1799-1999* (Munich, 1999).

⁶⁶⁷ Pathé footage from early March 1933 of the Cologne Carnival.

This chapter takes up the proceedings of this sudden shift into Carnival during the Third Reich in pre-World-War-II Germany, beginning with a discussion of this clampdown in Berlin.⁶⁶⁸ National Socialists had avidly printed homophobic rhetoric as a key part of their national and ideological vision already in the Weimar years, the subject of the first section. As Nazis demonized homosexuals alongside fervent opposition to Carnival cultures in Berlin seen in national Carnival debates, the suppression of Carnival in Berlin together with the revival of robust official Carnivals across Germany was a contrast to Weimar policy but also a popular opposition to Carnival immorality—especially that of the unofficial, nonmainstream, private variety. Analysis takes up this sudden rupture in German Carnival regulation by the Nazis, namely the broad public

⁶⁶⁸ Much scholarship on early-twentieth-century queer life in Germany focuses on the Nazi persecution of queer groups. See for instance Richard Plant, *The Pink Triangle: the Nazi War Against Homosexuals* (New York: H. Holt, 1986). Günter Grau und Claudia Schoppmann eds., *Homosexualität in der NS-Zeit: Dokumente einer Diskriminierung und Verfolgung* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer-Taschenbuch-Verlag, 1993). Burkhard Jellonnek, *Homosexuelle unter dem Hakenkreuz: die Verfolgung von Homosexuellen im Dritten Reich* (Paderborn: F. Schöningh, 1990). Burkhard Jellonnek and Rüdiger Lautmann eds., *Nationalsozialistischer Terror gegen Homosexuelle: verdrängt und ungesühnt* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2002). GJ Giles, “Legislating Homophobia in the Third Reich: The Radicalization of Prosecution Against Homosexuality by the Legal Profession,” *German History* 23, No. 3 (July 2005): 339-354. GJ Giles, “The Institutionalization of Homosexual Panic in the Third Reich,” in Robert Gellately and Nathan Stoltzfus eds., *Social Outsiders in Nazi Germany* (Princeton: University of Princeton Press, 2001). GJ Giles, “‘The Most Unkind Cut of All’: Castration, Homosexuality, and Nazi Justice,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 27 (1992): 41-61. Andreas Pretzel and Gabriele Rossbach, eds., *“Wegen der zu erwartenden hohen Strafe”: Homosexuellenverfolgung in Berlin 1933-1945* (Berlin: R. Winkel, 2000). Susanne Zur Nieden, *Erbbiologische Forschungen zur Homosexualität an der Deutschen Forschungsanstalt für Psychiatrie während der Jahre des Nationalsozialismus: zur Geschichte von Theo Lang* (Berlin: Max-Planck-Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Wissenschaft, 2005). Many memoirs and collections of postwar interviews also detail individual experiences living through the Third Reich, including Ilse Kokula, *Jahre des Glücks, Jahre des Leids: Gespräche mit älteren lesbischen Frauen* (Kiel: Frühlings Erwachen, 1990, first edition 1986). Claudia Schoppmann, *Days of Masquerade: Life Stories of Lesbians During the Third Reich* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

demonization of homosexuals in Berlin together with a simultaneous celebration of German Carnival across the Reich. The chapter then turns to the Carnival world itself, looking first to discourses of Carnival during the Third Reich. New Carnival discourse during the Third Reich, produced both by the party press and by the German populace, pointed to Carnival's power to realize the national, Volkish, and racial fantasies of the new society, as Carnival provided a powerful tool for both propaganda and the realization of the Nazi utopia. The last section then analyzes the specific changes made to Carnival during the years before World War II. Active Nazi changes to the holiday through new state institutions of the Third Reich reflected the party's conservative sex, gender, and race politics while appearing not like a party rally. At the same time, changes to Carnival during National Socialism suggested that Carnival practices could provide healing and a sense of repudiation to members of the *Volk* in Germany after the last decades of collective trauma.

I. Queer Clampdown in Berlin

Even before the Nazi rise to power, there was controversy surrounding queer Carnival and the queer clubs in Berlin, controversy that mounted considerably after the stock market crash of October 1929 and the resulting social and political turbulence that once again bordered on the outbreak of civil war. Proposed intensifications of §175, the term of the German penal code that made same-sex sex acts between men illegal, in 1925 and extensions of the term of the penal code to women in 1927 did not succeed. But numerous later interviews and memoirs from queer people who lived through these years

described greater police presence in the queer nightclubs in Berlin as well as an increase in police raids by the early 1930s. In a postwar interview, a lesbian identified as Branda recounted for instance her experience of a cabaret performance in the queer women's club Geisha Bar in 1930. She spent the whole event panic-stricken that a raid by the vice squad (*Sittenpolizei*) would result due to the controversial nature of the performance.⁶⁶⁹ Likewise, another account by Christopher Isherwood depicted a similar experience. Isherwood described a police presence in queer bars in *Goodbye to Berlin* during the winter of 1932 to 1933: "...the Police have begun to take a great interest in these places. They are frequently raided, and the names of their clients are written down."⁶⁷⁰ The new Berlin police president Kurt Melcher, a Catholic religious conservative from Essen, helped carry out measures in the opposition of purported immoral practices within public life, one outgrowth of the conservative reaction to the 1927 reform of sex worker laws in Germany.⁶⁷¹ This reaction was particularly fervent in Cologne, long a Catholic Centrist stronghold, where the Adenauer-led government demanded strict regulation. In October 1932 Melcher passed an ordinance in Berlin then that prohibited dancing between same-sex couples in public. Sensing the impending clampdown some nightclub owners like those of the famous Eldorado elected to close their own doors in the early 1930s. The Nazi party in Berlin even took over the club, which was run as an election campaign center. The party left up the nightclub's sign but covered the building's entire façade with

⁶⁶⁹ Interview with Branda in: Ilse Kokula, *Jahre des Glücks, Jahre des Leids: Gespräche mit älteren lesbischen Frauen* (Kiel: Frühlings Erwachen, 1990, first edition 1986): 94.

⁶⁷⁰ Christopher Isherwood, *Goodbye to Berlin* (London: Vintage, 1998): 464.

⁶⁷¹ See a discussion of the *Preußenschlag* (Papen Putsch) against Prussia's Social Democratic government in: Julia Roos, "Backlash against Prostitutes' Rights: Origins and Dynamics of Nazi Prostitution Policies," in Dagmar Herzog ed., *Sexuality and German Fascism* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005): 67-94.

Hitler election posters—a dramatic public confrontation of queer visibility with the implicit threat of violence of Nazi ideology in Berlin (See Image 1).⁶⁷²



Image 1. “Eldorado,” 1933. Landesbildstelle, Berlin.

Then in 1932, just ahead of the decisive federal elections that established the NSDAP as the largest party in the Reichstag, the Social Democrats published Ernst Röhm’s letters, which incriminated the current SA-Chief and head of the Hitler Youth as a homosexual in an attempt to paint the Nazis as hypocrites and a danger to children. Röhm was also a known regular of the queer club scene—his favorite nightclub was allegedly the Shadow Image (*Schattenbild*), a venue primarily for so-called transvestites.

⁶⁷² Image of Hitler’s election campaign posters covering the façade of the Eldorado. Bildarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz, early 1933.

Already in 1929 the news organ of the homosexual emancipation group the Scientific Humanitarian Committee (*Wissenschaftlich-humanitäres Komitee*), co-founded by prominent sexologist and outspoken queer advocate Magnus Hirschfeld, had made reference to such knowledge, stating in an article on “Homosexuality and National Socialism” that “a while ago a brochure appeared in Berlin, in which it was maintained that a series of prominent leaders of the National Socialist German Workers’ Party in Berlin are homosexual.”⁶⁷³ The Institute knew of Röhm’s letters, indeed had been approached by Social Democratic leaders with the opportunity to publish them but turned it down, only retrospectively referencing the material here within their news organ for the emancipation movement. Despite the “disgusting scoldings against homosexuals” that were “prevalent” in the party, according to a cited article in the *Berliner Abendzeitung*, in the Nazi party “homosexuality is the norm”⁶⁷⁴ While the political maneuver in 1932 was ultimately unsuccessful, and claims about rampant homosexuality within the ranks of the NSDAP have persuasively been debunked,⁶⁷⁵ the immediate decisive clampdown of the queer scene in Berlin in 1933 upon the Nazi assumption of power reflected both the growing controversy toward the Berlin’s nightlife as well as the pressure to display party ideology about homosexuals. The following year, the subsequent murder of Röhm—a known close friend of Hitler’s and a loyal old guard of the Nazi party—during the Night

⁶⁷³ “Homosexualität und Nationalsozialismus,” *Mitteilungen des Wissenschaftlich-humanitären Komitees E.V.*, No. 20, March 1929. Collected in: Friedemann Pfäfflin ed., *Mitteilungen des Wissenschaftlich-Humanitären Komitees: 1926-1933* (Hamburg: Bell, 1985): 161.

⁶⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁵ Consider historian Laurie Marhoefer’s treatment of this question in her discussion of “The Röhm Scandal” in: Laurie Marhoefer, *Sex and the Weimar Republic: German Homosexual Emancipation and the Rise of the Nazis* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006): 150-160.

of the Long Knives eliminated any remnant claims that the party was soft on queers. Nazi vitriol against queer communities had proliferated publically during the Weimar years, alongside the homosexual emancipation movements that attempted to carve out recognition for queer groups according to bourgeois notions of respectability. What constituted respectability to leaders of the movements, and of course to other critics within the national Carnival debate, some of whom has policed the boundaries of respectability since before the war, definitely did not include most practices at Berlin's queer Carnival events. In the context of intensified public persecution of queer groups, leaders of the emancipation movement persisted with claims that they themselves were not the real problem but the queer people who engaged in questionable practices like the queer Carnival events.

In the context of the targeting of Berlin's queer communities in early 1933, gay leaders of the emancipation movement did not rally around Berlin's masquerading subcultures. On the contrary, such leaders like Adolf Brand, author of the first homosexual emancipation magazine *The Special (Der Eigene)* that had been in print since 1896 and leader of the emancipation groups Society of the Special (*Gemeinschaft der Eigene*), saw such "cleansing" as good for the cause. Brand wrote a letter on 29 November 1933, which described Göring's actions against immorality in Berlin as "only directed against the ugly excesses of our movement."⁶⁷⁶ He therein displayed similar rhetoric to that about Carnival, unregulated play, and leisure forms during the Weimar years as immoral and excessive. To "all decent (*anständigen*) people" according to

⁶⁷⁶ Letter, Adolf Brand, 29 November 1933. Published in: Günter Grau und Claudia Schoppmann eds., *Homosexualität in der NS-Zeit: Dokumente einer Diskriminierung und Verfolgung* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer-Taschenbuch-Verlag, 1993): 63.

Brand, the queer clubs tarnished the community's reputation and were run by circles who "knew how to make a profitable business from the seduction of male youth."⁶⁷⁷ Brand continued, "[t]hese were police actions which, in the interests of cleanliness (*Reinlichkeit*) and the movement's reputation, were nothing but welcome."⁶⁷⁸ Despite the use of popular language about national enemies who were enterprising, Brand went on to deny any antisemitic bias, specifically against Hirschfeld who was Jewish. Nevertheless, he blamed the outspoken sexologist and public figure for the contemporary homosexual demagoguery like that of the Nazis and the homophobic impressions among the German public an account of Hirschfeld's "whole pseudo-scientific activity," namely his "false and ridiculous" theory of "so-called uranists... which demoted the manliest men in world history to semi-women and servants."⁶⁷⁹ Such logic reiterated bourgeois notions of queer respectability including disdain for effeminacy that was frequently seen in practices at mainstream and queer Carnival events since the mid-nineteenth century. Both Hirschfeld and Brand were early targets of raids and seizures already in 1933 and such pressure intensified difference within queer culture and advocacy as seen here surrounding morality, effeminacy, respectability, and "science."

Brand and other German audiences moreover took up this image of queer subcultures like those within Berlin Carnival and queer advocacy of them as seduction of German male youth or even an outright language of pederasty that seemed particularly

⁶⁷⁷ Letter, Adolf Brand, 29 November 1933. Published in: Günter Grau und Claudia Schoppmann eds., *Homosexualität in der NS-Zeit: Dokumente einer Diskriminierung und Verfolgung* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer-Taschenbuch-Verlag, 1993): 63-64.

⁶⁷⁸ Letter, Adolf Brand, 29 November 1933. Published in: Günter Grau und Claudia Schoppmann eds., *Homosexualität in der NS-Zeit: Dokumente einer Diskriminierung und Verfolgung* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer-Taschenbuch-Verlag, 1993): 64.

⁶⁷⁹ Ibid.

potent by 1933. Not only did Brand clearly buy into such a narrative, as seen in his invocation of the queer clubs as sites for the “profitable” gay “seduction” of susceptible “male youth.” But severe §175 prosecutions that during the Weimar years had primarily occurred only in cases of pedophile man now were commonplace for all queer men under the label of “sex offender” (*Sittlichkeitsverbrecher*).⁶⁸⁰ The notion of queer men in Berlin or at Carnival as pederasts wasn’t even new in 1933, but had rather already been used in a case in early 1929 as a pretense for the police targeting of queer men at Carnival in Munich. In a March 1929 article on “New Prosecutions of Homosexuals in Munich” in the news reporting of the Scientific Humanitarian Committee the author admonished the Munich police for, during the “previous Carnival (*Fasching*) days,” framing “homosexual Carnival (*Fasching*) festivals” as youth endangerment and youth sexual entrapment in order to prosecute queer men for activities “which approximately hundreds of affiliated participants of all Munich’s social classes attend.”⁶⁸¹ Carnival frequently entailed practices like cross-dressing, sex and gender play, and homoeroticism that the entire community of revelers engaged in, which made the holiday attractive to queer audiences; the police simply capitalized on this opportunity to target queer groups with their conservative morality that had gained favor. And they did so using invocations of “youth endangerment” that were popular within national debates over immorality in Weimar play. According to the author, in other places like “in Berlin... and even the entirety of

⁶⁸⁰ Published in: Günter Grau und Claudia Schoppmann eds., *Homosexualität in der NS-Zeit: Dokumente einer Diskriminierung und Verfolgung* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer-Taschenbuch-Verlag, 1993): 55.

⁶⁸¹ “Neue Homosexuellen-Verfolgungen in München,” subheading “Der §175 und die Münchener Polizei,” *Mitteilungen des Wissenschaftlich-humanitären Komitees E.V.*, No. 20, March 1929. Collected in: Friedemann Pfäfflin ed., *Mitteilungen des Wissenschaftlich-Humanitären Komitees: 1926-1933* (Hamburg: Bell, 1985): 159-161.

German large cities” the authorities are “more clever and a bit less deliberate” than to simply smear such “gatherings and festivities of homosexuals as recruitments spots for criminals who are dangerous to public safety.” Nevertheless, the result of the police raid on the queer Carnival event in Munich resulted in the uncovering of eight youth under 18, bolstering the claims of an official police report that queer Carnival had entailed “deceitful elements, which formed a serious danger for the youth.” Despite the contention that police had manipulated the occasion to make homosexuals at Carnival look like dangers to German youth, the Nazis homed in on this extant stance and spread it considerably.

A particularly potent symbolism of this conflation of queer men with pederasts or a danger to youth can be found in an event in early 1933, when the Nazi suppression of Berlin’s queer communities literally carried out the targeting of a Jewish advocate and homosexual advocate by means of actual German youth. Nazis raided Hirschfeld’s Institute for Sexual Science on 6 May 1933, and they sent a brigade of male students in uniform to enact the deed. The male youth ransacked the institute to the sounds of a brass band brought in tow and later ceremoniously burned the literature seized during the raid. Regardless of the political or social stances of different people, homosexuality constituted this threat to German youth and thus led to Nazi recovery of German health through its repression. Despite Adolf Brand’s initial welcoming of the Nazi clean up, the prominent gay author experienced five subsequent confiscations of his own, on May 3rd, September 2nd and 4th, and November 15th and 24th.⁶⁸² The raids were devoid of comparable fanfare,

⁶⁸² Letter, Adolf Brand, 29 November 1933. Published in: Günter Grau und Claudia Schoppmann eds., *Homosexualität in der NS-Zeit: Dokumente einer Diskriminierung und Verfolgung* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer-Taschenbuch-Verlag, 1993): 65.

but nevertheless achieved similarly devastating effect; they ended Brand's life's work and any career opportunities. Moreover, a central criticism against Röhm by the Nazi opposition dealt with the danger to German youth posed by his authority over the Hitler Youth.⁶⁸³ Social Democrat Helmuth Klotz initially made this criticism when he leaked the papers to the public. Röhm's murder despite prominent status in the party likewise drove home the commitment to Nazi persecution of homosexuals to save German youth. Whereas Brand welcomed the select "cleanliness" ushered in by the Nazis in early 1933, he, like Hirschfeld and Röhm, became a target within National Socialism because he was a queer person, when Nazis identified groups of people as the problem as opposed to Carnival, and Nazi ideology about healthy German people and the need to secure the future of the German *Volk* required his suppression in turn. The next section turns then to Nazi ideology against homosexuals as a group more broadly, contrasting this discourse with the new pro-Carnival stance of the National Socialists.

II. Nazi Anti-Homosexual and Pro-Carnival Rhetoric

The establishment of the Third Reich carried with it an inherent unequivocal stance toward queer people their activities. In Berlin, this was embodied in the Nazi party's immediate clampdown on the clubs in Göring's Second Directive. The First Directive and the Third Directive passed at the same time made clear that Nazis understood the queer Carnival scene in Berlin as immoral and a threat to German morality, German health, and in particular German youth. The First Directive combatted

⁶⁸³ Laurie Marhoefer, *Sex and the Weimar Republic: German Homosexual Emancipation and the Rise of the Nazis* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006): 159.

sex work and the spread of venereal disease.⁶⁸⁴ The Third Directive banned the selling of purportedly immoral literature, in particular literature of “filth” and “trash” that “trigger erotic effects.”⁶⁸⁵ This subsumed many of the most influential new sources of the Weimar era that had worked to spread awareness about Berlin’s queer communities, including lesbian newspapers like *The Girlfriend (Die Freundin)* and *Women in Love (Liebende Frauen)*, as well as the city guidebooks and histories of culture and morality of Curt Moreck. On these facts alone the NSDAP aligned with widespread concerns surrounding immoral activities in public life, which were spearheaded most aggressively by the conservative right and centrists during the Weimar years. These directives took up Weimar definitions of “immorality.”⁶⁸⁶ Within the sexual politics during the Weimar years, “immorality” was a term used to refer variously to venereal disease, sex work, sexual abnormalities and transvestites. Göring clearly was honing in on sites of social and sexual immorality using shared definitions of the Weimar era. Yet, there was an important difference between the Nazi approach to mainstream and queer Carnival activity that distinguished the party from the Weimar approaches to Carnival prohibition. While elements of Carnival both in Cologne and across the country were broadly viewed as a potential moral threat to the German people and nation during the Weimar decades, a stance shared by national liberals, Social Democrats, religious centrists, and conservative

⁶⁸⁴ Günter Grau und Claudia Schoppmann eds., *Homosexualität in der NS-Zeit: Dokumente einer Diskriminierung und Verfolgung* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer-Taschenbuch-Verlag, 1993): 54.

⁶⁸⁵ Verbot anstößiger Schriften. Dritter Runderlaß des Preußischen Ministers des Innern vom 24. Februar 1933. Published in: Günter Grau und Claudia Schoppmann eds., *Homosexualität in der NS-Zeit: Dokumente einer Diskriminierung und Verfolgung* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer-Taschenbuch-Verlag, 1993): 58.

⁶⁸⁶ For more on these sexual politics see Laurie Marhoefer, *Sex and the Weimar Republic: German Homosexual Emancipation and the Rise of the Nazis* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006).

nationalists alike, the Nazis did not share this stance. Instead, the Nazi singular demonization of individual groups of people, in particular queer communities alongside other groups like Jews and Marxists, only required the suppression of these groups and their institutions in order to solve the problems of Carnival that plagued Weimar society. The central problems of Carnival to the Nazis were these groups, “enemies of the state” and their resultant “cultural Bolshevism” above all else, and both the Nazi rhetoric and policy choices of Nazis toward Carnival in Berlin and Cologne bore this out. This section will take up the Nazi demonization of queer populations in Berlin in the late Weimar and early Nazi period before turning to the contrasting pro-Carnival Nazi stance reflected in the same sources.

NSDAP papers revealed two important facts about the Nazi stance toward Carnival and immorality. First, Nazi anti-homosexual discourse was a consistent theme, which linked queer communities to Volk damage, youth endangerment, and the threats posed by Jews and Marxists. Secondly, the presence of Carnival content in Nazi papers was positive and without scrutiny despite the considerable controversy surrounding the holiday by the late Weimar years. To the first point, even before the party gained a significant national following, Nazi demonization of queer communities in Germany was seen in the party press. In 1929 when the NSDAP still constituted a fringe party of the turbulent German political milieu, an article in the *Völkischer Beobachter* painted homosexuality as a persistent historical problem of mankind, a “degeneration of animalism (*Sinnenleben*) that existed throughout all of time.”⁶⁸⁷ The article’s author

⁶⁸⁷ “Homosexualität und Nationalsozialismus,” *Mitteilungen des Wissenschaftlich-humanitären Komitees E.V.*, No. 20, March 1929. Collected in: Friedemann Pfäfflin ed.,

further described this persistent problem of “homosexuality” as “under the known protections of Marxism,” and described queer people themselves as “nearly exclusively the dying off degenerate social classes to whom we in Germany owe if nothing else the November catastrophe of 1918.” The latter was surely a reference to those “November criminals” blamed for the revolution at the end of the war. This “stab in the back” myth, put forth by conservative nationalists to explain the impossible defeat of the German military, maintained through antisemitic and anti-communist rhetoric that certain circles on the home front had betrayed the German nation in the war effort. The article thus stated that homosexuals were a fact of history but also an aberration of Jewish and Marxist groups in Germany. The distorted Nazi ideology about homosexuals in the article turned then to eugenicist thinking about the underlying meaning of their presence in society, and in turn ways of “solving” such an issue. The author celebrated the thought of Arthur Schopenhauer on this question, who “referred to the significations of homosexuality as a device of nature to bring about the extinction of degenerate humans.” In a peculiar symmetry with contemporary sexological work on members of the Third Sex by Hirschfeld, Nazis saw their existence in society as natural and normal, but instead of a “noble” entity as Hirschfeld held a sign of weakness and inferiority in the human “race.” Already in 1929 the article ultimately pointed to the conviction that genocidal action was an appropriate solution to the problems embodied in queer people in Berlin. “In the National Socialist state, sterilization will help things along a bit.” The following year too the paper threatened violence against homosexuals, linking them now “to all the

mischievous urges of the Jewish soul” merging in the form of homosexual inclinations.⁶⁸⁸

“[A]s the legal hallmark of what they are, as totally utterly nasty aberrations of Syrians, as the [perpetrators of the] most totally severe crimes, [which should be met] with hanging and deportation.”⁶⁸⁹

In 1928, Adolf Brand, author of the movement’s oldest magazine *The Special* (*Der Eigene*) and one of the leaders of the homosexual emancipation movement, polled political parties on their stance toward homosexuals, the party responded at length, in rhetoric that implicated the Nazi anti-homosexual stance in the project that would follow to revive and make healthy and clean the celebration of Carnival across Germany. “It is not necessary that you and I live, but it is necessary that the German people live. And it can only live if it can fight, for life means fighting. And it can only fight if it maintains its masculinity.”⁶⁹⁰ Such a message already stressed the collective German struggle over the impulses of the individual—seen in the case of homosexuals as “undisciplined.” This was similar language to Weimar ideas about Carnival as being over the top or excessive and lacking self-control. Likewise, it pointed to the commitment to ridding society of any activities or groups perceived as effeminate or straying from conservative gender and

⁶⁸⁸ Günter Grau und Claudia Schoppmann eds., *Homosexualität in der NS-Zeit: Dokumente einer Diskriminierung und Verfolgung* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer-Taschenbuch-Verlag, 1993): 31. Quoted in: Hans-Georg Stümke and Rudi Finkler, *Rosa Winkel, Rose Listen: Homosexuelle und „Gesundes Volksempfinden“ von Auschwitz bis heute* (Hamburg: Reinbek, 1981): 96.

⁶⁸⁹ Günter Grau und Claudia Schoppmann eds., *Homosexualität in der NS-Zeit: Dokumente einer Diskriminierung und Verfolgung* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer-Taschenbuch-Verlag, 1993): 31. Quoted in: Hans-Georg Stümke and Rudi Finkler, *Rosa Winkel, Rose Listen: Homosexuelle und „Gesundes Volksempfinden“ von Auschwitz bis heute* (Hamburg: Reinbek, 1981): 96.

⁶⁹⁰ Quoted in: James Steakley, *The Homosexual Emancipation Movement in Germany* (New York: Arno Press, 1975): 84, and Laurie Marhoefer, *Sex and the Weimar Republic: German Homosexual Emancipation and the Rise of the Nazis* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006): 152. Steakley’s translation.

sexual politics. The party response then continues this idea by maintaining that “[a]nyone who even thinks of homosexual love is our enemy. We reject anything that emasculates our people and makes it a plaything for our people....” The leaders of the emancipation movement may have hoped that their embrace of bourgeois ideals shield them from persecution, but Nazi morality distained effeminacy, indeed as the homosexual emancipation leaders often did, but as a morality centered on groups of people that subsumed Brand, Hirschfeld, and other “respectable” queers. The passage then emphasizes something that would be an innovation to ideas about Carnival by the Nazis, that the promotion of good clean German fun would bolster the strength of the Volk:

Let’s see to it that we once again become the strong! But this we can only do in one way—the German people must once again learn how to exercise discipline. We therefore reject any form of lewdness, especially homosexuality, because it robs us of our last chance to free our people from the bondage that now enslaves it.⁶⁹¹

By the late Weimar years then, one could already see the Nazi commitment to the persecution of homosexuals as well as purported immoral activity in the nation as a bulwark to the strength and survival of the German Volk. Such language of “discipline” and the removal of “lewdness” would dovetail seamlessly with the problems of Weimar Carnival and the party would quickly home in on the political opportunities presented by the holiday.

Two days after the Second Directive was passed the main Nazi press organ, the *Völkischer Beobachter*, published another article, “New Declaration of War of the Berlin Chief of Police: Against Criminality, Against Cultural Bolshevism.” The article made explicit the larger ideological vision of healthy German culture in Berlin in opposition to queer communities and their sites of repute. This vision required the ruthless suppression

⁶⁹¹ Ibid.

of homosexuality and the correspondent “smut” of nightlife institutions and activities at them.⁶⁹² Again to the broad national audiences who saw nightlife in Berlin by the late Weimar years as excessive and immoral—the signs of an unhealthy nation created through the efforts of the *Schieber* and other purportedly immoral groups—such a stance would have likely been popular to a point. The article cited the Berlin police chief Admiral von Levetzow’s conviction that his central duty in Berlin was to “ensure the peace and order, discipline and morals (*Zucht und Sitte*) in the capital city of the Reich” – this was necessary, “because it conforms to the sincere/honest will of true Germans.” Von Levetzow was a decorated war veteran who joined the NSDAP in 1931 and was made Berlin chief of police on February 15th 1933. He was jointly responsible for the so-called “protective custody detention center” of Spring of 1933 and took part in the synchronization of the police force and the Gestapo in Berlin as well as the purging of republicans from the Interior Ministry.⁶⁹³ In his conviction that nobody would stand in his way of combatting immorality and creating true German health and morality in Berlin, von Levetzow promised that he would not “tolerate” any “inflammatory/seditious and subversive elements of the national government” and maintained that his task was “to fight against the enemies of the state.”⁶⁹⁴ The chief of police became more explicit then about what this all meant for Berlin when he maintained that the “cleansing” (*Säuberung*)

⁶⁹² “Neue Kampfansage des Berliner Polizeipräsidenten: Gegen Verbrechertum! Gegen Kulturbolschewismus!”, in the Berliner Beobachter section, *Völkischer Beobachter*, No. 56, 25 February 1933. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

⁶⁹³ Klaus Drobisch, Günther Wieland eds., *System der NS-Konzentrationslager: 1933-1939* (Berlin: Akad.-Verl., 1993): 43. Stefan Malinowski, *Vom König zum Führer: Deutscher Adel und Nationalsozialismus* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2004): 512.

⁶⁹⁴ “Neue Kampfansage des Berliner Polizeipräsidenten: Gegen Verbrechertum! Gegen Kulturbolschewismus!”, in the Berliner Beobachter section, *Völkischer Beobachter*, No. 56, 25 February 1933. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

of Berlin meant the suppression of “known destructive and corrosive cultural Bolshevism.” To be exact, the Berlin police chief continued, “I’m thinking thereby of the smut in theaters, cabarets, naked performances, at which prostitution and homosexuality and that sort of thing [took place].”⁶⁹⁵ Then invoking many of the common tropes of Carnival rhetoric over the Weimar years, von Levetzow cited the necessity of such action, against “excesses” of “criminality,” for the protection of children and most of all “for Germany!”⁶⁹⁶ Articles in the National Socialist press thus made clear even early on that the party aimed to realize a particular vision of health in German culture and that this would require the ruthless purging of Berlin’s queer communities and their institutions and practices alongside those of other groups. In this aim their efforts were highly effective, as by 1934 effectively all traces of the rich public life of Berlin’s queer subcultures had all but vanished.

At the same time, the Nazi press also bore a striking difference from other conservative nationalist groups of the Weimar era as indeed broad audiences across the country by displaying a seeming indifference to the problems of Carnival. During the late Weimar years and during 1933, the party press documented the holiday of Carnival in Germany as a mere uncontroversial fact of life, a celebrated form of German culture and a welcome departure from the worries of the everyday in the service of happiness for German people. Already before the establishment of the Third Reich, the Nazi press presaged the centrality of the holiday to what would become the “Strength through Joy” (*Kraft durch Freude*) movement, the state program to deliver leisure and wellness to all members of the Volk. In March of 1930 for instance the Bavarian edition of the

⁶⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁶ Ibid.

Völkischer Beobachter printed jolly reports “from Munich Carnival” bearing exactly the sorts of titles for events for which both queer and Cologne Carnival events were criticized: “Carnival (*Fasching*) Parade in the Zoo;” “Venetian Night on Rose Monday;” “The Luckiest Boat;” and “Student Ball.”⁶⁹⁷ In the issue from the following day as well, the paper printed similarly light and positive articles about the history of Carnival, including “The Baker Carnival (*Fastnacht*) of Ryssel” and “The Carnival (*Fastnacht*) Processions in the Guilds of Old Nuremberg.”⁶⁹⁸ The former even linked the history of Carnival to traditions within one of Germany’s enemies during the Weimar years, as it took up traditions in a French village outside of Paris. National bodies were less significant than delineating Germanic peoples. Again taking up the subject of arguably the most controversial events of Carnival in Germany – the masquerade balls – the paper also printed an article on “Historical Masquerade Balls.” In stark contrast to the rest of the paper’s general severe tone, the article recounted in lurid detail, with a pronounced lightheartedness, stories of “Masks in Flames,” “A King Murdered at the Ball,” and “Cholera as Mask.”⁶⁹⁹ The same issue likewise took up the topic of “Folk Festivals in

⁶⁹⁷ “Von Münchner Karneval,” *Völkischer Beobachter*, Bayrische Ausgabe, No. 50, 1. March 1930, within the Münchener Beobachter. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

⁶⁹⁸ “Die Bäckerfastnacht von Ryssel,” *Völkischer Beobachter*, Bayrische Ausgabe, No. 51, 2/3 March 1930, within the Beiblatt des Völkischer Beobachter. Zeitungsabteilung. “Die Fastnachtszüge der Zünfte im alten Nuernberg,” *Völkischer Beobachter*, Bayrische Ausgabe, No. 51, 2.-3. March 1930, within the Beiblatt des Völkischer Beobachter. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

⁶⁹⁹ “Historische Maskenbälle,” *Völkischer Beobachter*, Bayrische Ausgabe, No. 51, 2/3 March 1930, within the Beiblatt des Völkischer Beobachter. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

Bavaria” in yet another article in that issue.⁷⁰⁰ At a time when most of the national presses were silent on the topic of the controversial holiday, and in the middle of another economic crisis in Germany that initiated the renewal of the holiday’s national prohibition once more, the Nazi press did not hesitate to detail the exciting facets of both contemporary and historical Carnival. Reports about Carnival constituted a singular ebullience and optimism about German people thriving against a backdrop of scathing political commentary that absolutely extended to other forms of leisure and culture perceived as immoral and degenerate.

In the context of the renewed national Carnival ban, the press also celebrated how enjoyable it was in Munich in early 1932 that the population could enjoy a “Chocolate Ball” as part of winter aid to the ailing German populace because the “police-blocked festivities of Carnival (*Fasching*)” will make such happenings a “rarity” this year.⁷⁰¹ In the tradition then of using the prohibition as a means of delegitimizing an existing regime, such language painted the Weimar government as repressive of healthy German cheer. This marked another stark contrast, as the economic crisis following the war precluded the possibility of such an event as a “bitter scorn” on the suffering of those in need. The article set up the party’s opposition to the Berlin-based police action, a reference to the reviled Prussian-based government frequently labeled as Marxist or Bolshevik in nature, as well as the party’s pro-Carnival stance. Despite the obvious knowledge of the ban on Carnival, the article celebrated how the organizers, who used

⁷⁰⁰ “Volksfeste in Bayern,” *Völkischer Beobachter*, Bayrische Ausgabe, No. 51, 2/3 March 1930, within the Beiblatt des Völkischer Beobachter. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

⁷⁰¹ ““Trumpf”-Schoko-Ball zugunsten bei Münchner Winterhilfe,” *Völkischer Beobachter*, Bayrische Ausgabe, within the “Aus der Landeshauptstadt” section, No. 19, 19 January 1932. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

the pretense of “winter aid” to organize the ball, “had rather also done everything, in order to fashion the ball to the high points of Munich Carnival (*Fasching*).” This was exactly the sort of thing that the officials in the Weimar government in Berlin had attempted to legislate against. Two small points in the article also presaged what the Nazi politics of Carnival would be about. First, the article’s author referenced how those in attendance lamented the breakup of their “place of joyful activity,” and secondly recounted how everybody in attendance heeded advice to eat “German, eat German chocolate!” Carnival during the Third Reich would protect the notion of necessary merriment as a necessary right of German people—harkening back to invented heritage notions of the holiday from the nineteenth century, and siding with the stance of some pro-Carnival protestors in the Rhineland—while insisting on pulling out and emphasizing the inherently *German* elements of the holiday. In short, Carnival would make a powerful unofficial propaganda tool for the Nazi state.

The Berlin edition of the paper, which the party first published in 1933, likewise printed articles and even advertisements for German Carnival, a striking admission of the presence of Carnival in Berlin as well as a continued lack of reference to its purported controversial nature. For instance, an advertisement for a venue in Berlin listed the entire “great February program” as “Carnival” at the Reichshallen Theater despite the federal prohibition on Carnival for the nation.⁷⁰² In January 1933 then the Nazi press printed an article on “Peculiar Carnival (*Fastnacht*) Customs,” a reproduced “cultural historical chat” by a Rudolf Wagner on the specific rituals of different regional Carnivals from

⁷⁰² Advertisement, *Völkischer Beobachter*, Berliner Ausgabe, No. 59, 28 February 1933. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

different cities.⁷⁰³ By detailing the specific “peculiarities” of Carnival across cities and regions, including many places where Carnival wasn’t especially famous—South and West Germany, Brussels, Strasburg, Leipzig, Nuremberg, Munich, Frankfurt am Main, the Black Forest, and Hessen—the article pointed to a sort of pan-German diversity with Germanic peoples stripped of foreign influence or national affinity that nevertheless put diversity within German people on display. Post-1871 nationalist projects folded German diversity broadly conceived into a broader national imaginary in order to reconcile the distinct regional differences of Germany’s confederated states.⁷⁰⁴ What Carnival points too is how the National Socialist approach to German nationalism succeeded at this project, by integrating Germanic diversity into its ideological project, whereas the Weimar Republic by contrast struggled tremendously, failing to assimilate constant regional tension and general social fragmentation. Could such a maneuver successfully bolster a notion of the German “race” and also achieve the replacing of the foreign “exoticism” within Weimar leisure forms with a “safer” and “healthier” German exoticism? Especially surprising then were advertisements in the Berlin edition for exotic Carnival masquerade balls alongside other advertisements for Carnival masquerades. The 28 February 1933 issue of the Berlin edition of the paper included an advertisement for a “Carnival in Tunisia,” which featured an image of what looked like a military man in uniform alongside a veiled Tunisian woman in hijab.⁷⁰⁵ The advertisement promised that

⁷⁰³ “Eigenartige Fastnachtsbräuche,” *Völkischer Beobachter*, Berliner Ausgabe, No. 10, 10 January 1933. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

⁷⁰⁴ Alon Confino, *The Nation as a Local Metaphor: Württemberg, Imperial Germany, and National Memory, 1871-1918* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

⁷⁰⁵ Advertisement “Karneval in Tunis,” *Völkischer Beobachter*, Berliner Ausgabe, No. 59, 28 February 1933. Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

both “Zaida sings!” as well as the presence of “Charly and his funny Scots.” Perhaps the situating of immorality in groups of people instead of Carnival as a moral issue in general would mean some allowance for exoticist play; but Nazis would encourage cultural play within the pantheon of perceived Germanic cultures. Such a notion of pan-German diversity in lieu of the exoticism of earlier Carnival theatrics will be taken up in greater detail below.

During the late Weimar years up to the Nazi seizure of power in 1933, NSDAP literature displayed a consistent set of anti-homosexual and pro-Carnival discourses, narratives that were then carried into the policy choices of the Third Reich from 1933 onward. The rapid clampdown on the queer Carnival scene in Berlin took place immediately, as discussed above, connected to notions of a degenerate element of humanity that posed significant dangers to German health and German youth. The suppression of Berlin’s queer subcultures was immediately possible due to Göring’s assumption of the Prussian Interior Minister position already in January 1933, the position that had overseen the shaping of laws against Carnival in addition to those to combat immoral forms of leisure and literature throughout the Weimar years. The permission for Carnival across Germany would then be easy to assure, but the active shaping of Carnival took greater efforts, in the form of both a new Nazi institutional culture around Carnival and a corresponding active ideological socialization. The next sections then will take up this history of Carnival during the Third Reich, first taking up the new Carnival discourses forwarded by National Socialism, before turning to the ways the state used Carnival to shape and express an ideal Nazi community.

III. Carnival in the Third Reich: Associational Culture and New Carnival Discourses



Image 2. Joseph Goebbels (right), “Fasching in München,” 1934. Herbig Verlag/Archiv Marcus Leifeld.

With the rise of the Third Reich in Germany several decisive changes to Carnival culture and Carnival discourses also took place. Most basically, after the renewed national Carnival prohibitions of 1930 to 1932 due to the economic collapse, early 1933

saw the return of full public Carnival celebrations across the country. In 1933, while influenced by contemporary events, these festivities were not directly shaped by Nazi intervention, which for Carnival festivities began in proper the following year. After all, while Carnival celebrations in 1933 technically occurred during the Nazi assumption of power—Carnival Tuesday that year was February 28th—the orchestration of large-scale public Carnival festivities was months in the making. In the case of Cologne, this first full public Carnival since before the war occurred without Nazi organization but was rather financed through the efforts of Cologne’s mayor, Conrad Adenauer. A prominent Cologne leader and Center politician since before the war who would become the first Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, Adenauer would be relieved of his post on April 4th, the beginning of his targeting by the Nazis for over a decade. From 1934 onward the party continued to show great interest in the holiday, seeking to de-center members of the local elite and old guard of Carnival by subsuming them under the influence of the Strength through Joy movement.⁷⁰⁶ Unsurprisingly, early NSDAP

⁷⁰⁶ Any discussion of the delivered socialism of the Third Reich intersects with debates in scholarship over the nature of consent among the German populace at that time. As opposed to sweeping claims about broad culpability and consent, much extant scholarship suggests, as the history of Carnival does, that the Third Reich was characterized by multiples positionalities simultaneously, including average Germans as resisters, perpetrators, by-standers, and victims. See for instance Ian Kershaw, *The “Hitler Myth:: Image and Reality in the Third Reich* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987). Robert Gellately, *Backing Hitler: Consent and Coercion in Nazi Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). Shelley Baranowski, *Strength Through Joy: Consumerism and Mass Tourism in the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). Martin Broszat, *The Hitler State: the Foundation and Development of the Internal Structure of the Third Reich* (London: Londman, 1981). Thomas Childers, *The Nazi Voter: the Social Foundations of Fascism in Germany, 1919-1933* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983). Thomas Childers, *The Nazi Party: a Social Profile of Members and Leaders, 1919-1945* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983). Raul Hilberg, *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders: the Jewish Catastrophe, 1933-1945* (New York: Aaron Asher Books, 1992).

members who were part of the Cologne Carnival elite, like Thomas Liessem who had been a party member since 1931, took on important leadership roles in the Carnival institutional elite during the Nazi years. This was even as postwar scholarship especially out of Cologne's Carnival circles frequently depict Liessem as a figure who's hand was forced.⁷⁰⁷ Furthermore, antisemitic actions within Cologne Carnival institutions that had begun during the Weimar years were extended before official party intervention. Many Carnival societies and clubs ousted their Jewish members if they hadn't already barred the option of their membership entirely by the mid-1920, as was the case with some Cologne Carnival societies. In still others, Jews had only been permitted the granting of "inactive membership" during the Weimar years.⁷⁰⁸ These changes to the holiday also carried with them the introduction of new discourses and ways of speaking about the holiday even just before the Nazi assumption of power.

In the postwar period a popular narrative of the so-called "Narren revolution" in Cologne spread, of Carnival revelers resisting the Nazi injection of ideology within the holiday in 1935. The narrative of the *Narrenrevolution* reproduced especially by German Carnivalists and early postwar German historians of Carnival suggests a brief attempt at resistance by Carnivalists that was foiled by the insurmountable power and influence of the Nazi party. While only somewhat persuasive, the *Narrenrevolution* is part of a broader literature that seeks to identify forms of resistance or opposition, the nature of

⁷⁰⁷ See for instance: Joseph Klersch, *Die kölnische Fastnacht von ihren Anfaengen bis zur Gegenwart* (Köln: Bachem, 1961). Carl Dietmar and Marcus Leifeld, *Alaaf und Heil Hitler: Karneval im Dritten Reich* (Munich: Herbig, 2010).

⁷⁰⁸ Carl Dietmar and Marcus Leifeld, *Alaaf und Heil Hitler: Karneval im Dritten Reich* (Munich: Herbig, 2010): 41.

support for the regime, and the fabric of intentionality.⁷⁰⁹ Yet, at the very least some discourse about Carnival from 1933, before any Nazi direct intervention with Carnival took place, pointed to the welcoming of Nazi ideology that could be seen expressed within Carnival discourse. Some of the pro-Carnival supporters in the Rhineland had been exactly those groups who also expressed antisemitic attacks and criticisms about the growing mass commercialization of the holiday in its modern form. They also railed against the “immoral excesses” and “jazzy Carnivals” seen at Carnival in Berlin. Such discourses in early 1933 do not necessarily mean that all the Carnivalists were staunch supporters of all Nazi policies throughout the Third Reich. The Nazi stance on Carnival overlapped with some interests of pro-Carnivalists expressed during the Weimar years. A 1 March 1933 article in the *Westdeutschen Beobachter* for instance described Cologne’s Rose Monday parade as such, driving home the alignment of many mainstream Carnivalists with Nazi ideology by early 1933:

The parade had nothing improvised, foreign to the Volk (*Volkfremdes*), as was the case in the years after the war under the manifold influences of the liberal-Marxist currents. No flamboyant jewelry, no dishonest/phony (*verlogen*) pageantry, rather unspoiled/elemental (*urwüchsig*) humor, folksy (*volkstümlich*) in representation, it fit rather entirely naturally in the framework of a folks festival. [...] The Cologne Carnival was again a true folk Carnival (*Volkskarneval*) and [entailed] no mass

⁷⁰⁹ See among others, Klemens Von Klemperer, *German Resistance Against Hitler: the Search for Allies Abroad, 1938-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994). Hans Mommsen, *Germans Against Hitler: the Stauffenberg Plot and Resistance under the Third Reich* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2009). Hans Mommsen, *Alternatives to Hitler: German Resistance Under the Third Reich* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2003). Michael Geyer and John Boyer eds., *Resistance Against the Third Reich, 1933-1990* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1994). Peter Steinbach, *Widerstand im Widerstreit: der Widerstand gegen den Nationalsozialismus in der Erinnerung der Deutschen: Ausgewählte Studien* (Paderborn: F. Schöningh, 2001). Detlev Peukert, *Inside Nazi Germany: Conformity, Opposition, and Racism in Everyday Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987). Ian Kershaw, *Popular Opinion and Political Dissent in the Third Reich, Bavaria 1933-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983).

production, no ready-made ware from the Jewish emporium.⁷¹⁰

Broad audiences across the country had clearly expressed many of these ideas about what was desired in a revived Carnival: anti-commercial, anti-materialistic, and antisemitic sentiment; the lament of foreign influence in the holiday that made it less German or folk-like; and the “spoiling” of the traditional holiday by unclean fun. While some of these arguments were made more implicitly by Carnival’s critics during the nationalization of Carnival discourse during the Weimar years, they were now out in the open and made quite explicit in the Nazi years. 1933 saw the emergence of the popular antisemitic Carnival song “The Jews Emigrate” (in Cologne dialect, *Die Jüdde wandern uss*).⁷¹¹ Such ideology is explicitly seen in bigoted and antisemitic displays at Carnival in Cologne as across the country discussed in the next section, as indeed through specific changes seen in Rose Monday parades at Carnival during the Third Reich.

Whereas during the Weimar years and in the national crisis of Carnival much of the press fell silent on the question of Carnival, the Nazi rise ushered in the return of pro-Carnival discourses in the public sphere, the recovery of Carnival legitimacy and morality through National Socialism. One focus of writing was on not just Carnival’s history in the nineteenth century, as had been the case before the war, when the holiday became institutionalized and significantly broadened and commercialized through initiatives of urbanization, modernization, and new nationalisms in Germany from 1823 on. Rather articles about the history of Carnival during the Third Reich reflected notions

⁷¹⁰ *Westdeutschen Beobachter*, 1. March 1933. Quoted in: Jürgen Meyer, “Organisierter Karneval und >>Narrenrevolte<< im Nationalsozialismus. Anmerkungen zu Schein und Sein im Kölner Karneval 1933-193,” *Geschichte in Köln* 42 (Dec 1997), 69-86: 73.

⁷¹¹ Carl Dietmar and Marcus Leifeld, *Alaaf und Heil Hitler: Karneval im Dritten Reich* (Munich: Herbig, 2010): 41.

of Germanness that transcended the boundaries of the modern German nation-state. Regional nationalists of the nineteenth century had invented the idea of Rhenish Carnival as ancient and eternal, but National Socialism catapulted such ideas to broad national popularity; moreover, Carnival would unite not a city, a region, or even the nation, but all of Germanic peoples. Articles on Carnival during the Third Reich located the roots of Carnival in ancient, medieval, and early-modern times, within the customs of Germanic peoples broadly conceived. Clearly such an approach was an expression of Nazi racial ideology, which celebrated the primacy and strength of a German race as opposed to specifically Cologne, the Rhineland, or even the German nation. From the early Nazi years then articles and printed lectures on the old history and roots of Carnival were published in many newspapers with such titles as “The Peasant Origin of Our Carnival (*Fastnacht*).”⁷¹² Other articles took up the historical “origins” of the Triumvirate (*Dreigestirn*) figures central to Cologne Carnival like in the article “The Peasant/Farmer (*Bauer*) and the Virgin (*Jungfrau*)” already in November 1932 ahead of the first Carnivals of the Third Reich.⁷¹³ Another article from early 1933 spoke of “Rhenish Carnival (*Fastnacht*) in Germany,” making a new shift to analysis of a “German” Carnival in opposition to the specifically local and regional specificities of each festival that was a persistent marker of each Carnival’s expression of local pride since the early nineteenth century.⁷¹⁴ Yet another article in 1934 homed in on how Carnival came to

⁷¹² Dr. Friedrich Rehm, “Die bäuerliche Ursprung unserer Fastnacht,” 17 February 1938. Series NS/5/VI, Archivsignatur 19287, Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde.

⁷¹³ “Kölnischer Bauer und Kölnische Jungfrau: Eine Plauderei über ihre Herkunft,” *Stadtanzeiger*, Nr 604, 27 November 1932. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

⁷¹⁴ Dr. Philipp Huppert, “Rheinische Fastnacht,” *Kölnische Volkszeitung*, Nr 40, 9 February 1933. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

Cologne from “Germanic as from Roman antiquity” in an historical treatment of “Christendom and Carnival (*Fasching*).”⁷¹⁵ Although in previous years the holiday had been referred to as “folksy,” the Nazi years also ushered in the new language of a “Carnival of the Volk” as well. Multiple articles from the *Westdeutschen Beobachter* made reference to this so-called *Volkskarneval*.⁷¹⁶ Still others reflected this shift toward Nazi ideology in language about Carnival by speaking of the holiday as a “German folk custom” (*Volksbrauch*).⁷¹⁷ Such language then already pointed to a new national Carnival of Germanic peoples during the Third Reich. The expression of Nazi ideology through Carnival was also purposefully shaped through the efforts of the party itself, seen most clearly through the efforts and publications of organs of the Strength through Joy movement.

The National Socialist Community Organization “Strength through Joy” (*NS-Gemeinschaft* “*Kraft durch Freude*,” NSG KdF) sought constant coalition with and influence over Carnivals across Germany throughout the years leading up to the war. By 1937 most German Carnivals were organized through a new “Vereinbarung” between the old guard of Carnival—the Carnival societies and organizations of the old local Carnival

⁷¹⁵ “Blick in die Geschichte des Karnevals. Christentum und Fasching—Die älteste Dokument über den Karneval in Westen des Reiches,” *Westdeutschen Beobachter*, Nr. 33, 26 January 1934. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

⁷¹⁶ “Volkskarneval,” *Westdeutschen Beobachter*, Nr. 242, 27 May 1935. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969. *Westdeutschen Beobachter*, 1. March 1933. Quoted in: Jürgen Meyer, “Organisierter Karneval und >>Narrenrevolte<< im Nationalsozialismus. Anmerkungen zu Schein und Sein im Kölner Karneval 1933-193,” *Geschichte in Köln* 42 (Dec 1997), 69-86: 73.

⁷¹⁷ “Rheinische Fastnacht – ein deutscher Volksbrauch. Die Reichsuraufführung einer echt kölschen Fastelovend-Kulturfilms am Sonntag in Köln,” *Stadtanzeiger*, Nr. 584, 16 November 1936. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

elite—and the Strength through Joy organization.⁷¹⁸ In the case of Cologne, an article about the founding of a new Carnival club (*Verein*) to oversee the organization of Carnival, its “controlled economy” (*Planwirtschaft*), and the purging of specific qualities like mass commercialization, became the official announcement of Nazi control of Cologne Carnival in 1935.⁷¹⁹ Indeed economic problems constituted a major vehicle for national Carnival debate and policies about Carnival at every level of government. Many historians have argued that National Socialism was so popular because it was good for the economy, at least during the early Nazi era until around 1936.⁷²⁰ Stimulus of the economy through the revival of Carnival constituted another arm of this economic recovery. The local discomfort with and critical response to such a plan, and resulting shifts in approach by the NSG KdF, formed the basis for the story of the “Narren revolution” in Cologne.⁷²¹ Nevertheless, party influence in Carnival was arguably greatest and most successful in Cologne. The NSDAP achieved this through the NSG

⁷¹⁸ Such an agreement is seen referenced in primary and secondary sources alike. See reference to it in the case of Düsseldorf in: “Karneval in Düsseldorf mi KdF,” *Die Deutsche Arbeitsfront N.S.-Gemeinschaft Kraft durch Freude GAU Düsseldorf*, No 1, January 1937: 19. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin Preussischer Kulturbesitz. See reference to it in the case of Cologne in: Joseph Klersch, *Die kölnische Fastnacht von ihren Anfaengen bis zur Gegenwart* (Köln: Bachem, 1961): 177-185.

⁷¹⁹ “Planwirtschaft im Fastelovend. Beigeordneter Ebel: Absolute Liquidation des Geschäftskarnevals—Der Verein Kölner Karneval und seine Aufgaben,” *Stadt-Anzeiger*, 24 May 1935.

⁷²⁰ For broader considerations of the Nazi economy, see among others Adam Tooze, *The Wages of Destruction: the Making and Breaking of the Nazi Economy* (New York: Viking, 2006). R. J. Overy, *The Nazi Economic Recovery, 1932-1938* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). Avraham Barkai, *Nazi Economics: Ideology, Theory, and Policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990). Götz Alz and Susanne Heim, *Architects of Annihilation: Auschwitz and the Logic of Destruction* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2002).

⁷²¹ See the articulation of main points of criticisms on the part of the local Cologne Carnival elite for instance in: “Die Karnevalisten antworten. Stellungnahme zur ‘Planwirtschaft im Fastelovend’,” *Stadtanzeiger*, Nr. 266, 27 May 1935. Digitale Kölner Sammlung von Zeitungsausschnitten 1840-1969.

KdF as well as control via Cologne's Nazi-controlled tourist office, which absorbed the traditional Carnival festival committee headed by Liessem, founded the Great Council of Cologne Carnival (*Großer Rat des Kölner Karnevals*), and attempted to then subsume all the other Carnival elite groups under the influence of the club (*Verein*) founded in 1935.⁷²² Importantly, while Carnival organizations ousted their Jewish members and prohibited Jewish membership, the Carnival societies otherwise maintained their historical institutional structure as well as personnel continuity, although those Carnivalists who had supported the NSDAP even before 1933 had an especially successful tenure within the Carnival organizations now working closely with those of the Nazi KdF. Nazi officials seemed to understand the major foundational of Cologne Carnival and what had guaranteed the holiday's success in the years leading up to the war: financial steering; top-down shaping by elite societies; municipal stimulus; and investments in tourism. Though many Rhenish Carnivalists were uncomfortable with another state imposing control over their "hometown" holiday, most traded some interventions just to have their long-absent cherished tradition revived to its prewar splendor.

Through such influence the party enacted specific changes to the holiday's previous local and historical traditions. By looking at the published literature of the organization and the messages generated by it during this period, one sees the specific uses of Carnival and Nazi discourses added to the holiday to specific ideological ends. On the most basic level, Carnival was an important part of the purported socialism of the

⁷²² Historians of Carnival during the Third Reich Carl Dietmar and Marcus Leifeld refer to this process in Cologne as an attempted "synchronization" (*Gleichschaltung*). Carl Dietmar and Marcus Leifeld, *Alaaf und Heil Hitler: Karneval im Dritten Reich* (Munich: Herbig, 2010): 55.

NSDAP which sought to finally bring wellbeing to all members of the Volk after decades of tumult and suffering. The Strength through Joy movement of the party, which worked to build up German health and wellbeing through investments in sport, vacation options, and other leisure activities, clearly saw in regional German Carnivals a unique political opportunity to deliver on joy while achieving political ends. Since joy became politicized as a result of the war, and the joy at Carnival became highly contested and controversial during the Weimar years, the recovery of “clean” and “healthy” German joy—that joy and fun described before the war as “harmless”—marked a critical shift from the previous era. In the Rhineland in particular, where the hallmarks of local Carnival included the Rhenish sense of humor and the warmth, Carnival presented a especially fruitful opportunity for the expression of Nazi ideology and a unique opportunity to assuage deep social tensions that had become exacerbated under the republic. The Carnival message of generosity too, of welcoming everybody in the community who attended, suited party approach as well, so long as definitions of the community were clear. Revelers and pro-Carnival audiences in Cologne had seen joy as an “age-old right” of the Rhineland as well as Rhenish children in particular. The movement returned this “right” to German people, albeit with some caveats. This welcomed recovery of joy for Rhenish people came with some purposeful shaping of the holiday by the movement.

Numerous sources from the press organs of the NSG KdF pointed to the Nazi vision of Carnival, namely to promote clean German joy that was healthy for German people, that ultimately would bolster the inherent strength of the Volk. For instance, an article from 1937 about Carnival in Düsseldorf—one of the hearts of Carnival festivity in the Rhineland—expressed that members of the nation (*Volksgenossen*) had the freedom

at Carnival to have what they wanted. This wasn't entirely true though. As the article emphasized, anybody could try on anything from within a specific spectrum of propriety – “Because a true Carnival is a decent (*anständiges*) folk festival.”⁷²³ Again the article invoked the “custom” (*Brauchtum*) of Carnival available for “all members of the nation (*Volksgenossen*),” and promoted the idea that “each can take from the rich wreath of presentations what speaks to her or him best.” After referencing the coordination between the party and the traditional organizers of Carnival in Düsseldorf, the article reiterates that nothing would be lost through such party intervention. Rather, the Carnival at Düsseldorf would still be the “shiny festival” with “the same good taste.” Considering the morals surrounding Carnival festivities in the Rhineland were questioned even before the war, such a statement almost read like a threat. Furthermore, much of the article also reiterates again the notion of Carnival as older than its modern invention from the early nineteenth century, stressing that while Prince Carnival in Düsseldorf would be celebrating his 112th anniversary that year that Carnival customs stretched back to much earlier times. Another article in the following issue stressed the same notion, of “common Carnival pleasures in the large cities, which for many centuries, indeed maybe more than a millennium, [experience] unchanged Carnival activities in certain areas of Germany....”⁷²⁴ In these places the traditional “masks/costumes” which have been involved in the local customs “for centuries” represented “life wisdom, life experience, and the whole creative power of many generations.” The attempt to coordinate Carnivals,

⁷²³ “Karneval in Düsseldorf,” *Die Deutsche Arbeitsfront NS-Gemeinschaft Kraft durch Freude Jahresfahrtbuch 1937 Gau Düsseldorf*, Nr 1, January 1937. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

⁷²⁴ “Unsere Fasenacht,” *Die Deutsche Arbeitsfront NS-Gemeinschaft Kraft durch Freude Jahresfahrtbuch 1937 Gau Düsseldorf*, Nr 2, February 1937. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

as the virtuous expression of ancient wisdom for national gain and to spread them to a national audience as the NSG KdF was attempting to do, was about sharing this ancient wisdom as well as securing the safety of those in attendance—in particular from “life-endangering stupidity” that could be seen at some festivities. Again the purported ancient roots of German people’s customs are emphasized, and the merriment of moral Carnival freedom within reason celebrated.

In most of the articles from the organization, recommendations and highlights leaned toward emphasizing this national tradition of mirth in Carnival that should be shared by all members of the Volk, and often avoided explicit references to purported national enemies. However a circular from the organization to the local authorities across the country more expressly spelled out how to shape Carnival to Nazi ends—a message clearly meant more for influential Nazi officials than for the general public reading the published articles. This circular from 1938, to “all district offices,” in the *Die Deutsche Arbeitsfront*, *NS-Gemeinschaft*, *Kraft durch Freude*, instructed local authorities in detail about what the specific expression of Carnival under Nazism should be. In the instructions the author assimilated the main vision of Carnival in National Socialism: good clean German fun. However, it went on to underscore how Carnival would avoid the mass commercialization of the holiday as well as any “foreign” or “Jewish” aspects of the festivities. It would promote German strength and German humor, importantly without looking like a “party rally” by involving the color brown, swastikas, Nazi uniforms, or other Nazi insignia. Finally, a sort of settlement on the popularity of certain features of earlier Carnivals combined with a vision of unified German peoples, the Nazis also sought to replace the diversity in ethnic or other “immoral” displays at Carnival from

earlier decades with a sort of pan-German diversity that celebrated the diversity within and across specifically Germanic peoples. The more problematic cosmopolitanism of the Weimar era, associated with purported enemies of the Volk, was replaced by the innocuous diversity within and across Germanic peoples and their histories—to save and unite the German Volk.

To begin, in order to organize a good Carnival ball, the authorities needed to know and approve what the band would play. This was critical, “because it is our task to influence the cultural life of the public, and not a thing of the dance band.”⁷²⁵ In short, German songs and dances are to be performed, while purportedly “Jewish” ones are to be avoided. Band repertoires must be submitted to the district offices ahead of time for approval, because “experiences teach us... [that] pieces of Jewish composers repeatedly creep in.” The author goes on to how a Carnival ball’s hall should look, first and foremost not like a party rally, because “Carnival celebrations are no demonstration event of the NSDAP”: no “swastika flags or wall decorations... pictures of the Führer and leading persons, party and state are to be removed.” Although the actual aesthetics of Carnival, including decorations, are highly specific to and traditional within each site, the author instructs district offices about colors as well, recommending the avoidances of cooler hues that “seem cold” in favor of warm colors. Where and how to hang confetti is also discussed. How to promote the event was as well, although in line with the anti-commercial rhetoric surrounding Carnival during the Nazi years, the advertisement itself

⁷²⁵ Die Deutsche Arbeitsfront NS Gemeinschaft Kraft durch Freude, “Rundschreiben Nr. 7/1938, An alle Kreisdienststellen!“, 14 January 1938. Series NS/5/VI, Archivsignatur 19287, Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde.

was deemed unimportant, only to serve as an announcement rather than a piece of modern marketing, since “everyone will come gladly to the Carnival (*Fasching*) ball.”

The last points about how to craft an effective Carnival ball then turn to an innovation in Carnival’s regulation under National Socialism. In the absence of distinct party presence, the event could serve as a powerful propaganda tool for the celebration of German diversity united in blood and soil. Previous masquerade balls both before the war and during the Weimar years involved a considerable breadth of costume and masking choices, often spanning ethnicities, artistic expression, and historical periods. Instead, the features of the Carnival ball under Nazism, including decorations and the repertoire of the band and the dances and symbols, would avoid the immoral pitfalls of these depictions and instead be used to celebrate the diversity within and across Germanic peoples. The “suggestion” of the author was that the event could provide a “funny/jolly KdF tour through Carnival (*Fasching*),” replete with entry cards as if they were train tickets.⁷²⁶ Leaning into harmless Carnival humor has been an effective way to secure the holiday’s morality by elites before the war. Now humor would secure Carnival morality but to specific social ideological ends that celebrated Volk nationalism as a race of people rather than the city and regional nationalism of the Wilhelmine era. The band would begin with a dance, and then through songs and dances travel “to Southern Germany” and then “to Swabia,” after which “the train arrives in Stuttgart” before a long winding travel through the Rhineland, with the trip later visiting Hamburg, Pomerania, Berlin, “Sudeten Germany,” Upper Bavaria, Vienna, Pomerania again, and eventually could devolve into a

⁷²⁶ Die Deutsche Arbeitsfront NS Gemeinschaft Kraft durch Freude, “Rundschreiben Nr. 7/1938, An alle Kreisdienststellen!“, 14 January 1938. Series NS/5/VI, Archivsignatur 19287, Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde.

silly game of going east then west and back east etc. Such a tour had to be funny the author emphasized, critically because “Carnival (*Fasching*) is a festival of laughter and mirth.” To “discard” that part of the holiday was “to scorn something that is holy to the Germans and to the peasants/farmers (*Landmann*).” To alienate revelers in this way would both compromise the influence of the party but also speak to a lack of health on the part of the organizer. The circular ends just with the insistence to “always stay a whole man who can take the mickey out of himself.”

This suggestion on the part of the author reflected broader trends within Nazi discourses about Carnival though, obviously at odds with the history of the local Carnivals themselves. Nazi discourses celebrated all the Carnivals across Germany, even facilitating both visits to large Carnival festivities from other cities. See for instance the NSG KdF’s enthusiastic announcement of its trip to Düsseldorf Carnival festivities for Berliners because “[i]t is necessary to prove to the Rhinelanders, that the Berliners can also celebrate Carnival.”⁷²⁷ Party policy also aimed to naturalize one traditional Carnival within another city with its own rich tradition. The NSG KdF organized a Rhenish Carnival in Berlin for instance in 1935. An issue of the Berlin edition of an NSG KdF publication detailed their organization of a large-scale Rhenish Carnival festivities for the whole month of February in Berlin under the cooperation of Reich Club of German Artistry (*Reichsverband der deutschen Artistik*) and the “Club of Rhinelanders in Berlin” (*Verein der Rheinländer zu Berlin*), the latter likely the founded organization of the NSG

⁷²⁷ “Fahrt nach Düsseldorf zum Rheinischen Karneval,” Kraft durch Freude Programm-Mitteilungen Gau Gross-Berlin, Nr 3, 1 March 1935. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin Preussischer Kulturbesitz.

KdF.⁷²⁸ The organization also spearheaded a Cologne Munich Carnival organization so that Munich Carnival would be introduced into and celebrated locally in Cologne. In this way the party attempted to diminish the lines of distinction between local variations in the holiday that were the source of great pride as well as animosity. The party thus attempted to unite the Volk through healthy and safe celebrations of German Carnivals—including those by Germanic peoples outside of Germany like in Saarbrücken, Sudetenland, and Austria—at the same time that efforts were made to diminish dissonance between those groups to mixed ends. After all, differences between Carnivals informed prewar civic pride and identity; it was no small thing to call all Carnivals the same. The Munich Carnival in Cologne was purportedly not especially successful and residents in Cologne had reactions ranging from perplexed to angry. Nevertheless, while Carnival became a national debate during the Weimar years through the nationalization of discourse about it, it stayed a national holiday during the Third Reich as an ideological tool for the production of a strong, united, healthy German Volk. While this section took up new structures within and meanings of Carnival added by the Nazis, the following section turns to new displays at Carnival, namely against the Volk's purported enemies. It analyzes then the realization of Nazi ideology through Carnival rituals before the Second World War.

IV. Enemies of the Volk: Repudiation and the Janus Face of Joy

⁷²⁸ See "'Rheinische Abende': Große karnevalistische Sitzungen" and "'Großes Rheinisches Karnevalstreiben'" in: Kraft durch Freude Programm-Mitteilungen Gau Gross-Berlin, Nr 2, 1 February 1935. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin Preussischer Kulturbesitz.

Carnival in Cologne, both to the Carnivalists themselves and to the Nazis, also became a means of repudiating the perceived burdens and problems of Weimar and even Wilhelmine eras. This occurred by means of select changes to the holiday's rituals, meanings reflected in respective Carnival discourses during the Third Reich. The specific changes seen in Carnival combatted the most popular "problems" of the holiday in Cologne, including the excessive immoral and commercial nature of the holiday's modern form and the presence of questionable scapegoated groups of the Weimar years, foremost among them, the black colonial troops used to occupy the Rhineland, Jews, homosexuals, and Marxists. The cherished "freedom" at Carnival to create an alternative world—in the Cologne case modeled after romantic notions of the German *Kaiserreich* and structured around myths of ancient German roots—presented a unique site for the creation of an actual world according to Nazi ideology. Postwar accounts of Carnival in Cologne unsurprisingly attempt to highlight any examples of resistance (*Widerstand*) on the part of the local population,⁷²⁹ and yet the overwhelming result was the public embrace of Nazi ideology in the form of a thriving Cologne Carnival between 1933 and 1939. The extent to which Carnivalists were *true* Nazi sympathizers or rather members of the conservative Catholic right that at least vis-à-vis Carnival overlapped significantly with Nazi ideology remains unclear. Carnivalists during the Third Reich may also have been opportunistic Cologne natives happy to trade some changes just to have their holiday back. Still, the Nazi revival of Carnival restored the fame and reputation of the

⁷²⁹ Consider the treatment of Carnival during the Third Reich for instance in the work of Carnival historian and Cologne Carnivalist Joseph Klersch, which underscores the Cologne societies' attempts to challenge Nazi formal control over the holiday's direction and depicts the Nazification of the holiday as local Carnivalists slowly giving into the constant pressure applied by Nazi authorities in Berlin. Joseph Klersch, *Die kölnische Fastnacht von ihren Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* (Köln: Bachem, 1961).

cherished holiday, which after years of bitter suppression was used in select ways to demean certain groups in subtle and nevertheless directed insidious ways. What resulted was a Carnival in Cologne that was arguably the most Nazified in the whole nation.⁷³⁰ This section will home in on these political and ideological changes made to the holiday—specifically those directed against certain groups by “members” of the German nation (*Volksgenossen*)—before it was shut down again upon the outbreak of the Second World War. It analyzes these effects as both therapeutic functions of long-held frustrations of the Carnivalists as well as simultaneous powerful symbolic and socializing mechanisms of Nazi ideology.

The Nazi demonization of homosexuality—and in particular the more problematic and not respectable queer men found in those deemed effeminate—was reflected in the Nazi change to one of the key figures within the sacrosanct Triumvirate of Cologne Carnival. The Triumvirate was made up of three figures usually played by prominent members of the Cologne elite: Prince Carnival, the peasant/farmer (*Bauer*), and the virgin (*Jungfrau*). They constituted the aristocracy of the Carnival world who throughout the festivities presided over the week of events at Carnival in Cologne. Before the war all three figures were played by men. Thus as part of the harmless “jokes” of Rhenish Carnival, the virgin had traditionally been played by a prominent man in Cologne society in drag, a feature of the festivities that the party sought to remove. The party’s sexual politics trumped German custom in this case, as sexual immorality came second to a

⁷³⁰ Other recent scholarship on the Third Reich has focused on the local experiences of Nazification in towns and cities. See for instance, David Michael Imhoof, *Becoming a Nazi Town: Culture and Politics in Göttingen between the World Wars* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013). Andrew Stuart Bergerson, *Ordinary Germans in Extraordinary Times: the Nazi Revolution in Hildesheim* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004).

tradition that had occurred every year for the entire history of organized Carnival in Cologne. As a result of ongoing pressure, in particular by the NSG KdF, the last two Carnivals in Cologne before the war, in 1938 and 1939, featured a *Jungfrau* played instead by a young healthy German woman as the party wished. Similarly, already in 1935 the organizing committee had already been instructed by the NSG KdF that the *Funkenmariechen*, a brigade of soldier corps women also traditionally played by men cross-dressing, always be played by women as well.⁷³¹ Cross-dressing was such a widespread tradition at Cologne Carnival that its presence never entirely vanished, as seen in photographic documentation of Cologne Carnival from these years (See Images 3 and 4).⁷³² Nevertheless, the bias against effeminacy and homosexuality, and the centrality of strong Germans within Nazi conservative gender and sexual politics strongly discouraged it at Carnival. Thus prominent traces of jokes about queer activity, an old traditional feature of play at Carnival, was purposely and significantly diminished at the same time that the Nazis violently pursued and suppressed queer communities throughout the country.

Furthermore, another dramatic change to the canon of Cologne Carnival occurred surrounding the role of women in the holiday's proceedings. Traditionally, the official

⁷³¹ Carl Dietmar and Marcus Leifeld, *Alaaf und Heil Hitler: Karneval im Dritten Reich* (Munich: Herbig, 2010): 145.

⁷³² A brief discussion of cross-dressing at Carnival masquerade events during the Third Reich is likewise taken up in the scholarship of both Cornelia Limpricht and Stefan Micheler. See Cornelia Limpricht, "'Für eine Nacht Seligkeit': Homosexuelle im Kölner Karneval" in Cornelia Limpricht and Jürgen Müller eds., *"Verführte" Männer: das Leben der Kölner Homosexuellen im Dritten Reich* (Cologne: Volksblatt, 1991). Stefan Micheler, *Selbstbilder und Fremdbilder der "Anderen": Eine Geschichte Männer begehrender Männer in der Weimar Republik und der NS-Zeit* (Konstanz: UVK Gesellschaft: 2005): 190.

opening of Carnival week occurred by means of the Women's Carnival
(*Weiberfastnacht*) on Carnival Thursday. Women in Cologne, and in particular the



Image 3. "Szene aus dem Kölner Karneval," 1935. Archiv Gerhard Küpper.



Image 4. “Die Karnevalsgruppe ‘Meldereiter’ feiert Karneval in Köln,” 1934. Archiv Irgei.

market women of the city, would storm the Cologne city hall, ceremoniously enacting the inversion of power characteristic of Carnival’s topsy-turvy world by cutting off the neckties of the men at work there. The market women would then parade through the streets throughout the day in what in the Rhineland was referred to as a “Gecken-Bähnchen,” a term stretching back to the at least the early-modern period to refer to revelers in procession on open streets during Carnival. During this time women would literally leave their children behind or only bring their daughters with them in tow for hours of carousal. The increasing significance of the Women’s Carnival together with the growing involvement of women in Carnival activities around the turn of the century occurred alongside new feminist movements—or at least were seen as part of feminist demands within mocking floats at Cologne Carnival. And the involvement of women as well as children in Carnival festivities continued to be controversial, both before the war and throughout the Weimar years. At Carnival during the Third Reich by contrast, the

conservative gender politics of the regime as well as its homophobic discrimination ushered in a sharp deviation from a tradition of Carnival that had occurred every year within sanctioned public celebrations since at least the early nineteenth century. The women's Carnival that celebrated workingwomen's seizure of power within the Carnival world, and entailed the loud bawdy antics of working-class women throughout the streets, simply went away. Instead, during the years of Carnival during the Third Reich the Carnival was officially opened on the same day but through the raising of the flags of Prince Carnival at the city hall, the figure of the Triumvirate who could most clearly align with a healthy strong Aryan man. After all, of the three figures of the Triumvirate—a healthy German prince, a woman played by a man in drag, and a peasant farmer—Prince Carnival aligned most clearly with Nazi ideology. He thus eclipsed the public presence of virago women in Carnival space, reiterating in turn the commitment to German women's roles as child-bearers who generated the guaranteed wellbeing and health of the future generations of the Volk.⁷³³ The solution was the result of a suggestion from the Cologne festival committee, from the elites who had controlled Carnival's form and fate in the decades leading up to the war.⁷³⁴

The politics surrounding still other national enemies to the Nazis played out in further changes to the Carnival milieu. A group perceived to have caused bitter humiliation of the nation in the Rhineland in particular became a new feature of Cologne

⁷³³ On motherhood and conservative gender politics in the Third Reich see Claudia Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland: Women, the Family, and Nazi Politics* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987). Renate Bridenthal and Atina Grossmann eds., *When Biology Became Destiny: Women in Weimar and Nazi Germany* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1984).

⁷³⁴ Joseph Klersch, *Die kölnische Fastnacht von ihren Anfaengen bis zur Gegenwart* (Köln: Bachem, 1961): 184.

Carnival during the Third Reich: the black colonial troops employed by the French and Belgian forces during their occupation of the Rhineland after the war. The employment of black colonial troops during the tumultuous years after the war had sparked a highly politicized and racialized hysteria in the region about black violence against white Germans, in particular women – what became termed the “Black Shame on the Rhine.” Carnival during National Socialism presented a new opportunity to invert the power dynamic surrounding this humiliating episode in German history through the ridicule of this demographic. Already in 1933, then, the year Carnival took place nationwide without Nazi influence, the Rose Monday parade in Mainz for instance featured the ridiculing of black colonial soldiers through floats featuring German citizens in blackface.⁷³⁵ Another bitter memory in recent German history that was taken up in Carnival floats dealt with the “stealing” of the German colonies by the British and French as an outcome of the war. Numerous floats of Germans in blackface at Carnival depicted the subjects of their former colonies, as was the case in a 1938 Cologne float at the Rose Monday parade. The float seemingly depicted people from the former German Southwest Africa carrying products available in the colonies under the title “Germany’s Colonies in Expectation,” and the motto “and there’s more where that came from” (in Cologne dialect *un mer*

⁷³⁵ See photo from StA Mainz, Bild- und Plansammlung, alphabetische Sammlung: Rosenmontagszug 1933. No 36. “Die neun haben se vergessen...” Flachsmarktstr. Printed in: Iris Wigger, *The ‘Black Horror on the Rhine’: Intersections of Race, Nation, Gender and Class in 1920s Germany* (London: Palgrave, 2017): 11. See also: Joachim Schultz, “Die ‘Utschebebbes’ am Rhein: Zur Darstellung schwarzer Soldaten während der französischen Rheinlandbesetzung (1918-1930),” in Joachim Schulz and János Riesz, eds., *„Tirailleurs sénégalais“: Zur bildlichen und literarischen Darstellung afrikanischer Soldaten im Dienste Frankreichs* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1989): 75-95.

krigge se doch).⁷³⁶ In another 1936 Cologne Carnival float, an apparent reference to the politics surrounding Mussolini's army in East Africa the previous year, locals in blackface like famous Carnival performer Karl Küpper appeared as part of a group of Cologners riding camels in racialized and ethnic caricatures, were meant to be "Correspondents from Abyssinia" (See Images 5 and 6).



Image 5. "Karl Küpper, Berichterstatte aus Abessinien," 1936. Archiv Gerhard Küpper.

⁷³⁶ See photo of the float reprinted in: Carl Dietmar and Marcus Leifeld, *Alaaf und Heil Hitler: Karneval im Dritten Reich* (Munich: Herbig, 2010): 118.



Image 6. "Karl Küpper, Berichterstatter aus Abessinien," 1936. Archiv Gerhard Küpper.

Carnival costumes and Rose Monday processions continued to feature these blackface caricatures, often referred to as the “Negro costume” (*Negerkostüm*) or “Moor head” (*Mohrenkopf*) (See Image 7).



Image 7. “Rosenmontag in Köln,” 1939. Archiv Karl Stuessi.

Both *Neger* and *Mohr* were racist terms in German used variably as a description, insult, or a slur, as Germans paraded the streets in racist caricatures pulled from historical minstrelsy. The *Neger* and *Moor* became central figures at Carnival, which led to the

founding of a Carnival organization expressly for bands of blackface exotic caricatures, the Negro Head Carnival Society (*Karnevalgesellschaft Negerköpp*) in Cologne in 1929.

Still another favorite group to target by the Nazis were communists, Marxists, Soviets, and Bolsheviks. Bias against the Nazi's political enemy during the Weimar years and their purportedly resulting "cultural Bolshevism" became reflected in Carnival displays in Cologne during the Nazi years as well. A float in the Cologne Rose Monday parade in 1938 made clear reference to the Red Army purge of 1937 when it took up the Soviet Union leadership as its target, in a float bearing a warped head of Stalin, a group of caricatures of Soviet men, and a giant statue in the style of Soviet iconography (See Image 8).



Image 8. "‘Staliniade’ im Rosenmontagszug 1938." Picturealliance/dpa/dpa/Oliver Berg.

The statue, which depicted a strong Soviet man and women side-by-side, had both figures with one arm held to the sky, holding up their own decapitated heads. A banner on both

sides of Stalin's head read "The apex of headlessness"—here the "*Kopflosigkeit*" has a literal meaning of not having a head as well as a figurative sense of being in a panic. The float's sign read "Staliniade." An article in the *Kölnische Zeitung* from 1 March 1938 remarked on the float that "[t]he revolutionary forward-bringers from the gable of the Russian house at the Paris World Exhibition carry in their brutal gesture no longer the hammer and sickle in the upward-fisted hands, but rather their own heads."⁷³⁷ Similar imagery could be found in still other Carnival floats that year. Also part of the 1938 parade was a procession of giant "Russian types," double-sized giant figures in Russian ethnic garb again decapitated, who carried their own giant severed heads under their arms (See Image 9).



Image 9. "Russentypen, Kölner Rosenmontagszug," 1938. Archiv Gerhard Küpper.

The favored political persiflage typical at Carnival, which frequently took up Prussian leaders and local German politicians, was now eclipsed by the Volk's true enemies

⁷³⁷ *Kölnische Zeitung*, 1 March 1938. Quoted in: Carl Dietmar and Marcus Leifeld, *Alaaf und Heil Hitler: Karneval im Dritten Reich* (Munich: Herbig, 2010): 121.

according to National Socialism. While Nazi vitriol for homosexuals, blacks, and communists could clearly be seen playing out in the displays of Rose Monday in Cologne during the Nazi years, the most widespread racial demagoguery was reserved for antisemitic displays, constant staples of Carnival from 1933 to 1939.

As was seen in Nazi literature even before 1933 the party reserved its most bitter demagoguery for the Jews, a demonization that likewise came through clearly in Carnival festivities during the Third Reich. Antisemitic floats became a mainstay of the Rose Monday parade in the Third Reich even before the party began actively shaping the festivities. Already in 1934 before the passing of the Nuremberg Laws, the parade, the heart of Cologne Carnival, featured an antisemitic float as part of the its “jokes” and “pranks.” A group of revelers costumed as Hasidic Jews, dressed in kaftans, beards, and payot, with suitcases in hand rode a float that read “the last of them move out” (See Image 10).



Image 10. “Antisemitische Mottowagen aus dem Kölner Rosenmontagszug 1934.” NS-Dokumentationszentrum Köln.

The side of the float featured a roadmap of sorts starting in Cologne and leading to “Liechtenstein” and “Jaffa” (Tel Aviv)—the back of the float read in Cologne Carnival dialect “who makes a little trip to Lichtenstein and Jaffa.” Antisemitic content and wares became popular staples of the Carnival repertoire in Cologne. By 1936 a popular Carnival song heard on the streets took up similar narratives of expelling the Jews from Germany: “Hooray, we will be free from the Jews, the whole kosher gang is moving to the chosen land, we are in fits of laughter and joy, the Itzig and Sara are moving away!” (in *kölsch*: „Hurra, mer wäde die Jüdde los, die ganze koschere Band trick nohm jelobte Land, mir laachen uns for Freud kapott, der Itzig und die Sara trecken fott!“).⁷³⁸ The bourgeois Carnivalist Jean Schmitz in the Cologne Carnival of the same year gave a prominent speech or *Büttenrede* with the title “Interpreter of the Stars” (Sternendeuter); it featured the line “[t]he lousiest star is the star of David.”⁷³⁹



Image 11. “Fußgruppe an Rosenmontag in Köln,” 1938. Archiv Gerhard Küpper.

⁷³⁸ Reproduced in: Carl Dietmar and Marcus Leifeld, *Alaaf und Heil Hitler: Karneval im Dritten Reich* (Munich: Herbig, 2010): 122.

⁷³⁹ Ibid.

Similarly, Carnival revelers in the Cologne Rose Monday parade wore paper noses and other costumes from Jewish stereotypes, as could be seen in 1938 (See Image 11). Public ridicule for Jews was seen elsewhere too, like in one 1939 Carnival (*Fasching*) procession in Villingen-Schwenningen, a small town in Baden-Württemberg, that featured a group of Jewish beggars, the “parade of enrichment-keen Jewish beggars” (*Zug bereicherungswilliger Betteljuden*) (See Image 12). That year too in Schramberg, another small town in Baden-Württemberg, one Carnival organization in its local parade dressed as “squalid dirty Jews with their suitcases [who] move out to the promised land” (*dreckige Juden armselig mit ihren Koffern ins gelobte Land ausziehen*).⁷⁴⁰



Image 12. “Zug bereicherungswilliger Betteljuden in Villingen-Schwenningen,” 1939. Archiv Michael Zimmermann.

Likewise, the Third Reich ushered in a new annual figure at Cologne Carnival, seen at other German Carnivals as well, namely the “Deviserish” or caricature of a

⁷⁴⁰ Michael Zimmermann, “Narren in der Nazi Zeit. Bei der Fasnacht Juden verhöhnt,” *Stuttgarter Zeitung*, 6 February 2012.

foreign Jewish banker that was a constant in Cologne since 1935.⁷⁴¹ Finally during the Cologne Carnival of 1936, one antisemitic float blatantly referenced and celebrated the Nuremberg Laws of the previous year. Float 13 of the Rose Monday parade in Cologne featured the motto, again in Cologne Carnival dialect, “*Däm hab se op d’r Schlipps getrodde*” (*Dem haben sie auf den Schlipps getreten*)—“to them [the laws] have stepped on their neckties” (See Image 13).



Image 13. “‘Däm han se op dr Schlipps getroode,’ Kölner Mottowagen,” 1936. NS-Dokumentationszentrum Köln.

The float itself entailed a thick round circle on which only the German symbol for a paragraph of a piece of legislation was printed, the circle attached to a large pair of black boots. The boots trampled on a long necktie that was attached to the neck of an effigy of a Jewish caricature attached to the end of the float. In yet another year the Rose Monday

⁷⁴¹ Kristin Semmens, *Seeing Hitler’s Germany: Tourism in the Third Reich* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005): 65.

parade in Cologne featured the figure of New York mayor Fiorello La Guardia as a Jew climbing out of a slurry tanker. The depiction reflected the specifically Nazi's version of identity, as La Guardia was a practicing Episcopalian. Such floats were seen in Carnivals across German towns and cities as well. The idea of expelling the Jews from Germany as well as the figure of the Deviserish even came together as in the case of a float at the Marburg Carnival parade of 1936. It featured caricatures of Jewish bankers with signs like "Off to Palastine" (*Auf nach Palästina*) (See Image 14).



Image 14. "Antisemitische Propaganda im Fastnachtsumzug in Marburg," 1936. Archiv Friedrich Unkel, Marbach.

Likewise, the finale of the Carnival parade (*Narrenumzug*) in Nuremberg in 1938 was the float the "Death Mill" (See Image 15). The parade float featured listless bodies hung by their necks from the arms of a life-size mill, one of the arms labeled "Jew" (*Jüd in kölsch*).



Image 15. “‘Todesmühle’ Mottowagen auf dem Umzug in Nürnberg,” 1938. Stadtarchiv Nürnberg.

Finally, the 1939 Carnival procession in the town of Singen am Hohentwiel in Baden-Wuerttemberg featured what looked like a giant alligator or monster with sharp teeth, with a large placard that simply read “the Jew eater” (*Der Judenfresser*, “fressen” in German being a word to denote eating specifically by animals or beasts) (See Image 16). The float, the annual contribution of the local aluminum cylinder factory, featured workers from the factory who fed “Jews,” revelers wearing paper noses, to the beast. The float’s motto read: “grumblers and trouble-makers go under the roller.” The display constituted an especially graphic manifestation of the Nazi commitment to destroy the “Jewish threat,” as fantasies of violence became part of clean German fun.



Image 16. “‘Der Judenfresser,’ Singen am Hohentwiel,” 1939. Stadtarchiv Singen, Archiv der “Poppele”-Zunft.

Thus changes made in the service of “clean German fun” and the targeting of Nazi Germany’s enemies entailed fantasies of repudiation against exactly the groups of people long scapegoated during the Weimar years for the bitter suffering of the German people after the war. The “freedom” at Carnival to enact jokes and ridicule as well as the entire project of the holiday—to create an alternative social and political fantasy world—played out insidious fantasies of a strong German race no longer burdened by the perceived oppression of its purported enemies. Moreover, Carnival during National Socialism entailed a reversal of Weimar Carnival anxieties, as exactly the elements of the holiday that had made it impossible during the Weimar years were purged or became the site of mockery and Carnival content during the Third Reich. Finally, the resultant Carnival world also served as an insidious ideological tool for the socialization of Nazi ideology, something that is even clearer upon consideration of the spectrum of changes

made to the holiday in the service of promoting joy for members of the German nation (*Volksgenossen*). By coupling the above changes to the holiday with a number of new ideas about Carnival introduced by the Nazis, one sees Carnival's unique and highly effective potential not just for therapeutic effects in the context of the experience of society after the war, but also for powerful ideological socialization for the bolstering of the Third Reich.

V. Conclusion

At the Nazi seizure of power in 1933, Berlin resident Harry Graf Kessler described a “carnival atmosphere” amid the streets of Berlin in his diary on January 30, during actual Carnival week that year.⁷⁴² Metaphors between Carnival and its world and the actual German nation were defensible. Some authors like the Nazi-pursued novelist Irmgard Keun, who had actually moved from Cologne to Berlin, even likened Hitler's public appearances to the fanfare surrounding the figure of Prince Carnival. “...[A]nd slowly an auto drove by, within which stood the Führer like Prince Carnival in the Carnival parade.”⁷⁴³ Although the author meant to ridicule Hitler here as offering nothing—he bore none of the candies given out by Prince Carnival at Cologne Carnival—such a metaphor was especially ripe given the actual history of Carnival in Cologne. As this chapter has shown, the revival of Carnival in Cologne as across

⁷⁴² Diary, 30 January 1933, *Tagebücher*, 747. Quoted in: Modris Eksteins, *Rites of Spring: the Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1989): 302.

⁷⁴³ From the Irmgard Keun novel *Nach Mitternacht*, 1937, quoted in Carl Dietmar and Marcus Leifeld, *Alaaf und Heil Hitler: Karneval im Dritten Reich* (Munich: Herbig, 2010): 9.

Germany facilitated the creation of a world in the party image with Hitler the obvious monarch overseeing the Carnival utopia. New discourses about Carnival reflected and shaped Nazi notions of the German race and *Volk*, the institutional development of the holiday through the Strength through Joy that bolstered the strength and wellbeing of members of the German nation (*Volksgenossen*), and the rituals of and displays at the holiday enabled the shaping of a Nazi utopia that “solved” the problems perceived to plague Weimar society. In this way Carnival provided an especially powerful and simultaneously insidious tool for Nazi ideology and the socialization of the nation through the holiday’s restoration before World War II.

Through the directed shaping of Carnival during the Third Reich, the party was able to craft a world of the healthy and strong Germanic Volk according to its specific ideology. To this end the Nazi party followed in the tradition of the last decades of German elites and regimes attempting to contain Carnival by regulating morality at its events. Carnival in the Third Reich was massively successful. But this achievement was the culmination of more than just the application of National Socialist ideology from 1933. On the contrary, these policies toward Carnival were successful because they assimilated historical beliefs about and functions of the holiday from at least the late nineteenth century, that largely went suppressed during the Weimar years, and applied them in ways that assuaged bitter criticisms and broadly-held anxieties about the holiday and German society from at least 1919. Carnival’s revival wasn’t just therapeutic because it entailed the targeting of perceived enemies; it was also therapeutic because it returned Carnival—as that “impeccable” and “folksy” custom of warm and generous people around 1900—to its status as a marker of goodness, civic identity, and pride. It also

brought with it now a sense of collective belonging. The result was nevertheless Carnivalists who targeted homosexuals, Jews, blacks, communists, and emancipated women in exchange.

Conclusion

The onset of the Second World War ushered in renewed cancellations for Cologne Carnival as indeed for Carnivals across Germany. By 1939 this norm—Carnival’s prohibition—had occurred for fifteen of the years since the turn of the century. From 1940 to 1948 there again wouldn’t be a Rose Monday parade in Cologne, the heart of Carnival there, and for similar reasons as already seen in the century: the hardships of wartime followed by difficult postwar years. In 1947 the Cologne city council (*Stadtrat*) distributed an ordinance that prohibited the holiday. It used the same language that rationalized the first as well as many twentieth-century Carnival bans in Cologne and Germany: the “seriousness of the times” (*Ernst der Zeit*). The language of the ordinance likewise raised similar ideas and critiques as had surrounded Carnival’s regulation during and following World War I:

Carnival is since time immemorial a folk festival of the city of Cologne, in which the zest for life of the Cologne population is always manifest. But over Carnival stands the seriousness of the times. In order to preserve the character of a folk festival in Carnival for better days in the future and in order to prevent any type of commercial exploitation, for the year 1947 the organization of organized parades, public masquerade balls, and costume festivals is not allowed.⁷⁴⁴

Again in the postwar period Cologne’s officials took up a language of Carnival as an ancient folkway, a set of customs that put characteristically Rhenish qualities of warmth and gaiety on display—one dominant understanding of Cologne Carnival by the turn of the century. Although even Cologne’s populace and officials had moved away from this idea during and following World War I, Nazi organizations and Carnival societies during

⁷⁴⁴ Ralf Bernd Assenmacher, Michael Euler-Schmidt, and Werner Schäfke, eds. *175 Jahre... und immer wieder Karneval* (Cologne: Bouvier, 1997): 90.

the Third Reich had successfully restored it. Paralleling the language of the *Schieber* and profiteers in Germany that predominated after the First World War the prohibition's language still maintained a similar criticism about capitalist economic activity by unsavory types in its invocations of "commercial exploitation." Carnival's growing commercialization since around the mid-nineteenth century carried this persistent concern over what constituted appropriate economic activity, during times of prosperity as well as calamity. By 1947 there was also this idea that Carnival shouldn't be allowed, so that its true expression—as a folk festival—could be preserved. Carnival's restoration should wait for improvements in the dire conditions in Cologne. This represented an inversion of the views of Rhenish nationalists in Cologne and the Rhineland after the First World War who saw the restoration of Carnival in the difficult years after that war as a necessary act of cultural preservation and regional identity. As opposed to the popular belief during the Weimar period that a celebration of Carnival was a scorn on the suffering of the populace, and that it would stoke social tensions, instead the city council spoke of not tarnishing the cherished holiday tradition. Even this brief statement about Carnival in the postwar era then carried distinct continuities with threads that had woven in and out of Carnival's history and meanings since the nineteenth century. The prohibition pointed to select ruptures as well.

Unlike during the First World War, much of the city—including Cologne Carnival's traditional landmarks—had been destroyed in Allied bombing campaigns during the Second World War, which informed this public call to wait for better times. The following year, in the context of another cancellation of the holiday, some of Cologne's populace embraced select festivities, although not the large sanctioned ones

that were characteristic of the prewar years, the period from 1927 to 1930, and those of the Third Reich before the Second World War. Yet remaining images of these activities show jolly costume-clad Carnival revelers against the backdrop of the rubble of Cologne, what made for a dramatic juxtaposition (See Images 17 and 18).



Image 17. "Kölner Karneval," 1948. Koelner-karneval.info.



Image 18. “Köln Altstadt Nord 1947 im Schnee in der Ritterstraße.” Walter-Dick-Archiv.

Standing amidst the rubble, revelers celebrated Carnival mirth before the imposing profile of the Cologne Dom. The badly damaged historic cathedral now remained a ghastly remnant of Cologne’s once robust city center, around the Severinsviertel and near the Neumarkt that had been the central sites of Carnival’s public festivities since the nineteenth century. The revival of the “folk festival” did come though, and Carnival’s postwar form maintained distinct continuities with as well as ruptures from Carnival’s history up to the Second World War.

When the city permitted the revival of a public sanctioned Carnival in Cologne in 1949, many familiar figures from its recent history maintained their importance into the postwar era. The first Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, Conrad Adenauer, who had served as the mayor of Cologne and saw the city through both World War I and the Weimar era as a devout Catholic and Centrist leader, recognized Carnival mores

within national politics on more than one occasion. As the Rhenish Carnival of the first legislative period was approaching in early 1950, Adenauer insisted on the Rhenish Carnival custom to only carry out affairs between 8 am and the hour of the *Narr*, 11 AM, after which only stand-by service remained for all federal offices in Bonn.⁷⁴⁵ Likewise, in a press conference from 1950 Adenauer recounted a sports match against Belgium, which likely occurred in 1947, at which the band present played, when requested to play the national anthem, the Carnival song “We are the natives from Trizonesia” (“*Wir sind die Eingeborenen von Trizonesien*”), the song mocking the state of affairs in the Trizone now occupied by the French, British, and American powers.⁷⁴⁶ As a result of this talk, the jocular Carnival song took on the role of West German national anthem at a time when there wasn’t one. Adenauer in truth wasn’t a Carnivalist or even especially enthusiastic about Carnival, perhaps because devout Catholics often rejected the indulgences at the holiday’s festivities. But he likely understood well the importance of Carnival mores to people in the Rhineland as well as the holiday’s importance to public life. What resulted in the Rhineland after World War II was the full restoration of the holiday, again highly popular and commercially successful.

Within Carnival’s postwar return in Cologne other figures from its last revival under National Socialism maintained their significance and influence through central leadership roles in the historic and elite Carnival societies and committees. Thomas Liessem, an early supporter of the NSDAP and who organized the Rose Monday parades from 1936 to 1939, went on in the postwar years to organize them again, from 1949 to

⁷⁴⁵ Frank Bösch, *Macht und Machtverlust: die Geschichte der CDU* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2002): 20.

⁷⁴⁶ “19. April 1950: Pressekonferenz des Bundeskanzlers Adenauer in Berlin.” Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung. Pressearchiv F 1/30.

1953. As part of the denazification of the city after the war, the Cologne Denazification Authority (*Entnazifizierungsstelle Köln*) banned Liessem from delivering Carnival speeches or appearing in Carnival performances for two years.



Image 19. “Thomas Liessem – wieder Zugleiter,” 1950. Walter-Dick-Archiv.

Nevertheless, Liessem led the first Rose Monday parade after World War II in 1949 (See Image 19), and maintained Cologne Carnival leadership positions, including as chairman of the Cologne Carnival Citizen’s Committee (*Bürgerausschuss Kölner Karneval*) in 1952. Other prominent Carnivalists of the Nazi era likewise took on central roles in Carnival’s organization after the war as well. Already in 1949 too Cologne’s bourgeois circles once again headed the elite Carnival societies and resumed their public roles as influential organizing bodies for public Carnival celebrations. Prominent and affluent Cologne natives once again played the roles of the Triumvirate (*Dreigestirn*)—as well as the role of the Virgin (*Jungfrau*), played again by a cross-dressing man (See Image 20).

These events represented a return to some Carnival customs as they had been in prewar Cologne.



Image 20. “Bauer und Jungfrau des Kölner Dreigestirns,” 1951. Walter-Dick-Archiv.

The politics of postwar Carnival associational culture in Cologne extended to popular entertainment figures as well. Some performers, like Karl Küpper, proclaimed the best Carnivalist in Germany in 1938, had been banned from Carnival speeches for life during the Third Reich for mocking the *heil Hitler* salute, a prohibition overturned in 1944 due to his popularity as a Carnival performer in Cologne. After the war, Küpper played a central but brief role in Carnival festivities. Küpper saw himself not as part of the resistance to National Socialism but rather as a Carnivalist who used the political dimension of Carnival practices in Cologne to make jokes about contemporary issues. Both Liessem and Küpper, albeit it through different political orientations, distanced themselves from the Nazi past then. Küpper warned after the war of the danger of the revived influence of Carnival’s old elite. Upon delivering a Carnival speech in 1952 that

satirized the rectification of Germany's displaced persons (*Wiedergutmachen deutscher Vertriebener*) the Cologne Carnival Citizen's Committee headed by Liessem and the Cologne Carnival Festival Committee (*Festausschuss Kölner Karneval*) orchestrated Küpper's permanent removal from sanctioned Carnival festivities through their influence on the Carnival societies and organizations. They simply encouraged all the Carnival organizations not to engage him as a speaker due to his "faux pas" (*Entgleisungen*).⁷⁴⁷ Cologne's Carnival would continue then under the banner of prewar traditions, of elite orchestration, together with a leadership that had worked closely with Nazi organizations up until World War II. This leadership worked, as their prewar precedents had in their reform movement, to diminish the political dimension of public Carnival celebrations in Cologne. In truth, this narrow definition of politics, embraced by Liessem and the elite Carnival leadership, and to an extent by Küpper as well, also served to effectively absolve them of any implication both in the Nazi past and within Cologne Carnival's postwar racist present, discussed below.

Beyond these select ruptures and continuities within Carnival's history up to the onset of World War II, still others can be found in postwar Carnival displays in Cologne. Overtly antisemitic displays dropped out of Carnival after the war, together with an increase in cross-dressing that had been characteristic of prewar festivities but became taboo during the Nazi era. Yet, racialized and racist depictions at Cologne Carnival persisted if not intensified in the postwar years. Popular costumes included Native Americans (See Image 21), Aborigines, the Chinese, Mongolians, and ambiguous black

⁷⁴⁷ Fritz Bilz, *Unangepasst und widerborstig der Kölner Karnevalist Karl Küpper, 1905-1970* (Cologne: Ed. Kalk, 2010): 106-107.

caricatures, costumes whose appropriateness largely went unchallenged through the end of the century.



Image 21. “Veedelszog,” 1953. Robert-Filmore-Berger-Archiv.



Image 22. “Kölsche Akrikaner mit Ehrenmitglieder Josephine Baker,” 1953. Archiv Marianne Bechhaus-Gerst.

In 1953 Josephine Baker, visiting Cologne Carnival as an honorary member of a Carnival society, was greeted by a group of “funny Cologne Africans” (in Cologne dialect, *Löstige kölsche Akrikaner*), a striking confrontation between on the one hand a prominent entertainer whose legacy was deeply embedded in the appeal of ethnic exoticism in Europe and on the other hand colonial fantasies of the primitive exotic in Cologne (See Image 22). Throughout these years blackface figures in the aesthetics of black minstrelsy continued to be popular mainstays of Cologne Carnival, connected to varied colonial settings or depicted simply as servants, slaves, primitives, demons, or fools. The centrality of the medieval fool in Carnival rituals, which inspired the term *Narr* or “fool” as a neutral term to describe Carnival revelers, may also have influenced the development of these blackface characters, usually termed a *Neger* or a *Moor*, as somebody foolish or incompetent, the insult or mockery version of a *Narr*. These characters continued to be depicted in similar ways as exotics in grass skirts with bone necklaces, or as ambiguous indigenous tribal peoples. It is unclear where exactly the characteristic primitive motifs originally came from, but some older Cologne populations would have been introduced to “primitive” blacks and indigenous groups through exhibitions around the turn of the century, of colonial Samoans at the Cologne zoo in 1901, and of the “Dahomey Amazons” from Togo displayed in exotic costumes in 1890.

After the Second World War, these racist terms became staples of postwar Carnival humor. The extent to which they were viewed as part of the “harmless” Carnival repertoire is captured by how frequently blackface figures were the basis of Carnival organizations and even music groups based around caricatures of Cologne’s different urban districts.



Image 23. “‘Kölsche Neger’ beim Rosenmontagszug,” Hansaring Cologne, 1950. Walter-Dick-Archiv.



Image 24. “‘Kölsche Neger’ beim Rosenmontagszug,” Hansaring Cologne, 1950. Walter-Dick-Archiv.

Each district's band of "primitives" battled it out in annual Carnival, in contest with each other. In 1950 groups of primitive exotic blacks, the "Cologne Negros" made up a walking unit in the Rose Monday parade (See images 23 and 24). Likewise in 1930 the Carnival band "Jungle Brothers from the Severinsviertel" (*Vringsveedeler Dschungelbrööder*) formed, and released numerous albums of march music for Carnival processions. The band's main album from 1950 featured thirteen blackfaced band members dressed as primitives with afro wigs and necklaces out of bone, the members flanked by two white Cologne Carnivalists smiling in suits (See image 25).



Image 25. Vringsveedeler Dschungelbrööder Album Cover, 1950.

Emblazoned on the band's drums and hanging from their instruments was the group's insignia of two ostensibly indigenous men in loin clothes shaking hands. The march band and Carnival organization, based out of the Severinsviertel, also produced collectible memorabilia like medals with maps of "Kenia" etched into them. Other Carnivalists in

the city founded similar groups around Cologne districts, like the Mülheim Negro Carnival Society (*Mülheimer Neger Karnevalgesellschaft*), founded in 1960, which first changed its name in 2015. The district of Mülheim in Cologne, located in the less reputable districts on the East side of the Rhine, was connected to Cologne's poorest populations. Likewise in 1978 other Carnivalists formed the *Frechener Negerköpp*, what might loosely be translated as the "negro heads from Frechen," based on the western Cologne suburb of that name. The society first changed its name in 2018 amidst mounting public controversy, but maintained its costuming practices. Other such groups included the *Neppeser Cannibale* from around the Cologne district of Nippes, *Neppeser* being *kölsch* for people from this district.



Image 26. "Nur für kurze Zeit Zunft: Die 'Kongo-Neger' bei der Aufstellung zum Faschingsumzug 1960er Jahre." Fotomuseum Hirsmüller.

The group featured each year a band of “Nippes cannibals,” citizens in blackface in grass skirts with bone necklaces and tribal paintings on their faces. Similar depictions could be seen outside of Cologne as well, even in small towns like Emmendingen in Baden-Württemberg, where the tradition of the “Congo Negro” in Carnival (*Fasching*), like in the case of Cologne’s blackface characters, stretched back to at least the turn of the twentieth century (See Image 26).⁷⁴⁸ Beyond these organizations as well as these racist nomenclatures in Carnival humor, this culture led to established traditions in Cologne Carnival costuming, like roleplaying the “Negerköpp,” “Mohrenkopf,” or “Primitiven Schwarzen” at annual events. Because such racialized depictions often dealt specifically with indigenous groups from bucolic settings, Chinese caricatures, and colonial blacks, the origins of such roleplaying could be connected to historical repudiation, to Germany’s loss of colonies in German Samoa, Qingdao, and German Southwest Africa. But they persisted as permanent staples of the Cologne Carnival milieu throughout the postwar years after regulation, as Carnival in Cologne continued uninterrupted from 1949 to the present.

One final area of rupture and continuity for postwar Carnival in Cologne dealt with the popularity of Carnival for queer communities. Nazi measures against venues deemed immoral successfully quashed the robust club scene and its masquerade ball subcultures in all major cities. After the war only slight traces of this culture remained in Berlin. Kati R., the central proprietor of the popular nightclub Magic Flute who had organized many of the most popular Carnival balls in Berlin during the Weimar years, revived the tradition in the 1950s by organizing monthly “elite dance evenings” for queer

⁷⁴⁸ See also “‘Kladderadatsch’ mit reichlich Dampf,” *Badische Zeitung*, 26 January 2012.

women.⁷⁴⁹ Harking back to the more clandestine urban club cultures of the Wilhelmine years, only women “in the know” attended, a solid 200 Berliners who used backdoor entrances at different bars and clubs at the monthly events. Even this remnant of the once robust queer Carnival scene in Berlin dwindled away by the late 1970s though.⁷⁵⁰ Nevertheless, Carnival remained what it already had been even by the mid-nineteenth century: a unique annual celebration with select acts of permissible cross-dressing, homoeroticism, and anonymous sex in costume (See Image 27).



Image 27. “Verkleidete ‘Damen’ in einem Raum. Karneval in Köln,” 1969. Robert-Filmore-Berger-Archiv.

⁷⁴⁹ Ilse Kokula, “Die urnische Damen treffen sich vielfach in Konditoreien.” *Courage: aktuelle Frauenzeitung* 5, no. 7 (1980): 39. Gertrude Sandmann, “Anfang des lesbischen Zusammenschlusses: die Clubs der zwanziger Jahre,” *Unsere Kleine Zeitung* 7/8/1976: 7.

⁷⁵⁰ Ilse Kokula, “Die urnische Damen treffen sich vielfach in Konditoreien.” *Courage: aktuelle Frauenzeitung* 5, no. 7 (1980): 39.

This element continued to drive Carnival's popularity to queer people, as the holiday remained tremendously popular for these groups. In the postwar era both East and West Germany maintained Paragraph 175, the term of the German penal code that made same-sex sex acts illegal for men. Postwar West German oral historian Ilse Kokula described the status of queer women in Germany then from the Third Reich and into West German society as from "asocial" or "degenerate" to "psychologically or sexually ill."⁷⁵¹ This historical attraction of Carnival—as a secret indulgence in otherwise impermissible and taboo activity—was thus maintained by the cultural and legal stigmatization of these communities that was a staple of the culture already in the Wilhelmine and Weimar eras. First organized in Cologne in the 1980s, Germany's gay pride festival, Christopher Street Day or CSD, of which Cologne's is the largest in Germany, is referred to as the "sixth season of the year," taking this label from Carnival, the purported "fifth season of the year" in Cologne.

These ongoing continuities with and changes to Carnival cultures seen in the postwar period were characteristic of Carnival's broader history since the nineteenth century. This dissertation took up collective Carnival discourses and debates that proliferated in Germany, as Carnival was invented and reinvented, deployed for a variety of purposes and functions, and connected to highly diverse phenomena and issues across the country. As these juxtapositions threw in sharp relief, immanent in Carnival was the potential both to shut down and to open up. This capaciousness within Carnival cultures explains their ability to be cherished by queer Berliners and the Nazi party at once, to be understood after the war as the source of and solution to a wide variety of Germany's

⁷⁵¹ Ilse Kokula, *Jahre des Glücks, Jahre des Leids: Gespräche mit älteren lesbischen Frauen* (Kiel: Frühlings Erwachen, 1990, first edition 1986): 9.

problems, and to be seen as a right of the children of the *Volk* and a force for *Volk* youth endangerment at the same time. Carnival worlds were shaped by tradition, memory, emotion, fantasy, ideology, and trauma—and these worlds and their qualities had actual effects. At Carnival, people defined city, regional, state, subcultural, national, sexual, and racial communities—and importantly, Carnival’s culture of mockery reinforced these definitions. Carnival then was a rich and contested political space within which different groups projected their meanings onto it. This dissertation analyzed then the simultaneous, overlapping, and conflicting meanings and functions of Carnival during a particularly tumultuous period in German history in order to analyze negotiations over and within German communities over the German nation.

In this way, Carnival was and did a number of things at once over time. The holiday and ideas about it were highly susceptible to changes in society, which produced these striking shifts in its cultures in conversation with German politics broadly conceived. Because of Carnival’s structure, its history, and also the histories of the regions and communities involved, the holiday demonstrated change over time in ways that connected disparate groups, geographies, and themes. As a result, this study has sought to span time and space, but also numerous categories of identification, including region, class, gender, confession, sexuality, race, political affiliation, and age. While Carnival may not have been one of the most important things to happen within the history of the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich, it *is* a particularly effective prism through which to view some of the most important issues in Germany during these periods as they evolved over time. Beyond Carnival’s capacity to reflect culture and society, the holiday and ideas about it also compelled change in society, as Carnival became connected to

different sorts of problems over the nineteenth and twentieth century and attempts to solve them. As has been shown, to many groups taken up in this study, Carnival and its regulation became a burning issue in its own right, however surprising that may seem. Carnival became a practice and cultural framework onto which different groups simultaneously applied meanings, often at odds with one another, in their attempts to mobilize Carnival for their ends—and ends that were often not insignificant or viewed as harmless. What resulted from the complexity and reach of Carnival and narratives about it during the period was both this striking change over time, but also the spectrum of competing views about dominant debates over society within Germany. In the chapters presented here, these narratives about Carnival displayed contestations over central issues within German society, foremost among them regional and national identity, commerce and the economy, and morality and health. This study will conclude then by briefly discussing these debates and their effects, reconstructing then the tensions over Carnival that grew over time, in particular after World War I.

This study has presented Carnival as contestations over the *Volk*, as modern Carnival demonstrated socio-cultural clashes between disparate groups within Germany. This dissertation took up narratives within which the German word *Volk* refers to all of its historical meanings, connected to folkways and imagined ancient tribes of people, a collective mass of people in a community, the body of people who make up a German nation, and the pan-Germanic peoples that National Socialism tied together within a single imagined race. Carnival proved an especially powerful tool within these constructions of a German *Volk*: the turning of a set of folk customs into a regional holiday that manifested civic pride within a German nation; the restriction of the holiday

to assure the success of the German nation in World War I; the mobilization of Carnival to oppose Weimar republicanism and agitate for an autonomous state for the Rhineland and for the Palatinate; the regulation of Carnival to heal German people after the war; the use of Carnival traditions for the forging of subcultural communities; and the nationalization of a family-friendly Carnival in order to realize Nazi racial ideology around a unified race. Carnival thus was wrapped up in projects around collectivities, membership in them, their success, and their imagined rituals and pasts. These examples point on the one hand, as Carnival became a site of political aspiration or the aspirations of diverse communities, be they regional, national, sexual, racial, etc.

Conversely, on the other hand was how, within these aspirations for pride or power in one's community or folkways, the mobilization of Carnival for the success of some *Volk* frequently relied on tensions with real or imagined Others, against which either the political dimension of Carnival the holiday or the narratives of Carnival were directed. In other words Carnival helped communities inscribe themselves via opposition to imagined enemies. Whereas Carnival has historically been connected to the possibility of revolution or liberation through its structure, Carnival's political dimension is most clearly seen here as social groups in persistent conflict with each other, even as that conflict evolved over time. For example then, within the earliest attempts to bolster Rhenish pride through an official Cologne Carnival holiday around the 1820s, the culture was built up in opposition to Prussian power, tensions that continued to percolate and were clearly seen in the beliefs of Rhenish people about Carnival's suppression in the Rhineland after the war. It is surprising that Carnival's trajectory included a potential mitigation of the confessional divides between the Rhineland and Prussia as well as

elsewhere, and likewise surprising that Cologne Carnival traditions became more popular in other cities outside of the Rhineland, many of them heavily Protestant. But Carnival's suppression in the Rhineland by officials in Berlin nursed deep fissures and a yawning sense of bitterness on the part of populations in Cologne and in the Rhineland. This bitterness toward the Berlin-based government and Prussian influence by extension, encouraged on the part of the foreign occupation authorities, undermined support for the republic, most clearly seen in Carnival's connection to the separatist movements. Reich officials in their measures toward Carnival could never successfully resolve this bitterness and historical contempt within the story of Carnival; indeed they seemed to accidentally compel it further.

At the same time, the growing commercialization of Carnival in Cologne, as part of the holiday's new status as a modern public holiday there, produced a consistent debate over appropriate economic or capitalist activity. Already before World War I, a struggle ensued to keep Carnival commercially viable while separate from its potential social, sexual, and moral dangers. In the face of growing urban consumer culture in Germany, concern developed over keeping Carnival as a custom separate from controversial urban dangers: violence, sex work, alcoholism, cabarets, and other nightlife activities of ill-repute. In Cologne before the First World War, Carnivalists maintained the claim to appropriate commerce in Carnival by distaining working-class Carnival practices and by reforming their own customs to maintain claims to bourgeois respectability. After the war, in the context of inflation and the occupation, widespread social plight, and eventually by the mid-1920s a consolidating mass consumer culture in Germany, an appropriate Carnival that was good for the economy but not socially or

nationally damaging seemed impossible to many, but not everyone. Because Carnival had constituted a tremendous force within the Rhenish economy, and for many Rhinelanders equated to normal economic life, again the debate over Carnival produced great animosity. In the context of serious social hardship both during and after the war, the financial ability to take part in Carnival—and importantly Carnival’s connection to excessiveness, waste, dispensable income, or even jolly celebration—became offensive to many who faced ongoing poverty and plight. Carnival became broadly seen not as good for the economy but rather as signs of escapism or hedonism, but also capable of inciting riots or skirmishes. This animosity only intensified in the context of new Weimar discourses about unsavory types, especially in Berlin, who purportedly made money off the war and revolution—most incorrigibly as soldiers died on the front for the Fatherland—and many believed opposed the reconstruction of a strong German nation through the support of the black market and immoral Carnival nightlife in Berlin. What resulted was a series of economically-grounded moral claims about Carnival in particular and German society generally, about who was a “true Rhinelander” or “true German” and who wasn’t. The only examples of strong community building through Carnival cultures during the Weimar years came from the unofficial queer Carnival subcultures in Berlin, who many Rhinelanders stigmatized because of their appropriation of these practices, and broader audiences stigmatized because they were simply part of nightlife culture in Berlin broadly seen as immoral and symptomatic of hedonism.

The Nazi approach to Carnival was exceptionally successful due to its ability to mitigate these tensions—regional, economic, moral, social, national, etc.—that had permeated Carnival debates up until 1933. The NSDAP, as one of the only parties to

favor Carnival when it was most unpopular nationwide, could, as “friends of Carnival,” restore Carnival to the Rhineland as its cherished folk holiday at the same time that the holiday was leveraged as a national ideological tool for not just all of Germany but an imagined Germanic race. Party influence over Carnival in the Rhineland and elsewhere may have made many Carnivalists uneasy, but it wasn’t viewed as the violence of Prussian meddling. Further, the party invested heavily in Carnival’s restoration and spread its reach considerably, which Carnivalists accepted in exchange for select changes to the holiday’s customs. Even the message Nazi organizations promoted in Carnival diminished social and regional tensions in Carnival—indeed even diminished religion—by promoting the holiday on the one hand as a communal celebration and on the other hand as a celebration of the diversity across Germanic peoples that connected back to a time of ancient Germanic tribes. Prewar Carnival in Cologne may have promoted nationalism through the holiday’s connection to regional identity within a unified Germany, but Carnival during the Third Reich promoted the strength and specialness of the entire German race. The Nazis democratized the holiday, for once making it truly national, as Carnival was fully restored as a holiday of German people. Finally, the efforts of the Nazi organizations to suppress entire groups of people who had been associated with Carnival vice swiftly ended some of the sharpest anxieties over morality, including immoral economic activity. The Nazi targeting of queer people in general disaggregated the imagined immorality of Carnival from the holiday itself, which swiftly eradicated many of Carnival’s problems. In this way, Nazi officials unburdened Carnival culture from its decades plagued by moral and economic handwringing. Instead populations were given space in sanctioned public Carnival celebrations to mock these

groups and others tied to perceived episodes of injustice within German history. What resulted was a national festival culture that married harmless good German fun with fantasies of violence.

Carnival cultures thus changed over time with the ruptures and transformations of these years. During the Wilhelmine period if not earlier, Carnival in Cologne was made into a commercialized city holiday with tremendous power for bolstering civic pride but also concern over bourgeois and urban vice. With the onset of World War I, Carnival became an affront to the suffering of soldiers at the front, and its restriction a sign of support for Germany and the war effort. After the war in the occupied Rhineland, Carnival took on wholly new dangers and political associations, connected to the political aspirations of competing powers in the regions, including to the most violent episodes of these crisis years in the hyperpoliticized Rhineland, as well as to the new culture of amusements for British forces and their families that made up their everyday culture in occupied Cologne. Across the nation and within every wrung of the Weimar government, Carnival and its regulation became around this time a means to rebuild the struggling nation, connected to the suppression of various kinds of vice as symptomatic of moral bankruptcy and illness in the German people. Even as these cultures were connected to the most objectionable of contemporary Carnival practices within national debates, Carnival subcultures in Berlin became a powerful tool for community building for queer communities. Finally, during the Third Reich Carnival became a safe and commercially viable national folk holiday, a celebration of “Germanic peoples” and the triumph over national enemies and collective German trauma.

This study took up Carnival across three German regimes usually taken up separately within the study of modern Germany in order to study this evolution of issues over time but also to provide insights about the regimes themselves. The “saturnalian state,” the central object of this study, had a double meaning then, as a reference to the constant attempt by disparate authorities and elites to shape and regulate Carnival—to use the holiday to forward their aspirations and visions of society—at the same that revelry itself was popular and its meanings changed over time. This study began in the Kaiserreich because it enabled an analysis of full official Carnival in Cologne at the height of German urbanization, modernization, and prosperity before the First World War, while looking back to the politics of early projects for Carnival’s building-up in the Rhineland during the early nineteenth century. A rich flourishing Carnival culture proliferated as a result by the turn of the twentieth century, within which an influential bourgeois elite promoted a Carnival associational culture as well as the commercialization of the holiday in the face of select problems. While the 1920s in Germany are generally regarded as a time of cultural outpouring, characterized by liberal politics and relative economic prosperity, public Carnival cultures flourished the most—especially culturally and economically—in the Kaiserreich and then again during the Third Reich, as the years before the war in particular created select cleavages that interrupt inherited wisdoms about periodization in German history. World War I ushered in changes to the holiday as part of its restrictions, as the politics of Carnival began to shift drastically, politics that intensified after the war in the context of new groups and authorities that took up and mobilized Carnival practices in the face of the republic’s serious challenges. Whereas the war indeed initiated dramatic rupture, many of the lines

of criticism and issues within Carnival existed before the war. In the context of economic catastrophe and the bitter humiliation of Germany following the Versailles Treaty, Carnival debates during the foreign occupations of the Rhineland followed established tensions within Rhenish society, including opposition to Prussian influence in the region and aversion to the social and sexual dangers of Carnival activities, especially at night and in public space.

Regarding the republic itself, while much of the discourse of Carnival from the war to the Third Reich depicted society as in crisis, Weimar was treated here instead as a landscape of multiple and competing trajectories. One symptom of these multiple opportunities then was the lack of cohesion within understandings and applications of Carnival at this time. So whereas the perception of crisis very much informed a new politics of Carnival after the war, as the holiday was imagined as one of disorder during a time when public order was an issue, what resulted was a series of competing contestations over Carnival and its applications, within which the opportunity that ultimately triumphed was that of National Socialism. One of the ways that this opportunity succeeded, as is argued here, stems from the popularity of particular discourses about the state of German society and the “immorality” of its amusement culture. Within the spectrum of Carnival approaches during Weimar, generally devoid of consensus in line with the social and political fragmentation the republic is known for, one powerful consensus proliferated within these competing interpretations: that outside of one’s community, immoral Carnival activities raged, usually at night and by unsavory types, and these activities and the people who organized them were imperiling the moral health and future success of the German people. The surprising revival of Carnival by the

Nazis from 1933 onward, during which the holiday that had caused so much controversy for so long became a massively successful family-friendly holiday of the nation, emerged from how effectively Nazi ideology and Carnival policy tapped into this vision of German society while the party built up the holiday as a central part of its promise to raise living standards.

This dissertation thus suggests a number of surprises. What is striking about the years of the Kaiserreich is the strength of the public celebration culture of Germany's Catholic populations, and its growing appeal to predominantly Protestant populations in Germany, during the years of the *Kulturkampf* and in the immediate decades following it. But also insightful are the ways that the Kaiserreich created cleavages—in Cologne and Berlin—for a relative amount of ambivalence toward queer communities that enabled the growth of urban queer subcultures. This history suggests that if there was a “golden age” it started before even the turn of the century, not necessarily an outgrowth of actual tolerance but some combination of ambivalence and lack of public attention, in particular in the years proceeding the Eulenburg Affair. While queer communities grew in the Weimar years, and made Carnival their own, the attraction of Carnival balls—costuming practices that often included social inversion—emerged strongly from the experience of public stigmatization than previously, stigmatization that despite new public debate about sexual abnormalities after the war increased during the Weimar years in specific ways, not least of which through the increase of legal action against these groups. Moreover, while World War I functioned for Carnival as a watershed of sorts, specific threads that wove through discourses about Carnival, like regional tension or concerns over the social and sexual dangers presented by Carnival, preceded the war and point to important

continuities with prewar society. Likewise, not only does the national “crackdown” on Carnival in Reich Chancellor Wilhelm Cuno’s words during the Weimar era represent a dramatic counter to the republic as a time characterized by cultural outpouring—again the Weimar “golden age” as it’s often termed. But also officials, their prohibitions, and their language about Carnival suggest a liberalism that went hand-in-hand with necessary policing. To an extent the history around Carnival also suggests that more censorship occurred during the years of the republic than many historians suggest, and still more was desired across political party lines but couldn’t be realized due to ongoing bureaucratic issues within the Weimar government constantly in flux. Finally, this study has suggested a number of surprising insights about the Third Reich. National Carnival discourse already in the inflation period of the republic pointed to ways of seeing society that the NSDAP successfully tapped into, suggesting again a reach across German historical periodization. The massive resurgence of public Carnival across Germany in 1933 before active party intervention, by which point the holiday’s practices took up racial demagoguery and displays against other “internal enemies,” suggests a broad receptiveness to specific ways of viewing Germany’s problems on the part of communities that took part in Carnival very early into the regime. Carnival in 1933 immediately followed the Nazi seizure of power, which also suggests that planning for the holiday’s displays that year had long begun before President Paul von Hindenburg appointed Adolf Hitler as Chancellor on 30 January 1933; Cologne Carnivalists were likely planning the antisemitic displays and messages that took place in Carnival in 1933 before the federal election in November 1932 took place. One way to interpret this is that Carnivalists were happy to trade certain shifts within holiday culture in exchange for the

restoration of their cherished custom—that they sensed a shifting tide, especially in the context of the results of the federal election of July 1932, and spoke the language of Nazism. But what is more likely is that Nazi ideology clearly addressed specific ideas about society that disparate groups described within all sides of the Carnival debate for a long time. Also surprising though is how effective Nazi ideology worked together with traditional understandings of the holiday so that Carnival could make broad swaths of the German populace—members of the Nazi *Volk*—happy and function as an unsuspecting ideological tool of the Nazi utopia. The mockery and the imagined ancient ties of Carnival—as well as a sense of Rhenish specialness that predominated throughout the period taken up in this study—dovetailed seamlessly into a new vocabulary of Carnival as joy for the *Volk* and violence for its enemies.

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