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“I Got Through Those Times Well”

Otto Brunner and National Socialism

HANS-HENNING KORTÜM

TRANSLATION BY DONA GEYER

This contribution analyzes the structural and biographical conditions that made the career of the Austrian medievalist Otto Brunner (1898–1982) possible. Brunner proved to be a fervent adherent of the Nazi regime until the bitter end. His support for the regime manifested itself in several ways: his function as head of the *Volksdeutsche Forschungsgemeinschaften* (Ethnic German Research Associations) between 1940 and 1944; his efforts to gain Nazi Party membership (ultimately successful in 1943); his close collaboration with Amt Rosenberg even as late as January 1945; his professional successes, including his reception of the prestigious Verdun Prize in 1943; and his publications, most importantly his manuscript “Der Schicksalsweg des deutschen Volkes” (“The German People’s Road to Destiny”) of 1944. Long considered lost, the manuscript did in fact survive, albeit only in the form of proofs. Brunner succeeded in jump-starting his professional career in the young Federal Republic in the 1950s through the help of long-standing personal networks. He continued his study, with only minor modifications, of the most important topics that had kept him busy during the Third Reich. Völkisch-nationalist ideas still pervaded his depiction of German history and medieval society. Structural peculiarities of the academic discipline of history, including a West German historical conservatism, led to a situation in which Brunner’s interpretation of the Middle Ages came to be challenged only in the 1980s.

Introduction

The death on June 12, 1982, of Otto Brunner, professor emeritus of medieval and early modern history at the University of Hamburg, marked the passing of a man who was undoubtedly one of the most influential German historians of the twentieth century.¹ However, this accolade at the end of his life might have seemed unlikely in May 1945, because the collapse of the Greater German Reich had a palpable impact on Brunner’s academic career. For the Austrian Brunner, who definitely felt himself to be German, the founding of the Second Austrian Republic was a twofold disaster. One reason was that the denazification process that began in 1945 at the University of Vienna, where he had

taught, ended in 1948 with his unequivocal forced retirement.² What possibly proved harder for him to face, however, was that he could no longer claim to “belong [. . .] to the German people,” as he wrote with some bitterness to Carl Schmitt, the former “crown jurist of the Third Reich,”³ who had also been forced into retirement and with whom Brunner had corresponded since the 1930s.⁴ However, unlike Schmitt, Brunner was able to gain a foothold professionally in the new Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), especially thanks to the active support of several colleagues who themselves had survived unscathed and had been able to continue their careers after, at most, a very brief interruption. One particularly energetic supporter of Brunner’s candidacy for the academic chair at the University of Hamburg was his predecessor, Hermann Aubin,⁵ with whom Brunner had worked closely since the 1930s within the framework of the so-called *Volksdeutsche Forschungsgemeinschaften* (Ethnic German Research Associations).

The intense debate in Germany concerning the involvement of historians in National Socialism,⁶ which began, at the latest, in 1998 at the forty-second Biennial German Historians’ Convention in Frankfurt am Main, is the reason why we are now relatively well informed about the relevant networks and structures that were already in existence in the 1930s and continued to thrive during the postwar period. It is now widely accepted that the year 1945 represented anything but a new beginning with regard to the writing of academic scholarship.⁷ Two research approaches have become very clearly recognizable in this context. One is based on an analytical concept that focuses strongly on generational history⁸ and emphasizes, above all, the centrality of the First World War experience in explaining the corresponding mental dispositions and resulting behaviors among many of the men born around 1900.⁹ Brunner, who was born in 1898, joined the army as a one-year volunteer in 1916, and thus belonged to the “young front generation”¹⁰ of men who completed their university studies in the 1920s and then successfully advanced their careers in the 1930s.

The other approach prominent in contemporary historical research draws specifically on the heuristic value associated with the concept of *Denkstil* (style of thought) in the sociology of knowledge.¹¹ This may help explain why certain paradigms and research approaches are dominant during an era, marginalizing or even obliterating the importance of alternative interpretations. Such an approach is advisable in the case of Otto Brunner’s oeuvre, as he is among the historians who have given significant thought to their methodological procedure. Thus, Brunner repeatedly turned his attention to the history of historiographical terminology. In addition to his most influential work, *Land und*

Herrschaft ("Land and Lordship," 1939), Brunner is remembered by historians particularly for his co-editorship of *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* ("Fundamental Concepts in History"), a monumental work of conceptual history that was not completed until long after his death.¹²

More than two decades ago Gadi Algazi subjected Brunner's figures of thought and central explanatory categories as they appear in *Land and Lordship* to a convincing analysis.¹³ However, his arguments made only a partial impression on the field of medieval studies. Apparently, leading names in medieval studies and in legal and constitutional history continue undeterred to adhere to Brunner's main theories. This testifies to the long-lasting "continuity" of interpretive frameworks, as emphasized by Otto Gerhard Oexle.¹⁴ Only slightly modified following the Second World War, some of them still enjoy great popularity today. The reasons for this will be addressed more extensively below.

The many obituaries¹⁵ written about Brunner after his death at the age of eighty-four tellingly avoided all mention of his numerous writings on the "German East." The reader of the obituary can come away unaware of the dramatic increase in the number of his writings on *Deutschtum im Südosten* ("Germandom in the Southeast"), beginning in the second half of the 1930s. The eulogies usually mentioned little or nothing about the conspicuous break in Brunner's academic career, the removal from his academic chair in Vienna and the accompanying ouster as head of the Austrian Institute of Historical Research (ÖIG, *Österreichisches Institut für Geschichtsforschung*) in 1945, and the forced retirement that ensued three years later.¹⁶ Instead they highlighted the year 1954, when Brunner resumed his academic career in the FRG upon appointment to a position at the University of Hamburg, an event that is still described today in the annals of the Hanseatic city's university as an "unusual stroke of luck."¹⁷

The Early Years: Brunner's Youth and Student Days, 1907 to 1923

Even as a young person, Brunner may well have been exposed, at least subconsciously, to the ethnic tensions in the multiethnic Habsburg nation-state. He spent the second half of his secondary education years in the Moravian city of Jihlava (German: Iglau) and then in the bigger city of Brno (German: Brünn). Both cities had a highly multiethnic profile. In addition to "German Austrians" (*Deutschösterreicher*) and Czechs, Jewish communities also existed in both of these cities.¹⁸ At the Erstes Deutsches Staatsgymnasium, where Brunner spent his last two years of secondary school (1914–16), classes were

taught in German. According to the statistics for the 1908/9 school year, not quite three percent of the 502 pupils attending the school were native speakers of Czech, while over 97 percent claimed German as their native tongue. The fact that a disproportionately high percentage of the pupils were “of the Mosaic faith” seems both noteworthy and typical of the time. While Jews accounted for less than ten percent of the total population, they made up 24 percent of this school’s student body. Another 71 percent belonged to the Catholic Church and five percent—including Brunner—were Protestants.¹⁹

In addition to his schooling, Brunner was also profoundly influenced by military life. His stepfather was a career officer in the army of the Habsburg Empire. In 1916 Brunner himself was drafted at the age of 18 to serve in a rifle regiment, Schützenregiment No. 21, in Sankt Pölten. His experiences in the final two battles of the Isonzo Front—in which he probably fought in August and October 1917—the disbandment of the Austro-Hungarian army, and the capture of “nearly all parts” of his regiment by the Italians on November 4, 1918,²⁰ did not cause Brunner to suffer from postwar trauma. Rather, his enthusiasm for all things military apparently continued undiminished even into his later years. For example, “from September 19 to 27, 1940” he took part “in a trip with scholars to the French battlefields.”²¹ He dated the preface of the second, expanded edition of *Land and Lordship* to his time “in military service, October 1942,”²² and on May 12, 1944, he wrote a letter from his duty station at the time, Luftkriegsschule 7 (a Luftwaffe officer training school) in the town of Tulln in Lower Austria, to the dean of the Philosophy Faculty at the University of Vienna, which he signed “Captain Brunner.”²³

When, at the age of 20, Brunner resumed his studies in history and geography in Vienna in the winter semester of 1918/19, he entered a university that was in an extremely dramatic situation, the mirror image of a difficult era in German-Austrian history. Even after the war, the university itself remained the highly conservative *Ordinarienuniversität*—a university controlled by its professorial chairholders—that it had been before 1914. The introduction of a republican constitution put the university faculty in a difficult position. As civil servants, the faculty members were legally bound to the new democracy, but in their hearts they rejected the newly formed Republic of Austria. Therefore, the university became a reactionary island in the midst of “Red Vienna.”²⁴

The end of the war in 1918 marked a dramatic turning point for the University of Vienna.²⁵ For one thing, the German-speaking Austrians who had previously studied at the universities of the lost crown lands now flocked primarily to Vienna to study. The faculty also grew in size because it was forced to absorb the German-Austrian professors who had previously taught at oth-

er universities of the now defunct Habsburg monarchy. The number of students rose by 50 percent, to approximately 15,000. There were two reasons for this: first, men like Brunner were returning home from the war to resume their studies, and second, the universities were opening their doors to women.²⁶ One very obvious development was the influx of refugees, particularly Jews from the former crown lands in the eastern part of the Habsburg Empire, namely Galicia.

Violent confrontations occurred at the university. The students, the overwhelming majority of whom held German nationalist views, vehemently demanded the repatriation of the “Eastern European Jews” (*Ostjuden*) and a *völkisch* admission restriction.²⁷ In late April 1920—in the middle of Brunner’s student years—antisemitic agitation came to a head for the first time when German nationalist students vandalized the Jewish dining hall and the anatomy lecture hall. By the end of 1923, when Brunner concluded his studies at the university and began his work at Austria’s national archives, the Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, the situation had certainly not improved. Still inspired by the failed Beer Hall Putsch in Munich, “about 200 ‘*Hakenkreuzler*’ [members of groups using the swastika emblem] armed with clubs and brass knuckles [made] their way into various buildings and classes, where they demanded the exclusion of Jewish students. Nine people were seriously injured as a result.”²⁸

Brunner’s academic instructors had been appointed to their university chairs at the turn of the century, that is, long before the First World War.²⁹ To these professors, already elderly, Brunner owed the genuine expertise he gained in his field, knowledge that he was able to deepen as a member of the thirty-third class at the ÖIG between 1921 and 1923. However, the greatest influence on his philosophy of history and his political view of the world was Othmar Spann, a member of the Faculty of Law and Political Science. Brunner had taken classes not only in history and geography but also in other fields. He had a particular interest in the offerings of the Faculty of Law and Political Science.³⁰ Spann’s views on the “true state” must have resonated with the young student and reserve officer Brunner, who was very probably worried by the collapse of the old order. Spann borrowed heavily from nineteenth-century romantic Catholic social teachings to conceive his idea of a harmonious, integrated corporate state (*Ständestaat*) and at the same time to adamantly reject liberalism and socialism, positivism and empiricism. “Spann was a brilliant rhetorician and fascinated the youth by questioning and usually thoroughly repudiating social conventions and conventional academic teachings.”³¹

Early Academic Career and Involvement during the National Socialist Period, 1931 to 1939

Brunner's appointment in September 1931 as professor (albeit without chair, or *Lehrstuhl*) of medieval and Austrian history, and hence as a faculty member of the ÖIG, laid the foundation for his subsequent university career. The institute's graduates, who liked to call themselves "instituters," (*Institutler*)³² were united by a very specific esprit de corps linked with an elitist attitude. All three of the men who held professorships in history in 1930s Vienna were members of the twenty-third graduating class of the institute. Therefore, there was "homogeneity also in the ideological orientation of those teaching and their teachings."³³ Brunner's further academic advancement was facilitated considerably by this "network." One particularly helpful person for Brunner's career proved to be Hans Hirsch, who became a professor of history and the auxiliary sciences of history (*historische Hilfswissenschaften*) in 1926 and, as the successor to Brunner's doctoral advisor Oswald Redlich, the new chairperson of the ÖIG board in 1929.³⁴ Brunner especially had Hirsch to thank for his rapid rise to the status of one of the most influential historians of the Nazi period and for his general ideological worldview. For his dissertation, titled "Österreich und die Walachei während des Türkenkrieges von 1683 bis 1699" ("Austria and Wallachia during the Great Turkish War from 1683 to 1699"), Brunner had even picked one of Hirsch's central topics, namely the danger posed to Germany by the enemy from the East.³⁵

It is also striking that one of the titles Brunner submitted to the relevant committee as a possible topic for his habilitation lecture was "Das Problem der Gesamtstaatsidee in der österreichischen Geschichte" ("The Problem of the Idea of the Unified State in Austrian History").³⁶ The terms "state" and "Austria" and specifically "Austrian history" were leitmotifs that permeated Brunner's thinking, writing, and actions in the decades to come. The topic of the medieval feud was also evident in his writings by the end of the 1920s and would become the central focus of what remains his most famous work, "Land and Lordship. Structures of Governance in Medieval Austria" published originally in German in 1939 as *Land und Herrschaft. Grundfragen der territorialen Verfassungsgeschichte Südostdeutschlands im Mittelalter*.³⁷ Brunner's tribute to Hans Hirsch in the *Historische Zeitschrift*, published the year following Hirsch's death in 1940, reveals what made him exceedingly important to Brunner. In addition to the human and academic qualities of his deceased mentor, Brunner appreciated Hirsch's "vibrant awareness of history in the *Volkstumskampf*" (ethnic struggle): "In Vienna he expanded his horizon

to include the German ethnic groups in the Southeast. In many years of largely unnoticed organizational work, he was able to develop the requisite scholarly know-how for the *Volkstumskampf* in this region and to make personal connections that enabled lively interaction between academics inside and outside Germany.”³⁸ With these words Brunner outlined Hirsch’s involvement in the Southeast German Research Foundation (SODFG, *Südostdeutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft*), which he co-founded with the geographer Hugo Hassinger in 1931 and which was financed by the Reich.³⁹ Brunner’s own involvement was evident in that, among other things, he was a regular participant in the study trips organized continually by the SODFG, starting in 1932, to the *außendeutsche* ethnic regions, meaning regions where German ethnic culture existed outside Germany’s borders.⁴⁰ With considerable regularity he presented relevant historical lectures.⁴¹

Most importantly, Brunner now began to publish *völkisch*-oriented contributions on a regular basis. By 1932, in an essay on the Burgenland published by *Volk und Reich*, he was already addressing a topic key to his historical thinking: the danger that Hungary posed to the “German border regions.” He justified his position with geographic, cultural, and historical arguments. He considered Hungary to be a “piece of the south Russian steppe pushed into Central Europe.” In his eyes the “Hungarians” themselves were a “nomadic people” characterized by a “peculiar tenacity.” He was convinced that a danger emanated from the state established by the “ruling classes” of this people, namely the danger of an ongoing and unrelenting Magyarization of the “*deutschen Volkskörper*” (the body of the German people).⁴² The demonization of Hungary and the Hungarians, a portrayal he justified on geopolitical and *völkisch* grounds, would remain a regular feature of his historical discourse to the end of the Third Reich. Even in the context of his later work as head of the SODFG, starting in 1939, Hungary was often the focus of his *Volkstumskampf*.⁴³

Another component of Brunner’s narrative was the close association he made between the ideas of “borderland,” “border area,” and “march” (or “mark,” meaning “frontier or border area”) and what he viewed as an inevitable concomitant “*völkisch* threat” to the “German people” settled in these regions. The danger, by its very nature, arose primarily and almost exclusively “in the East.” In his essay “The Historical Significance of the Waldviertel,” he wrote that “what we are interested in, however, is the border to the East.”⁴⁴ This statement can be viewed as paradigmatic of practically all his work on *Volkstum* between 1930 and 1945.

It probably was not wholly coincidental that Brunner’s pertinent work proliferated in 1938, the year of the Anschluss, Austria’s annexation by the Third

Reich. In an essay inspired by the immediate impact of Austria's *Heimkehr* (homecoming) to the Reich, Brunner pontificated about Austria as "Europe's *Ostmark*", referring to "the struggle against the incursions into Europe by foreign steppe peoples from the southeast." In medieval German history, he said, rulers "from the Carolingian dynasty, then again from the Saxon and the Salic dynasties," had found themselves "battling against an equestrian people alien to Europe, the Magyars." Later it had been "the dukes of Austria" who had taken on the task "of being Europe's *Ostmark*," to be followed even later by the "German-Austrian countries" with "help from the Reich." Now that Austria's *Heimkehr* had restored the order disrupted "by the calamitous political fragmentation of the German people," the opportunity presented itself once again "to fulfill the task of being Europe's *Ostmark*."⁴⁵

Brunner wrote this essay as a contribution to the exhibition *Europas Schicksalskampf im Osten* ("Europe's Battle for Destiny in the East"), which the *Amt Schrifttumspflege* (Office for the Cultivation of Literature)—an entity subordinate to the so-called Plenipotentiary of the Führer for the Supervision of the Entire Intellectual and Ideological Training and Schooling of the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP, *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei*)—put on in the Nuremberg Norishalle in 1938 as part of the preparations for the annual Nuremberg rally. One might therefore interpret Brunner's words as opportunistic statements by a career-minded historian who either had to or wanted to adopt National Socialist jargon, as he would then do in his praise of the "creator of Greater Germany [. . .], Adolf Hitler," who "[is] an Austrian." In this context Brunner noted that, "despite all blunders and errors, which were unavoidable, [. . .] something great and unique happened here: the decisive shaping of ethnic German thinking."⁴⁶ However, even his purportedly strictly academic article on *Das österreichische Institut für Geschichtsforschung und seine Stellung in der deutschen Geschichtswissenschaft* ("The Austrian Institute for Historical Research and its Place in German Historical Scholarship"), upon closer inspection, has an unmistakable *völkisch* veneer toward the end of the work. For example, Brunner evaluated Austrian *Historie* (the discipline of history) as having been "more fortunate" than the "theoretical sciences of government, economics, and society," because "it never lost the pan-German context. It is no accident that the turn toward pan-German and thus simultaneously ethnic German thinking took place on Austrian soil."⁴⁷ Here Brunner was obviously referring not only to his mentor, Hans Hirsch, but also to himself.

Earlier research in contemporary history, particularly in Austria, occasionally tried to relativize *völkisch* thinking in comparison to National Socialist

ideas. It was argued that what was important to Otto Brunner's way of thinking was the "soil" (*Boden*), not the "blood" (*Blut*).⁴⁸ This was most likely true for the period up to 1939, but after that what mattered first and foremost to Brunner was, no doubt, the "blood."

In his article for the magazine *Die deutsche Schule* (The German School) in 1942, for example, Brunner descended into the depths of the racist National Socialist "blood and soil" ideology by examining "Southeast German Achievements and Destinies" since AD 1000. In particular, notes Michael Wildt, Brunner's emphatic praise for SS *Obergruppenführer* Werner Lorenz demonstrates his familiarity with the "comprehensive, *völkisch*-racial concept of a new order in which settlement areas were to be created for 'Aryan' Germans by way of expulsion, deportation, and genocide."⁴⁹ From October 1939, Lorenz headed the *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle* (Ethnic German Liaison Office) and was, as such, a subordinate of Heinrich Himmler, Reich Commissioner for the Strengthening of Germandom. Lorenz was assigned the task of "creating new German settlement areas through resettlement." In Brunner's words, it was "the Faustian will and the vigor of the Germanic blood" that had made it possible to transform a "natural landscape" into a "German cultural landscape." He added that, by the end of the eighteenth century, the "biological strength" of "Southeast German ethnic groups, by then long established," was making it difficult to procure sufficient "space, specifically soil, and thus food," whereas the "Hungarian state, one utterly weakened in a biological sense, tries to strengthen its constitutive Magyar people by assimilating the ethnic Germans." He went on to argue:

The year 1938 finally brings about [. . .] also the turning point [. . .] for the ethnic groups. [. . .] First, ethnic Germans in the borderlands [*Grenzdeutschtum*] were reintegrated into the Reich, thereby rectifying a blatant injustice. [. . .] Second, ethnic Germans beyond the Carpathians were uprooted and resettled in the Reich. The "Reich Commissioner for the Strengthening of Germandom," *Reichsführer* SS, and Chief of the German Police Heinrich Himmler and the Ethnic German Liaison Office under SS *Obergruppenführer* Lorenz solved this difficult problem in the interest of strengthening the German East. [. . .] Only Yugoslavia refused to make concessions. Nothing, not even the smallest step, could be achieved in either foreign or domestic policy because the ruling class of South Slavia [Yugoslavia] listened too much, and then succumbed, to West European insinuations. So, after many attempts to preserve peace

in the Balkans, the Führer finally struck and wiped the unnatural state off the map after barely fourteen days of fighting.

Therefore, the “ethnic groups” were, in Brunner’s mind, “no longer a regrettable appendage of the German people but contributors to the pan-German mission, which is determined solely by the Führer. Is this not more than every German on either side of the border ever dared to dream of?”⁵⁰

The Years of the Second World War

In the years just before the onset of the Second World War, Brunner was enjoying a first high point in his prestige, among fellow historians and influential NSDAP officials alike. He was convinced very early on that the future was his. This is evident in the triumphal tone of his lecture at the 1937 German Historians’ Convention in Erfurt, in which he leveled what was, especially for a professor who did not hold a chair, harsh criticism at established older medievalists—and he did so the year before the Anschluss and as the only Austrian representative of historical scholarship in attendance, besides Heinrich von Srbik.⁵¹ Furthermore, Brunner proved to be right: in recognition of his accomplishments, he received the *Erinnerungszeichen zur Wiedervereinigung Österreichs mit dem Reich* in 1939, a medal in commemoration of Austria’s reunification with the Reich, for having “closely cooperated with the authorities in the German Reich and endangered [his] life and position in order to support scholarly work on ethnic Germans in the Alpine region and the Danube region along pan-German lines.”⁵²

Naturally Brunner also attended the traditional “breakfast”⁵³ for the heads of the *Volksdeutsche Forschungsgemeinschaften* at the Hotel Adlon in Berlin on March 28, 1938,⁵⁴ even though he would not be appointed by the Reich Ministry of the Interior to be Hirsch’s successor until the following year, on April 14, 1939.⁵⁵ That high expectations were being placed on the young Brunner is also suggested by the fact that he was selected to give the opening address at the Research Associations’ conference on April 17, 1939, instead of one of the long-serving institutional directors such as Albert Brackmann from Berlin or Hermann Aubin from Breslau. Brunner spoke on “the altered political situation and its effects on *volksdeutsch* research” (German ethnicity research). He defined the new tasks of “*volksdeutsch* scholarship” to be “well-planned active cooperation in securing the entire German *Lebensraum*, that is, in the great and crucial mission assigned to us by the Führer.” He applauded

the integration of Austria and the “former Sudeten lands,” viewing it as proof that German ethnic groups in what had been isolated and border regions outside Germany (*Grenz- und Inseldeutschum*) had now been “intimately” joined to *Deutschum* within Germany. “Borders where open conflict raged or underground subversion festered have now become Reich borders.” However, he stressed the necessity of being on guard, because a new danger was emerging “through the creation of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia”: “The Czechs have centuries of experience in ethnic struggle and possess mindsets that will meet the challenge superbly, particularly in the situation where they are no longer the constitutive people.” This led him, he said, to an inevitable conclusion: “The issue of the Germanic heritage in these lands, of the share of German blood and the German contribution to the political and cultural achievements of the Czechs, is to be pursued on the broadest front possible in order to clarify the prerequisites for the existence and function of Czech culture in the German *Lebensraum*.”

In other words, Brunner believed that the new Greater German Reich offered the Research Associations the opportunity to abandon the defensive position previously needed “to fend off the offensive conducted at the time by the Eastern peoples and their scholarship.” Instead, now was the moment to take the offensive themselves. “I believe that ethnic German research should spring from the idea of *German Lebensraum*, proclaimed as the guiding theme of the latest major decisions. Domestic Germanism and ethnic groups along with their constituent peoples are part of the *Lebensraum*. Ethnic German research should not shy away from reaching beyond the borders of the Reich.” However, the “new situation” also brought about “difficulties.” “No longer are tasks set for us by the need of the day, as they once were; instead, new tasks are to emerge from a long-term political focus. Therefore, the new situation requires even closer contact with the key offices in the Reich [. . .].”⁵⁶

Brunner’s formulations, nebulous rather than clear, would fall again on fertile soil as the war progressed. His remarks at the meeting in Vienna on March 17–18, 1941, to mark the tenth anniversary of the SODFG provide further proof of his “undoubtedly racist, pseudohistorical, and geopolitical arguments,” according to Michael Fahlbusch.⁵⁷ In any case, they perfectly fit the specific pattern of thought so characteristic of Brunner when he talked about the “percentage of Germanic blood in the population” and the “immunization of German ethnic groups against the intellectual influence of foreign ideas of governance,” and then underpinned this also with geopolitical theories.⁵⁸ In this respect the doubts expressed from time to time about the authenticity of

these quotes—based primarily on the fact that their source is a file memorandum summarizing the proceedings at the meeting—have gained no ground.⁵⁹

The fact that Brunner was a pivotal figure in the historical profession since the start of the Second World War is proven also by his assistance with the well-attended Munich exhibition *Deutsche Größe* (German Greatness), which was opened on November 8, 1940, at the Deutsches Museum by its sponsor, Deputy of the Führer Rudolf Heß, and distinguished by a speech given by *Reichsleiter* Alfred Rosenberg and broadcast by the Großdeutscher Rundfunk. The exhibition was basically the brainchild of the Munich historian Karl Alexander von Müller. This “most influential historian in the Nazi state” was invited by the Rosenberg Office (Amt Rosenberg) to contribute to the project in a leadership role.⁶⁰ Whether Brunner was contacted directly by the Amt Rosenberg, with which he maintained close relations until the bitter end of the Third Reich,⁶¹ or whether the initiative originated with Karl Alexander von Müller, the working relationship between the two historians proved fruitful. In fact, when Müller was the only scholar who was asked by the Reich Ministry of Science, Schooling, and National Education to recommend people for the 1940 Verdun Prize, he placed the name of his Viennese colleague on his recommended list of candidates, albeit only in second place.⁶²

This prestigious and—with 3,000 Reichsmarks—valuable prize for historians had been awarded to Müller in 1935.⁶³ Originally the prize had been created in 1844 by the Prussian king Friedrich Wilhelm IV and had been last awarded in 1913. However, it was revived during the Nazi period.⁶⁴ Minister of Science, Schooling, and National Education Bernhard Rust decided in favor of Otto Brunner, despite votes to the contrary by the experts in his own ministry. On August 13, 1941, Brunner wrote to thank the minister for the 1940 Verdun Prize: “Allow me to express my sincerest gratitude for this very honorable distinction. This mark of recognition will be an incentive for me to continue dedicating all my talents to the service of German historiography.”⁶⁵

In 1942 Brunner took part in a *Historiker-Lager der Reichsdozentenführung* (a historians’ retreat sponsored by the Reich Leadership of the University Teachers’ League) in Augsburg, led by Professor Dr. Harold Steinacker, the rector of the “German Alpine University of Innsbruck.”⁶⁶ In Rosenberg’s optimistic opinion, his Main Office of Science had “succeeded in bringing together at the university-teacher retreats the ideologically significant people in the *Dozentenbund* [German University Teachers’ League]. There, ideological problems were wrestled with in presentations and discussions, and the mutually beneficial relationship between science and the NSDAP was promoted in an indirect way, through the scientific discussions.”⁶⁷

Thus it is not surprising that Steinacker—one of the most enthusiastic supporters of Hitler among German historians⁶⁸—entrusted the job of giving the opening lecture to his Viennese colleague. It was to be presented on April 9, 1942, and titled “Deutschland.”⁶⁹ Each speaker was to contrast the “Germans’ becoming a people” with a depiction of “becoming a people” for the English, French, Italians, and Russians. In the case of Germany, Steinacker believed that “a new idea of a people” was at work: “It involves the aspect of race and demands a new *Volksordnung* [national ethnic order], merging nationalism and socialism. It restructures the relations between the people and the state and bases the organization of both on the Führer principle.”⁷⁰ As Brunner was conscripted into military service on April 18, 1942, he could no longer be a speaker at the retreat, which had been postponed to October. Steinacker himself gave the opening lecture instead of Brunner, who was at least able to contribute to the discussion as one of the thirty-six participants.⁷¹

As part of his military responsibilities, Brunner served as a “teacher of history and national politics” at Luftkriegsschule 7 in Tulln/Langenlebarn, where he was stationed from April 1942.⁷² Apparently he fulfilled perfectly what was expected of him. Within just six months, he advanced from being a lieutenant in the reserves to the rank of *Oberleutnant* and was then promoted to *Hauptmann* (captain). In the recommendation for promotion to *Oberleutnant*, dated September 23, 1942, Brunner was evaluated as follows: “He knows how to deal with difficulties. His bearing both on and off duty is adroit and confident. He is firmly grounded in National Socialism and uses this knowledge also in his lectures.”⁷³ The same tenor is also found in the *Beurteilungsnotiz* (evaluation memo) dated April 13, 1943, in connection with his promotion to captain: “He is resourceful and effective in every situation. There can be no doubt about his National Socialist convictions.”⁷⁴

Brunner’s efforts in 1943 to be finally admitted as a member of the NSDAP are also to be seen in this context. According to him, his application of July 1, 1938,⁷⁵ was deferred by the Vienna Gau on May 6, 1940, on grounds of age, until the ban on new party membership admissions was lifted. The Gau made reference to Brunner’s application for admission, which it noted as having been submitted on June 1, 1938. The *Reichsleitung* approved the deferment on July 31, 1940. Three years later, on April 4, 1943, Brunner once again submitted an application, which once again was turned down by the *Reichsleitung* of the NSDAP, on July 16, 1943. However, by this point Brunner could rely on his influential network to further his cause. Evidently his application had been rejected strictly on the grounds of legal technicalities, as is apparent from the “appeal” made by Kurt Knoll, the Vienna Gau head of the University Teach-

ers' League and rector of the Hochschule für Welthandel (University of World Trade), to the "*Kreisleiter* [district leader] of Kreis VI of the NSDAP." He intervened on Brunner's behalf on December 10, 1943.⁷⁶

On December 19, Brunner also received the explicit support of the *Reichsdozentenführer* and the head of the Gaustabsamt of the Vienna Gauleitung, who testified to Brunner's "consistently impeccable National Socialist attitude." It was said that Brunner had "championed National Socialist ideas [...] at a time [...] when a university professor ran a certain risk in doing so." These efforts finally culminated in his acceptance into the party on February 18, 1944, "effective as of January 1, 1941, under the membership number 9 140 316."⁷⁷ Curiously, this occurred at a time when many hitherto enthusiastic supporters in Austria were distancing themselves from National Socialist Germany in light of the increasingly bleak military situation.⁷⁸ These circumstances may have helped secure Brunner the status of indispensability (known as *UK* status) that followed in June 1944. At any rate, Brunner informed the dean of the Philosophy Faculty in a letter dated May 12, 1944, that he had received "several days ago a letter from the *Reichsforschungsrat*" (Reich Research Council) in which he was informed "that [his] 'retrieval from the *Wehrmacht*' was forthcoming."⁷⁹ Previously, on June 22, 1943, and then again on August 30, 1943, "recommendations from the Main Office of Science" of the Amt Rosenberg had reached the Party Chancellery in which the *UK* status was requested for eight history professors, including "Professor Dr. Brunner, Vienna."⁸⁰ These recommendations apparently did not have any immediate consequences, which was not surprising, considering the traditionally tense relationship between Rosenberg and Martin Bormann. The fact that Brunner was finally granted *UK* status in June 1944 was linked to the increasing efforts, evident since December 1943, of the Reich Research Council to have scholars of value to the war effort, including scholars in the humanities, declared "indispensable." The retrieval initiative went by the codename *Sonderelbe Wissenschaft*,⁸¹ and the prerequisite for being included in the program was willingness "to serve in German military research."⁸²

Number five of the thirty-eight names on a list dated March 13, 1944—with the subject "re: *UK* Status of Humanities Scholars, file: Oral agreement with SS *Obersturmbannführer* Dr. Rößner"—was that of "Brunner, Otto, Prof., born April 21, 1898, modern history, Vienna, captain, Thul [*sic*]
Langenlebern near Vienna, Luftkriegsschule."⁸³ Thus, Brunner was one of the remaining thirty-eight persons of the originally planned "contingent of one hundred humanities scholars [selected] for retrieval."⁸⁴ In this way Brunner had not been snatched from "German military research,"⁸⁵ and thus was "se-

cured for the German people” and saved, “unlike many a humanities scholar, from being killed in action.”⁸⁶

Based on present knowledge, the question of Brunner’s specific role in “German military research” cannot be resolved, yet there can be no doubt that such a role actually existed. On October 2, 1944, Brunner’s close associate at the SODFG Dr. Wilfried Krallert wrote the following in a letter to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in his capacity as “executive director of the Southeast German Research Foundation”:

For many months, the current chairman of the Southeast German Research Foundation, Univ. Prof. Dr. Otto Brunner, has been unable to attend actively to his duties at the SODFG because he was in military service. Some time ago he left military service but has been assigned a special task that again prevents him from carrying out his responsibilities for the SODFG. Therefore, he has decided to resign from his position at the SODFG and has instructed me to inform you of this decision and to request, on his behalf, your approval of his resignation from the chairmanship.⁸⁷

A Lost Book: “Der Schicksalsweg des deutschen Volkes”

The “special task” still left Brunner with enough time to attend to the proofs of his book “Der Schicksalsweg des deutschen Volkes” (“The German People’s Road to Destiny”),⁸⁸ which was never published because of the war. “This small book,” the author informed his potential readers in a preface dated “Vienna, October 1944,”⁸⁹ “grew out of the classes I taught for a long period at a Luftkriegsschule. It has no other purpose than to be useful to all those who seek clarity concerning the historical foundations of our struggle for existence.” As he noted, Brunner had wanted “to have the book finished by the end of 1943.”⁹⁰

This work, until recently thought to be lost,⁹¹ gives us deep insight into Brunner’s philosophy of history, a philosophy shaped by *völkisch* and racist thought, precisely because he intended it for a wider audience. A “German ethnic consciousness,” allegedly developed during the time of “the ‘German Movement,’ the name we use to summarize the creative forces of the years 1770–1830” (112–13), was linked by Brunner to the “recognition of the individual as a whole, of all his emotional and intellectual powers, of the ‘*Gemüt*’ [soul] as the ‘sense of Natural Totality’ (Hegel).” “Closely related to this is the present understanding of the concept of the organic as a distinct level of existence. This is the soil in which modern thought on heredity and race

is ultimately rooted, even if it was not yet understood at the time in its full consequentiality" (114). "In the years of collapse after Jena and the German uprising," continued Brunner, it had at least become possible to "understand and clarify" the "concept of the *Volk* as a political entity": "the *Volk* as a community of blood and common descent, characterized by its language, by its intellectual heritage, and by shared political experience" (147). In order to "discover and understand German *Völkheit* [peoplehood] in history, language, and myth, in fable, legend, and poetry, in law and customs," people had looked to "the Germanic north in search of origins, to find the original Germanic essence among the brothers of one's own ancestors" (116). However, ever since the times of Johann Joachim Winkelmann, "the great era of true Hellenism, from Homer to Plato" had also been vitally important to the "German spirit," because it had gained "direct access to a world in which it recognized the existence of a deeply related power derived from an earlier commonality of blood. In Hellenism, we saw the image of a high and noble humanity, one in which we recognized ourselves" (116–17). "It has been left to our era," Brunner maintained, "to recognize once again the connection between Reich, *Volksordnung*, and ideology" (154). Despite the optimism expressed in the philosophy of history presented here, the book also reveals that its author was gripped by a certain degree of pessimism in light of the reversal in the military fortunes of the Greater German Reich on all fronts. Still, he refused to be discouraged, as his words in the book's introduction made evident: "A closer examination reveals the insight that the power to rise up has grown out of the great catastrophes in our history, that in centuries of outward standstill, *Volk*-like forces have survived that were destroyed elsewhere. Thus the years of hardship and misfortune strengthen our belief in the future of our people no less than do the glory days of German history" (11).

Brunner wanted to squelch any doubt about the central importance of all things *völkisch* to German history. The very first sentence of the introduction emphasizes this: "The subject of a German history in the full and true sense is the entire German people and its Reich," as well as the corresponding *Lebensraum* and the "entire German *Volksboden*" (areas inhabited by German-speaking people) (9). The "inevitable" and "necessary" "struggle" associated with that notion also belongs in this context: "Part of the essence of the Germanic mindset is a unique concept of destiny. The Teuton does not fatalistically endure the immutable as the Oriental does; rather, he is willing to undergo the inevitable struggle, with faith in its intrinsic necessity" (14–15). In using such a crude interpretation of destiny, laden with *völkisch* and racist overtones, Brunner was obviously under the influence of a philosophy of

history that Alfred Rosenberg had conveyed in his book *Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts* ("The Myth of the Twentieth Century"). In the context of his statements about the "Germanic concept of destiny," Hitler's chief ideologue contrasted "Semitic fatalism" with the Germanic cast of mind: "The struggling Germanic peoples wittingly accept this destiny in the service of those internal values which they so willingly honor, and they pursue this destiny, without complaint, as free men. [. . .] They know that they also face death, but they consciously and freely accept their duties in the service of tribal honor and fight until their last drop of blood is spent [. . .]."⁹²

Brunner's supposedly historical finding of what he called an "earlier community of blood" between "Teutons" and "Greeks" also reiterates one of Nazism's favorite ideas—one that was vehemently championed by Rosenberg and others—in which "the dream of Nordic humanity in Hellas was the most beautiful of all." "Wave after wave came out of the Danube valley" in order, "as rough masters and warriors," to supplant "the declining civilization of pre-Asiatic traders," in the process of which "Nordic strength, diminished by continual struggle, was continuously revived through sea migrations."⁹³

Brunner's evaluation of the German colonization of the East is hardly surprising: "When the German farmer moved eastward and cultivated the woodlands and swamps, he was searching there for new *Lebensraum* for himself and his children, but in doing so he expanded the overall German *Volksboden*." Naturally, in his depiction Brunner paid tribute—as he had always done—to the achievements of the people of the "Southeast German lands," who had known how to effectively fend off the dangers charging in from the East (9).

A statement at the end of Brunner's introduction warrants the greatest interest. Here we find the core of his self-image as a historian. Apparently, he deeply disdained independent, critical historical scholarship: "Whoever thinks he can be above it all lapses into a neutrality that is often erroneously termed objective. Whoever places himself outside the current of history is unable to feel its driving force." For this reason, Brunner argues that history can "be written only from one's own committed political standpoint." And once again, the soldierly side of "Captain Brunner" comes to the fore: "The soldier knows his enemy; he is determined to fight until the enemy is destroyed. But nothing is further from his mind than to demean and belittle the enemy. He gives him the respect due to him. This soldierly attitude also applies to the past; it is most closely related to the attitude of the historian" (11).

Brunner later wrote a defense of his unpublished book. This document, which has been preserved in his personnel file, was quite obviously used in connection with his denazification trial, which started in May 1945. In it, he

attempted to depict himself merely as a follower of National Socialism. He had, he believed, “maintained scientific objectivity,” and “on those few final pages about National Socialism and the events leading to the war” he had “expressed [himself] as cautiously as was possible at the time.”⁹⁴ It is not clear which aspect of such a self-evaluation is more amazing: his 180-degree turn in favor of scientific objectivity or his considerable degree of chutzpah in assuming that no one would notice the book’s last chapter, *Vom ersten zum zweiten Weltkrieg* (“From the First to the Second World War,” 267). Here the reader can find no trace of any reticence on Brunner’s part. Certainly he will be shown some leniency for having extolled, in a manner specific to the times, the First World War’s “front generation,” to which he belonged: “But what shines steadily throughout these four years is the heroism of the German soldier, in whom the frontline experience had deeply embedded itself. This was the source from which the National Socialist movement later drew the strength for its resurgence” (276). His harsh reckoning with the Weimar Republic also fits neatly into the standard conservative and antisemitic framework of the time (277–78):

The majority parties, Democrats, Center Party, and Marxists, were in charge here and gave Germany in 1919 in Weimar a liberal-democratic constitution based on the Western model. From those groups, no real resistance could be expected. Economic breakdown and intellectual decline progressed uncontrollably, most strongly influenced by the Jews, whose importance was ever increasing. Communism continued to spread. [. . .] The most terrible warning was the shocking drop in the number of births, which brought the extinction of the German people into the realm of possibility.

However, when Brunner eventually mentioned the era that dawned in 1933 with the emergence of the “new Germany,” he abandoned all subtlety and revealed his complete and utter acceptance of National Socialism, including its darkest aspects (284–85):

In the days of collapse, in Germany’s greatest need, Adolf Hitler decided to start a movement to liberate the German people. After fourteen years of the toughest struggle and despite all setbacks, he led the NSDAP to victory. On the day of the seizure of power, January 30, 1933, the Führer set about laying the foundation needed to achieve his aims. The purpose was not to reestablish the German Reich of 1914, but to incorporate all cohesive German settlements into a Greater German Reich and to se-

cure its *Lebensraum*. Therefore, the National Socialist movement placed at the heart of its political thought the idea of the people as an entity bonded by blood. [. . .] The NSDAP initiated a new political direction for the entire German people; it neutralized internal enemies, the parties, and Jewry. Fundamental laws started the biological revitalization of the German people.

In Brunner's eyes the "annexation of the *Ostmark*" brought about by the Führer meant the "shift of political influence in the southeastern region"; the Munich Agreement had made the "profoundly" longed-for "homecoming" possible for the "3.5 million Sudeten Germans separated from their *Volksgenossen* [racial comrades] in the Reich only by a national border." He argued that "what then remained was a rump Czecho-Slovakia, which soon proved unable to survive on its own. So in March 1939 the Führer created the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, while in the east Slovakia became independent and came under the protection of the Reich" (287). The outbreak of the Second World War—in which "Japan, [. . .] like Germany and Italy, fights to secure *Lebensraum* for its population of millions, crowded together in the tiniest of spaces"—was solely the fault of Great Britain and France, because neither London nor Paris had wanted to allow Germany a "free hand to settle, here [in the East], the vital matters threatening its existence" (288–89). Inevitably, the consequence was a "gigantic crisis," in which a struggle was being fought "for the self-assertion of the German people and a fundamentally new concept of order in the world." This crisis, he went on to claim, "is no accident and is not the result of human weaknesses and errors but of portentous necessity" (289–90). Brunner concluded his work with a dramatic appeal: "When the German people began to lift itself out of the catastrophe of its earlier history, it found that its place was occupied. In repeated efforts and setbacks it has risen up to face the final decisive hour. Now it must put itself to the test" (290). By calling for Germany to "put itself to the test," Brunner was propagating a stance that was urged on the German population repeatedly toward the end of the war in key speeches, newspaper articles, and books. In any case, the idea of a "test" confronting the German people became one of the prominent rhetorical phrases used in the final phase of the Third Reich.⁹⁵

As far as Brunner's own stance was concerned, it can be established that he "stood up to the test" by serving the Nazi regime almost to the end. In Berlin on January 21, 1945, a Sunday, Otto Brunner gave a lecture on Otto the Great, although by then the capital city of the Reich lay largely in ruins. This lecture would not be published in his lifetime, even though he had kept the

manuscript carefully stored away among his personal papers until his death. Yet its topic was a befitting one. In the Battle of Lechfeld in 955, King Otto the Great succeeded in defending “the southeast once again” with the help of a “military levy of all German tribes.” In 1945 as well, the unification of all Germans and their resolve and perseverance were the prerequisites for what Brunner thought could still be a possible victory over the enemy, an enemy that once again came from the East, just as the Hungarians had invaded in the time of Otto the Great.⁹⁶ His lecture was part of a series, which was given the characteristic title *Weltgeschichtliche Bewährungsstunden* (“World-Historical Moments of Truth”) and was organized “in cooperation with the *Deutsches Auslandswissenschaftliches Institut*” (German Institute of Foreign Studies) and “styled after [Johann Gottlieb] Fichte’s *Addresses to the German Nation*.” The idea for the series came from Brunner’s old acquaintance *Reichsleiter* Alfred Rosenberg,⁹⁷ with whom he had been in contact at least since 1938. When Brunner started to give his lecture in the Schinkelsaal at the *Deutsches Auslandswissenschaftliches Institut* at eleven thirty on a beautifully sunny winter morning, he was probably delivering the last in a series of lectures by historians who were both prominent and steeped in National Socialism, such as Helmut Berve from Munich and his colleague Wilhelm Weber from Berlin.⁹⁸

Otto Brunner after the Second World War

Although Brunner faced an uncertain future after the Second World War, he eventually had a breakthrough in the years following 1954. In Hamburg he not only successfully revived his university career, which had been interrupted for nine years by his forced retirement, but also single-mindedly continued his *cursus honorum*. In 1958 he became the dean of the Faculty of Humanities and in 1959/60 he was elected to serve as president of the entire University of Hamburg.⁹⁹ The universities of Heidelberg and Münster each awarded him an honorary doctoral degree. Brunner was a member of the academies of sciences in Vienna, Mainz, and Bavaria. However, the intensive effort he made to gain German citizenship for himself and his family immediately after taking what was his third official oath—in this case to uphold a liberal-democratic constitution the likes of which he had so reviled earlier—shows that his thinking was still highly influenced by *völkisch* ideas and that he continued at the same time to keep an eye on other career possibilities. As Brunner wrote in September 1950 to Carl Schmitt, who had also been forced into retirement, he would have had a hard time imagining “how I could have taught university lecture courses

in recent years. With all due respect for an independent Austria, I still cannot cease to see myself as belonging to the German people, and that is not officially allowed here.”¹⁰⁰ However, backed by the university, the efforts Brunner made were eventually rewarded, and he was granted German citizenship on May 3, 1956, while being allowed to keep his Austrian citizenship.¹⁰¹

By the second half of the 1950s, Brunner was once again one of the leading historians in his discipline. Together with Werner Conze and Reinhart Koselleck, he edited the eight-volume encyclopedic work *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*,¹⁰² and in 1956 a collection of his lectures and essays on social and constitutional history was published for the first time, under the title *Neue Wege der Sozialgeschichte*. In a revised and expanded edition published in 1968,¹⁰³ the terms *Abendland* (Occident) and *Alteuropa* (Old Europe) became the central focus of his historical observations.

This overall concept of an era¹⁰⁴ can in turn be considered as proof that, as Oexle has argued, continuity exists among interpretive models. There is obviously a close conceptual proximity between the evocation of *Alteuropa*, which began in West Germany after the Second World War, and the “Europa-Rausch”¹⁰⁵ (Europe frenzy) that erupted in Nazi Germany after the victory over France in 1940, intensified after the invasion of the Soviet Union,¹⁰⁶ and became the object of Brunner’s homage in his “Schicksalsweg des deutschen Volkes”:

It was clear from the start that, for the German people, this was a matter of to be or not to be. In the old Europe, worn down by the antagonisms of the world powers, there was no place for the Greater German Reich. This could exist only with the successful creation of a “New Europe” under its leadership, a Europe that was in a position to hold its own as a *Großraum* [greater space] among the other *Großräume* on earth. (288)

Basically, the foreign policy situation during the Cold War era was essentially unchanged. The enemy still sat in the “East,” threatening the *Abendland*, the Western world. The only difference now was that the enemy had reached the Elbe River and thus stood in the middle of Europe, in the middle of Germany.¹⁰⁷ Brunner had reflected on Otto the Great’s victory at Lechfeld, near Augsburg, in his lecture in Berlin on January 21, 1945, at which point Soviet armies had already reached the Oder River and thus were not far from the Reich capital. But only ten years later, in July 1955, sixty thousand people gathered in Augsburg’s Rosenau Stadium to celebrate once again the preservation of the Occident a thousand years before. This took place in the awareness that “now,

[. . .] again, the masses of the East [stand] not much farther from this city [than a thousand years ago].”¹⁰⁸

Brunner’s concept of the *Abendland* differed somewhat from other concepts that were current after 1945, with their particular emphasis on the “Christian” and “ancient Roman” aspects of the Western world. The reason why these aspects did not play such a prominent role in the way Brunner conceived the Western world after 1945 has to do with his specific understanding of antiquity, as presented earlier in “Schicksalsweg des deutschen Volkes” (116–17). What interested Brunner about the ancient world both then and in the postwar period was particularly the very manly and preferably noble Greek hero, who was just as much the master “of his inner life” as he was “of house and polis” thanks to his commitment to virtue (*Arete*).¹⁰⁹ Brunner’s greatly simplified image of Greek heroism may have been the result of his study of Rosenberg’s *Mythus*, in which Hitler’s chief ideologist had similarly exalted the type of the Greek hero. Both men were convinced that the golden age of such heroes was the period between Homer and Plato.¹¹⁰

Above all else, Brunner’s post-1945 emphasis on the European-Occidental world demonstrates his intellectual suppleness, which enabled him to adapt to the prevailing zeitgeist. A good example of this is his 1954 Hamburg University Lecture on *Abendländisches Geschichtsdenken* (Western historical thought), which the freshly appointed full professor gave in one of the larger academic auditoriums of the Hanseatic city.¹¹¹ Brunner traced the life and work of Karl Löwith, a historian of philosophy who had been driven out of Germany in 1936, had eventually immigrated to the United States, and had been appointed to a position at Heidelberg University in 1952. With the help of numerous boldly interspersed Latin quotes from Christian authorities, as well as those of late antiquity and medieval times, Brunner demonstrated to his audience the full scope of his knowledge of the treasures of Western culture. He ended his lecture with the following conclusion: “Historical thought is European in its origins, a Western achievement.”¹¹²

In somewhat coded terms Brunner also indicated to his audience at the end of his lecture the way he wished his own “historical thought” during the Nazi era to be evaluated. He did this by citing, in addition to Löwith, the educator Theodor Litt, another person of great moral stature and a man no less prominent in the early years of the FRG as an opponent of the Third Reich.¹¹³ “We are confronted with the ‘leading and misleading paths of historical thought,’” said Brunner, quoting Litt, “but sometimes we must travel to the end of an erroneous path in order to recognize it as such, before we find the

right one. What this requires is a scholarly mindset that is conscious of its own limitations.”¹¹⁴ Yet we may justifiably doubt whether, nine years after the war had ended, Brunner was truly conscious of the erroneous path that he himself had traveled, in full confidence of its validity, between 1933 and 1945. He does not appear to have succeeded, not even within the framework of a single academic speech, to free himself from those earlier spirits to which he had clung for so long: “There does indeed exist that ‘spirit’ of the world, of humanity, of time, of the peoples, and their ‘bodies’ also exist: society, classes, races, the peoples’ bodies. However, what has become highly controversial is their relationship to one another.”¹¹⁵ Litt had placed great emphasis on the general “idea of a person’s responsibility toward history and life, particularly in terms of revising the German conception of history.”¹¹⁶ Whereas Brunner quoted Litt repeatedly, he himself had quite obviously evaded this responsibility. Brunner was far from being conscious of his own guilt and the guilt of the German people, something that quite obviously tormented Litt. Brunner’s unfailing adherence to ideas already developed under National Socialism is also manifested in his concept of the *Ganzes Haus* (whole household), headed ideally by a “noble lord of the household.”¹¹⁷ Brunner emphasized what in his view was the markedly anti-economic orientation and binding character of his *Ganzes Haus* model, which he took for granted for an *Alteuropa* stretching from Greek antiquity to the Enlightenment. Nowadays historians regard this model, in particular, as an unrealistic and romanticized social utopia with a decidedly male perspective.¹¹⁸ The same must be said for his much-lauded but little-read work *Adeliges Landleben und europäischer Geist* (“Noble Rural Life and the European Spirit”),¹¹⁹ written during his forced retirement after the war and published in 1949. The truly notable aspect of Brunner’s depiction is that in 1949, four years after the end of the war, he believed himself to be mired in what he called the “present-day intellectual crisis,”¹²⁰ which he linked not to the collapse of the Third Reich but rather to the continuing failure to overcome the collapse of *Alteuropa*: “This new world has not yet managed to create enduring forms of human coexistence and an intellectual life befitting such a world.”¹²¹ Reading between the lines, we repeatedly find evidence of Brunner’s regret that National Socialism failed in its attempt, which he had so emphatically supported, to revive *alteuropäisch* “forms of human coexistence” and “an intellectual life befitting such a world” in a modified form. For Brunner, the *alteuropäisch* society culminated in the emergence of “masterful men, breeders of large livestock who, in the process of successfully taming and thus subjugating large, superior animals, developed a lordly attitude and a stronger rationality” that enabled them “to impose” their lordship over

“primitive, land-cultivating (hoe-farming) peoples with a matriarchal social structure and a magical-animistic mentality.” The characteristically *völkisch* agrarian romanticism¹²² he expressed here is based on ideas that originated in the nineteenth century and were adopted, developed further, and misused by National Socialism in propaganda and legislation.¹²³

The popularity of *Land and Lordship* in particular, Brunner’s most important work, continued after 1945. The first German edition had appeared in 1939, followed soon afterward by two further editions in 1942 and 1943. After the war, the book was published in a fourth and a fifth edition in 1959 and 1963, respectively. The latest reprint appeared in 1990, and the book is still lauded as a standard work of historiography.¹²⁴ This assessment again supports the hypothesis of the continuity of interpretive models and key ideas beyond 1945.¹²⁵ Like his academic ally Werner Conze,¹²⁶ Brunner merely “adapted [his] thought style.”¹²⁷ First, the subtitle of his book underwent a metamorphosis. The politically laden term “Southeast Germany,” which was automatically understood during the Nazi era as meaning the *Ostmark* as well as *Baiern* (Bavaria), mutated into “Austria.”¹²⁸ In several other instances Brunner replaced terms that had become problematic with unsuspecting-sounding ones: instead of *Völksgeschichte* (People’s History), Brunner now spoke of “structural history.”¹²⁹ Also to be seen in this context is his abandonment of what he subtly termed “outdated” literature, albeit without explaining to the reader why this literature was outdated. There was no fundamental change in the ideological substance of his remarks in *Land and Lordship* in the first postwar edition, in 1959. Therefore, one reviewer was disappointed, wishing that Brunner “had not aligned himself so unilaterally with the dangerously suspect Carl Schmitt.”¹³⁰ The outline and organization of the book remained the same, except for a “more expansive conclusion” and the inclusion of more recent literature. This led the same reviewer to note, “It may be a moot question whether the friends and users of this almost ‘classic’ book are truly well served; I personally would have preferred the unrevised republication, perhaps augmented by supplements that were identified as such.”¹³¹

The fact that Brunner’s views were basically unchanged is manifest especially in his interpretation of medieval violence in the form of war and feud, to which he held steadfast even after the war. Characteristically, Brunner explained such violence as a socially recognized legal remedy. Such a view was a deliberate challenge to the traditional constitutional and legal historiography of liberal historians and legal scholars that dominated the field until the 1930s. The overwhelming majority of these scholars had stigmatized the feud as the rule of brute force.¹³² But Brunner’s attempt to rehabilitate autonomous

force in *Land and Lordship* was in keeping with a *Denkstil* that had been cultivated since the mid-1920s by right-wing conservative intellectuals strongly influenced by Nazism, among them the majority of German constitutional scholars.¹³³ Well suited to this way of thinking was Brunner's view that, in the Middle Ages, it was accepted practice to literally engage in violence in pursuit of one's rights.¹³⁴ Therefore, at the end of his famous chapter on the feud, Brunner adopted an ironic tone to distance himself from conventional liberal concepts of law and, citing Heinrich von Kleist's *Michael Kohlhaas*, he interpreted the use of the "law of the fist" as "one of the strongest moral impulses of all social life, the individual's sense of right."¹³⁵ This line of argument should also be seen in the context of a surge in Kleist's popularity in the German-speaking world as of 1933, with Michael Kohlhaas depicted as a symbol of the well-behaved German and the entire German people as Michael Kohlhaas.¹³⁶

Such a denigration of the liberal constitutional state and its legal procedures continued to be attractive, at least to some degree, among non-lawyers even after the end of the Second World War. In the eyes of people without legal training, a barely comprehensible, out of touch, and increasingly complicated legal system still appeared to be in the hands of legal experts who supported the system, meaning the liberal constitutional state. Yet this system was traditionally and fundamentally distrusted on both the right and the left. To this perception, Brunner and others counterposed an idealized medieval model emphasizing simple and clear—because seemingly "orderly"¹³⁷—binary structures, such as "the ruler and the ruled" (*Herrscher und Beherrschte*), "obedience and loyalty" (*Gehorsam und Treue*), "protection and safeguard" (*Schutz und Schirm*), "the seigneur and the vassal" (*Grundherr und Grundholde*), "household and kin group" (*Haus und Sippe*), and "friend and foe" (*Freund und Feind*). Brunner's rehabilitation of medieval violence in particular was repeatedly embraced by parts of a younger generation of medieval historians, starting at the end of the 1980s.¹³⁸ By its very nature, the historical context in which *Land and Lordship* was written interested this generation only marginally or not at all. These young historians did not seek to "excoriate their academic mentors."¹³⁹ All the more eagerly, however, they seized upon Brunner's concept of the feud. His interpretation legitimized the use of force because, according to him, it was subject to strict rules and thus remained fundamentally contained and limited. Medieval violence did not seem to have exhibited the disconcerting aspects that characterized modern violence, particularly in the age of extremes. These aspects included excessiveness and totality. Thus, Brunner and his followers presented a fundamentally "different" Middle Ages, in sharp contrast to a present-day world that many viewed critically.¹⁴⁰ From this perspective, the medieval world

emerged as a positive foil, seemingly not afflicted by precisely those defects for which modernity was and still is held responsible.

His idea of a fundamental dissimilarity between the Middle Ages and the modern era put Brunner in perfect agreement with a contemporary *Denkstil*, one that was adopted by many experts, not only in the field of medieval history but also in other disciplines of medieval studies. For example, Hans Robert Jauß, a leading scholar of medieval French literature and perhaps the best-known representative of the Poetics and Hermeneutics research group in Constance, coined the catchphrase about the “alterity” of the Middle Ages, a term still in frequent use today.¹⁴¹

Also associated with *Land and Lordship* is the firm rejection of a concept of “the state” with respect to the medieval period.¹⁴² Brunner considered this absence a key indicator of the period’s otherness. Specifically, his argument that the feud was accepted by society made it nearly imperative to emphasize an absence of any medieval statehood. The contention that a person was allowed to take the law into his own hands in pursuit of his rights implies the non-existence of a state or state-like structures. Every state, even a very rudimentarily developed medieval one, would find itself fundamentally undermined or at least challenged by the autonomous use of force. The fact that more or less successful attempts to delegitimize the feud were initiated very early in the Middle Ages raises serious doubts about the acceptance of the feud within society,¹⁴³ a theory made popular by Brunner, and might indicate that medieval statehood was at least gradually developing. His adamant denial of any form of statehood might again be due to his overall *Denkstil*, which was characteristic of a specific point in history, as *völkisch* thought never tired of asserting the primacy of the *Volk* and all things *völkisch* over the state and all that pertained to it. Harold Steinacker, Brunner’s like-minded colleague from Innsbruck, put it this way: “History is not about states, it is about peoples. ‘In a word, *Volk* is above *Staat*. That is our basic law.’” As Renate Spreitzer explains, “Steinacker in general held the opinion that ‘*Volk* is everything, the individual is nothing; the tribes and estates and classes, the religious denominations, political parties, dynasties, states are nothing next to the *Volk*; the *Volk* is the end and the beginning of everything.’”¹⁴⁴

In the meantime, more than 30 years since Brunner’s death, a new generation of historians has emerged who critically question the seemingly irrefutable truths and insights linked to his name. The popularity of the term “feud” has declined noticeably in the academic disciplines, perhaps also because Brunner’s ties to a specific time have become problematic for many. It has been replaced by the distinctly broader, more neutral-sounding “conflict,” a term

that is almost ubiquitous in research, and a category under which considerably more can be subsumed than under “feud.” Furthermore, the author of a recently published study, Florian Dirks, stated somberly “that at present, there is little consensus in research about what is understood by the term ‘feud.’ While this may appear confusing and complex, on the one hand, it is due, on the other hand, to terminology found in the sources that is itself not exactly clear.”¹⁴⁵

However, the alternative interpretation put forth by Gadi Algazi was by no means received wholeheartedly. Distancing himself firmly from Brunner, Algazi interpreted the feud as an instrument used by the nobility to enforce social discipline and thereby to assert its absolute claim to lordship over the peasant classes.¹⁴⁶ Therefore, a middle course was suggested, with feuds to be understood first and foremost as “social practices” that took place in the “public sphere of politics” and did indeed leave actors with some options, as indicated especially by the quite divergent courses of various conflicts. In this interpretation, which of the options the actors eventually chose—be it exclusively the use of force or reliance on the mediating services of a third party—was dependent on “the perceptual horizon of the public-social space.” And, one should add, it might have also depended on how well a potential feuding party was equipped to use force. Hence this approach, whereby we “understand the feud first as a singular conflict with its own intrinsic logic,” offers us an opportunity to “check” the “leveling effect of macro-historical explanatory approaches.”¹⁴⁷

As part of the revision of Brunner’s feud concept in recent scholarship, it is not surprising that even the question of the medieval state, an issue previously considered anachronistic, can now be posed again.¹⁴⁸ A more careful view has also been adopted with regard to the differentiation between public and private, a distinction expressly labeled anachronistic by Brunner but now deemed acceptable,¹⁴⁹ if only in the form of a “controlled anachronism.”¹⁵⁰ Recently, Jörg Feuchter severely criticized Brunner, calling his argument a typical “apodictic assessment” by the “master medievalist,” for which Brunner had not provided sufficient proof and which has led to a veritable “thought barrier” due to its acceptance and explicit confirmation by the “master philosopher” Jürgen Habermas. Both of these men shared a view of the Middle Ages steeped in alterity, albeit in opposite ways.¹⁵¹

Objections have also been raised to an overly harmonizing interpretation of the warlike violence of the medieval period, which Brunner had significantly facilitated by equating war with the feud. A closer look, however, reveals this understanding as a special path taken by German medievalists. Committed to a relativistic constructivism, they clearly underestimate the reality and the extent

of violence in belligerent conflicts, the majority of which were conducted in anything but a chivalrous manner.¹⁵² As early as 1987, at a conference in Trent, Italy, considerable doubts were expressed about the soundness of Brunner's depiction of the Middle Ages and the early modern period,¹⁵³ and doubts as to the validity of his interpretations have continued to increase to this day. The harshest criticism leveled against Brunner recently has come from Peter Moraw, one of the most prominent German medieval historians:

From today's perspective, one can rightly call the selection of his sources manipulated and one-sided—especially when compared with the wide-ranging claim to validity of the assertions. One can also speak of the subjugation of the diversity of the realities, of time and space, to pre-conceived time-bound opinions that more likely can lay claim only to selective validity. [. . .] Generalizing, one can describe the access to the medieval past in those days, characterized by a preselection and conceptual pre-sorting of the material that is hardly conceivable today, as being enormously specific to its time, harmonizing, and conforming. [. . .] This applied especially to Brunner's concentration on the feud as a central, "regulative" concept of the Middle Ages rather than as means that can be understood in various ways as working to the advantage of the strongest, be they one or many.¹⁵⁴

The very harsh accusations that Brunner leveled against the "liberalistic" legal and constitutional historians whom he so thoroughly despised—namely, that they were obviously linked to specific times and values, specifically to the culture of the middle classes during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—were also applicable to him, probably to an even greater degree. He was conspicuously tied to particular times and values, in his case to *völkisch*-national categories. He remained fully committed to these not only as a young or relatively young man and scholar in the 1930s and 1940s but throughout his entire life. If the notion that Germany experienced a "zero hour" when the Third Reich collapsed has now become definitively obsolete, this notion concerns also some parts of German historiography after 1945, particularly the writings of Otto Brunner.

Notes

1. This contribution is a considerably shortened version of my original publication "Gut durch die Zeiten gekommen: Otto Brunner und der Nationalsozialismus" in *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 66, no. 1 (January 2018): 117–60.

2. Brunner could “not return to the University of Vienna [...] despite the relatively favorable judgment handed down by the special commissions.” On Brunner’s denazification procedure, see Roman Pfefferle and Hans Pfefferle, *Glimpflich entnazifiziert: Die Professorenschaft der Universität Wien von 1944 in den Nachkriegsjahren* (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2014), 150–52, here 151.

3. Alfons Söllner, *Deutsche Politikwissenschaftler in der Emigration: Studien zu ihrer Akkulturation und Wirkungsgeschichte* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1996), 98: “Carl Schmitt is the ‘crown jurist of the Third Reich’—this equation by his earlier friend Waldemar Gurian in 1934 provides the definitive cue. And it would remain the main leitmotiv of emigrant literature into the 1940s.”

4. In a letter to Carl Schmitt dated September 2, 1950, Brunner wrote, “With family, apartment, and books, I got through those times well; however, I have been forced to retire and now have to figure out how I can get by modestly.” Rheinisches Hauptstaatsarchiv Düsseldorf (hereafter: HStA Düsseldorf), Nachlass (personal papers) Carl Schmitt, RW 265–2112.

5. See Eduard Mühle, *Für Volk und deutschen Osten: Der Historiker Hermann Aubin und die deutsche Ostforschung* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 2005).

6. The relevant presentations at the German Historians’ Convention and other papers dealing with this topic are collected in a volume by Winfried Schulze and Otto Gerhard Oexle, eds., *Deutsche Historiker im Nationalsozialismus* (Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer Taschenbuch, 1999). See also Ingo Haar, *Historiker im Nationalsozialismus: Deutsche Geschichtswissenschaft und der “Volkstumskampf” im Osten* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000); Anne Christine Nagel, *Im Schatten des Dritten Reichs: Mittelalterforschung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1945–1970* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005).

7. On the historical profession, see Frank-Rutger Hausmann, “*Deutsche Geisteswissenschaft*” im Zweiten Weltkrieg: Die “Aktion Ritterbusch” (1940–1945), 3rd ed. (Heidelberg: Synchron, 2007), 177–203. See also Hartmut Lehmann and Otto Gerhard Oexle, eds., *Nationalsozialismus in den Kulturwissenschaften*, vol. 1: *Fächer, Milieus, Karrieren*; vol. 2: *Leitbegriffe, Deutungsmuster, Paradigmenkämpfe: Erfahrungen und Transformationen im Exil* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004).

8. For a more detailed account, see Jens Thiel, “Nutzen und Grenzen des Generationenbegriffs für die Wissenschaftsgeschichte: Das Beispiel der ‘unabkömmlichen’ Geisteswissenschaftler am Ende des Dritten Reiches,” in Matthias Middell, Ulrike Thoms and Frank Uekötter, eds., *Verräumlichung, Vergleich, Generationalität: Dimensionen der Wissenschaftsgeschichte* (Leipzig: Akademische Verlagsanstalt, 2004), 111–32, here 111–18; Nagel, *Schatten*, 13–16.

9. In this context it has been referred to, among other things, as “a widespread cult of masculinity, toughness, uncompromisingness and objectivity”: Patrick Krassnitzer, “Existieren generationelle Stile in den Bevölkerungswissenschaften? Ein Werkstattbericht,” in Middell, Thoms and Uekötter, eds., *Verräumlichung*, 95–110, here 105–6.

10. Ulrich Herbert, *Best: Biographische Studien über Radikalismus, Weltanschauung und Vernunft, 1903–1989* (Bonn: Dietz, 1996), 43.

11. For this analytical concept, associated with the name Ludwik Fleck, see Thomas Etzemüller, “Kontinuität und Adaption eines Denkstils: Werner Conzes intellektueller

Übertritt in die Nachkriegszeit,” in Bernd Weisbrod, ed., *Akademische Vergangenheitspolitik: Beiträge zur Wissenschaftskultur der Nachkriegszeit* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2002), 123–46, here 125–26. Lutz Raphael also refers to “Ludwik Fleck’s concept of *Denkstil* in the sociology of knowledge” in his contribution “‘Ordnung’ zwischen Geist und Rasse: Kulturwissenschaftliche Ordnungssemantik im Nationalsozialismus,” in Lehmann and Oexle, eds., *Nationalsozialismus*, vol. 2, 115–37, here 118.

12. See Otto Brunner, Werner Conze and Reinhart Koselleck, eds., *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, 8 vols. (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1972–97).

13. See Gadi Algazi, *Herrengewalt und Gewalt der Herren im späten Mittelalter: Herrschaft, Gegenseitigkeit und Sprachgebrauch* (Frankfurt a. M.: Campus Verlag, 1996); idem, “Otto Brunner: ‘Konkrete Ordnung’ und Sprache der Zeit,” in Peter Schöttler, ed., *Geschichtsschreibung als Legitimationswissenschaft 1918–1945* (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1997), 166–203.

14. Otto Gerhard Oexle, “Leitbegriffe—Deutungsmuster—Paradigmenkämpfe: Über Vorstellungen vom ‘Neuen Europa’ in Deutschland 1944,” in Lehmann and Oexle, *Nationalsozialismus*, vol. 2, 13–40, here 40; Nagel, *Schatten*, 19.

15. The following are some, but far from all, of the obituaries written on the occasion of Brunner’s death: Erwin Auer, “Univ.-Professor Otto Brunner,” *Wiener Geschichtsblätter* 37, no. 1 (1982): 178–79; Peter Blickle, “Otto Brunner (1898–1982),” *Historische Zeitschrift* 236, no. 1 (December 1983): 779–81; Ludwig Buisson, “Das wissenschaftliche Werk,” in *Zum Gedenken an Otto Brunner 1898–1982: Ansprachen auf der Akademischen Gedenkfeier am 1. Dezember 1982* (Hamburg: Pressestelle der Universität, 1983), 13–32; Werner Conze, “Nachruf Otto Brunner (1898–1982),” *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 69, no. 3 (July 1982): 452–53; Adam Wandruszka, “Otto Brunner,” *Almanach der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften für das Jahr 1982* 132 (1983): 387–97; Otto Friedrich Winter, “Nachruf: In Memoriam Otto Brunner,” *Mitteilungen des Österreichischen Staatsarchivs* 36 (1983): 557–63; Harald Zimmermann, “Nachrufe Otto Brunner,” *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 39 (1983): 352–53; Erich Zöllner, “Nachruf Otto Brunner,” *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 90, no. 3–4 (December 1982): 519–22.

16. This is certainly not surprising in the case of Werner Conze, one of Brunner’s closest ideological allies after the Second World War. Conze himself was also involved in *Völkstumsarbeit*; see Conze, “Nachruf.”

17. This is the wording used by Prof. Dr. Jürgen Deininger, speaking on behalf of the History Faculty at the University of Hamburg, in his opening remarks as published in *Zum Gedenken an Otto Brunner*, 9–11, here 9. Just as euphoric in his assessment was Hans-Werner Goetz, “Geschichtswissenschaft in Hamburg im ‘Dritten Reich,’” in Rainer Nicolaysen and Axel Schildt, eds., *100 Jahre Geschichtswissenschaft in Hamburg* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 2011), 103–60, here 155–57.

18. See Thomas Krzenek, “Brünn/Brno,” in *Online-Lexikon zur Kultur und Geschichte der Deutschen im östlichen Europa*, 2013, accessed November 12, 2019, ome-lexikon.uni-oldenburg.de/54186.html.

19. See *Jahresbericht des Ersten Deutschen Staatsgymnasiums in Brünn für das Schul-*

jahr 1908/09 (Brno 1909), 58–59, accessed November 12, 2019, digital.ub.uni-duesseldorf.de/uldbsp/periodical/titleinfo/3785086.

20. On “the bitter end” of the war, see Anton Sichelstiel, *Das k.k. Schützenregiment St. Pölten Nr. 21: Seine Friedens- und Kriegsgeschichte* (Vienna: Einundzwanziger-Schützen- und Landsturmabteilung, 1930), here 245–47. In this context the author’s remarks (243) on the ethnic composition of the regiment in the summer of 1918 are notable: “It is also interesting that at the time the regiment consisted of the following nationalities: German-Austrians 64 percent, Czechs 6 percent, Poles 13 percent, Slovenes 8 percent, Ruthenians 9 percent. It must be said that all fought bravely.”

21. Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Archiv der Republik, UWFuK, BMU, PA, Sign. 10 Brunner, Otto (Personalakte), “Schreiben Kurator der wiss. Hochschulen in Wien an den Rektor der Universität Wien, 30.9.1940.”

22. See Otto Brunner, *Land und Herrschaft: Grundfragen der territorialen Verfassungsgeschichte Südostdeutschlands im Mittelalter*, 2nd expanded ed. (Brünn, Munich, and Vienna: Rohrer, 1942), xxiv.

23. Archiv der Universität Wien (hereafter: UAW), Dekanat der Philosophischen Fakultät, D.-Zl. 136.

24. Mitchell G. Ash, “Die Universität Wien in den politischen Umbrüchen des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts,” in idem and Josef Ehmer, eds., *Universität, Politik, Gesellschaft* (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2015), 29–172, here 60–89, quote on 89.

25. See Stefan Lenk, “Chancen sozialer Mobilität an der Universität Wien im 20. Jahrhundert: Brüche und Kontinuitäten bei der sozialen Herkunft der Studierenden,” in *ibid.*, 565–618, here 573–76.

26. Dr. Stephanie Brunner, born Staudinger, Brunner’s wife since February 24, 1927, had also studied history and geography and, like her husband, came from a university-educated civil service milieu. Her father, Dr. Friedrich F. A. Staudinger (died 1905), had been a *Staatsanwalt Substitut* (deputy state prosecutor): UAW, Philosophische Fakultät, Oesterr. Institut für Geschichtsforschung, Personalblatt, “Anzeige über Verheiratung, 30.8.1938.” She thus fit the sociographic profile of the first generations of women students at the University of Vienna. See Waltraud Heindl, “Bildung und Emanzipation: Studentinnen an der Universität Wien,” in Ash and Ehmer, eds., *Universität*, 529–63.

27. See Klaus Taschwer, “Nachrichten von der antisemitischen Kampfzone: Die Universität Wien im Spiegel und unter dem Einfluss der Tageszeitungen, 1920–1933,” in Margarete Grandner and Thomas König, eds., *Reichweiten und Außensichten: Die Universität Wien als Schnittstelle wissenschaftlicher Entwicklungen und gesellschaftlicher Umbrüche* (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2015), 99–126, here 108. On antisemitism in academic circles, see the summary by Klaus Taschwer, *Hochburg des Antisemitismus: Der Niedergang der Universität Wien im 20. Jahrhundert* (Vienna: Czernin Verlag, 2015).

28. Idem, “Nachrichten,” in Grandner and König, eds., *Reichweiten*, 110.

29. This was true for Brunner’s doctoral advisor, Oswald Redlich (1858–1944), who held the medieval history chair from 1897 to 1934, had been rector of the University of Vienna in 1911/12, and served as president of the Austrian Academy of Sciences from 1918 to 1938. Another of Brunner’s teachers was Alfons Dopsch (1868–1953), professor of economic and

cultural history. He had been appointed to a full professorship in 1900 and was forced into retirement in 1936.

30. See Wandruszka, "Otto Brunner," 388; Zöllner, "Nachruf Otto Brunner," 519.

31. Tamara Ehs, "Gesellschaftswissenschaft. 2. Othmar Spann," in Thomas Olechowski, Tamara Ehs and Kamila Staudigl-Ciechowicz, *Die Wiener Rechts- und Staatswissenschaftliche Fakultät 1918–1938* (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2014), 581–90, here 585. The first to draw attention to the influence that Othmar Spann had on Brunner was Robert Jütte, "Zwischen Ständestaat und Austrofaschismus: Der Beitrag Otto Brunners zur Geschichtsschreibung," *Jahrbuch des Instituts für Deutsche Geschichte* 13 (1984): 237–62, here 244–55, 261–62.

32. The self-designation as "institutors" is found, for example, in Theodor Mayer, "Probleme der österreichischen Geschichtswissenschaft," in *Alteuropa und die moderne Gesellschaft: Festschrift für Otto Brunner*, ed. by Historisches Seminar der Universität Hamburg (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963), 346–63, here 363.

33. Gernot Heiss, "Die 'Wiener Schule der Geschichtswissenschaft' im Nationalsozialismus: 'Harmonie kämpfender und Rankescher erkennender Wissenschaft'?", in Mitchell G. Ash, Wolfram Nieß, and Ramon Pils, eds., *Geisteswissenschaften im Nationalsozialismus: Das Beispiel der Universität Wien* (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2010), 397–426, here 401. This is about the so-called "Trifolium," consisting of Hans Hirsch, Heinrich von Srbik, and Wilhelm Bauer.

34. See Manfred Stoy, *Das Österreichische Institut für Geschichtsforschung 1929–1945* (Vienna: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2007), 28–30.

35. See *ibid.*, 46, footnote 11.

36. See *ibid.*

37. See Otto Brunner, "Beiträge zur Geschichte des Fehdewesens im spätmittelalterlichen Österreich," *Jahrbuch für Landeskunde von Niederösterreich* 22, no. 4 (1929): 431–507. On this, see Hans-Henning Kortüm, "Mittelalterliche Verfassungsgeschichte im Bann der Rechtsgeschichte zwischen den Kriegen: Heinrich Mitteis und Otto Brunner," in Jürgen Dendorfer and Roman Deutinger, eds., *Das Lehnswesen im Hochmittelalter: Forschungskonstrukte, Quellenbefunde, Deutungsrelevanz* (Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 2010), 57–77; Hans-Henning Kortüm, "'Wissenschaft im Doppelpaß'? Carl Schmitt, Otto Brunner und die Konstruktion der Fehde," *Historische Zeitschrift* 282, no. 1 (December 2006): 585–617.

38. Otto Brunner, "Nachruf Hans Hirsch," *Historische Zeitschrift* 163, no. 1 (December 1941): 447–49, here 448–49.

39. See the summary, with citations to the older literature, in Petra Svatek, "'Wien als Tor nach dem Südosten': Der Beitrag Wiener Geisteswissenschaftler zur Erforschung Südosteuropas während des Nationalsozialismus," in Ash, Nieß and Pils, eds., *Geisteswissenschaften*, 111–39. On Hirsch's involvement in particular, see also Heiss, "Wiener Schule," in *ibid.*, 412–14.

40. On this, see the table in Michael Fahlbusch, *Wissenschaft im Dienst der nationalsozialistischen Politik? Die "Volksdeutschen Forschungsgemeinschaften" von 1931–1945* (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlag, 1999), 278.

41. Bundesarchiv Berlin (hereafter: BArch), R 153/1533, fols. 3–5; R 153/1487, fols. 5–9; R 153/1488, fols. 46–48, fols. 71–72.
42. All quotes are found in Otto Brunner, “Das Burgenland,” in Friedrich Heiss and Arnold Hillen Ziegfeld, eds., *Bekenntnis zu Österreich* (Berlin: Volk und Reich Verlag, 1932), 40–46.
43. BArch, R 73/1944.
44. Otto Brunner, “Die geschichtliche Stellung des Waldviertels,” in Eduard Stepan, ed., *Das Waldviertel*, vol. 7: *Geschichte* (Vienna: Verlag Dr. Eduard Stepan, 1937), 368–431, here 378.
45. Otto Brunner, “Die Ostmark Europas,” *Bücherkunde* 5, no. 9 (September 1938): 466–68. This journal was the organ of the Office for the Cultivation of Literature at the Plenipotentiary of the Führer for the entire intellectual and ideological training of the Nazi Party and the Reich Office for Promotion of German Literature.
46. Otto Brunner, “Österreichs Weg zum Großdeutschen Reich,” *Deutsches Archiv für Landes- und Volksforschung* 2, no. 2 (May 1938): 519–28, quotations on 519 and 526.
47. Otto Brunner, “Das österreichische Institut für Geschichtsforschung und seine Stellung in der deutschen Geschichtswissenschaft,” *Mitteilungen des Österreichischen Instituts für Geschichtsforschung* 52, no. 2/3 (March 1938): 385–416, here 415–16.
48. Gernot Heiss, “Von Österreichs deutscher Vergangenheit und Aufgabe: Die Wiener Schule der Geschichtswissenschaft und der Nationalsozialismus,” in Gernot Heiss et al., eds., *Willfähige Wissenschaft: Die Universität Wien 1938–1945* (Vienna: Verlag für Gesellschaftskritik, 1989), 39–76, here 49. However, influenced by more recent research, Heiss later leveled a far more critical assessment of Brunner; see idem, “Wiener Schule.” in Ash, Nieß and Pils, eds., *Geisteswissenschaften*.
49. Cited in Michael Wildt, “Eine neue Ordnung der ethnographischen Verhältnisse’: Hitlers Reichstagsrede vom 6. Oktober 1939,” *Zeithistorische Forschungen* 3, no. 1 (2006): 129–37, here 133.
50. Otto Brunner, “Südostdeutsche Leistungen und Schicksale,” *Die deutsche Schule* 46, no. 1 (January 1942): 74–79, here 77–79. For the historical background of the period, see Wildt, “Ordnung.”
51. See Ulrich Crämer, “Der 19. Deutsche Historikertag in Erfurt vom 5.–7. Juli 1937,” *Vergangenheit und Gegenwart* 27, no. 7/8 (July 1937): 345–69, here 357; Otto Brunner, “Politik und Wirtschaft in den deutschen Territorien des Mittelalters,” *Vergangenheit und Gegenwart* 27, no. 7/8 (July 1937): 404–22: “We are experiencing a scientific process in which the fundamental concepts of political science are being subjected to a far-reaching transformation in the broadest sense. In the face of a new reality, the concepts of a time which claimed that its fundamental categories could measure every historical reality are dissipating before our eyes” (421), and “What is occurring today is a revision of the fundamental concepts. It is an unacceptable state of affairs when concepts originating from a dead reality still determine the essential standards and questions for a time whose internal structure is thoroughly different. The demand cannot be worded too radically. [...] Nothing is more dangerous than the delusion that one can adopt the entire inherited store of knowledge and concepts essentially unchanged” (422). See further Kortüm, “Wissenschaft im Doppelpaß,” 593, footnote 35.

52. Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts (hereafter: PA/AA), R 60280, Abt. Kult. A 5428/38, Berlin, July 21, 1938.

53. This was actually a four-course, early afternoon meal, organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: PA/AA, R 60280.

54. Ibid.

55. PA/AA, R 60283, Abt. Kult. A 1466, and Abt. Kult. A 1589, "Schreiben Brunners an die 'Kulturpolitische Abteilung des Auswärtigen Amtes z.Hd. v. Herrn Ministerialdirektor Dr. Stieve,' 25.4.1939."

56. PA/AA, R 60295, "Volksdeutsche Forschungsgemeinschaften Tätigkeitsberichte 1938/39. Einleitungsreferat von Professor Dr. O. Brunner—Wien: Die veränderte politische Lage und ihre Auswirkungen auf die volksdeutsche Forschungsarbeit."

57. Michael Fahlbusch, "Südostdeutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft," in Ingo Haar and Michael Fahlbusch, eds., *Handbuch der völkischen Wissenschaften: Personen, Institutionen, Forschungsprogramme, Stiftungen* (Munich: Saur, 2008), 688–97, here 695.

58. Quoted from *ibid.*, 694–95.

59. See Hans Böhm, "Magie eines Konstruktes: Anmerkungen zu M. Fahlbusch 'Wissenschaft im Dienst der nationalsozialistischen Politik?'" *Geographische Zeitschrift* 88, no. 3/4 (2000): 177–96.

60. This is the assessment of Matthias Berg, *Karl Alexander von Müller: Historiker für den Nationalsozialismus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014), 453–62, here 459; on the exhibition, see 316–18.

61. BArchB, NS 15/72, "Hausrundsreiben Nr. 93/44 des Abschnittsleiters Zöllfel 'An alle Politischen Leiter,' 21.11.1944."

62. BArchB, R 4901, fol. 205, "Schreiben des Präsidenten der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften an den Herrn Reichsminister für Wissenschaft, Erziehung und Volksbildung, Berlin, 11.12.1940." Additional suggestions were presented by the president of the *Reichsinstitut für Geschichte des neuen Deutschlands*, Walter Frank; the president of the *Reichsinstitut für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde* (Monumenta Germaniae Historica), Edmund Stengel; the president of the Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Heinrich Ritter von Srbik; the rector of the University of Marburg, Theodor Mayer; Professor Erich Botzenhart, who was a professor from 1939 to 1945 at the University of Göttingen and became the successor of the ousted Walter Frank in 1943; and Prof. Wilhelm Schüssler from the Historisches Seminar of Berlin's Friedrich Wilhelm University: BArchB, R 4901, fols. 206–14.

63. BArchB, R 4901, fols. 215–16, here fol. 215, "Referentenentwurf, 15.1.1941." On the largely unresearched history of awarding the Verdun Prize, see Katharina Weigand, "Geschichtsschreibung zwischen Wissenschaft und nationaler Vereinnahmung: Der Verdun-Preis," in Katharina Weigand, Jörg Zedler and Florian Schuller, eds., *Die Prinzregentenzeit: Abenddämmerung der bayerischen Monarchie?* (Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 2013), 105–27.

64. See *ibid.*, 118, 127, footnote 109.

65. BArchB, R 4901, fol. 225.

66. BArchB, NS 15/326.

67. BArchB, NS 15/20, fols. 1–19, “Schreiben des Zentralamts des Amts Rosenberg an den Leiter der Partei-Kanzlei Martin Bormann, 15. 8. 1944”; quotation on fol. 12.

68. For more detail on this, see Renate Spreitzer, “Harold Steinacker (1875–1965): Ein Leben für ‘Volk und Geschichte,’” in Karel Hruza, ed., *Österreichische Historiker 1900–1945: Lebensläufe und Karrieren in Österreich, Deutschland und der Tschechoslowakei in wissenschaftsgeschichtlichen Porträts*, vol. 1 (Vienna: Böhlau, 2008), 191–223, here 203–4, 218–20.

69. BArchB, NS 15/326, fol. 95682.

70. BArchB, NS 15/326, fol. 95675, “Undatierter Entwurf Steinackers ‘Zum Thema des Lagers.’”

71. BArchB, NS 15/326, fols. 6, 13, “Bericht über das Historiker-Lager der Reichsdozentenführung (7.–10.10.42 in Augsburg) von Dr. Wolfgang Erxleben, Hauptamt Wissenschaft. Amt für Wissenschaftsbeobachtung,’ 15.10.1942.”

72. BArchB, Pers 6/189048.

73. Ibid.

74. Ibid.

75. UAW, Philosophische Fakultät, Oesterr. Institut für Geschichtsforschung. The personnel sheet (*Personalblatt*) filled out by Brunner on May 19, 1945, gives the date as July 1, 1938. The dates of May 1 and June 1, 1938, also appear in the letter from the party office as being the dates of Brunner’s applications for party membership: BArchB, Berlin Document Center, PK 10100244488.

76. BArchB, Berlin Document Center, PK 10100244488, “Kurt Knoll an den ‘Kreisleiter des Kreises VI der NSDAP’ 10.12.1943.”

77. This becomes clear from the documents in the BArchB, Berlin Document Center, PK 10100244488.

78. On such trends toward disengaging and withdrawing from the party, see Hermann Hagspiel, *Die Ostmark: Österreich im Großdeutschen Reich 1938 bis 1945* (Vienna: Braumüller, 1995), 331–34.

79. Brunner’s letter had arrived at the dean’s office on May 19, 1944: UAW, Dekanat der Philosophischen Fakultät, D.-Zl.: 136.

80. BArchB, NS 8/241, fol. 116.

81. For details about these retrievals—particularly concerning the letter written by the head of the planning office at the *Reichsforschungsrat* to the Party Chancellery “with attached lists of the humanities scholars designated for retrieval,” dated May 30, 1944, that is, immediately before the renewal of Brunner’s UK status in June 1944—see Sören Flachowsky, *Von der Notgemeinschaft zum Reichsforschungsrat: Wissenschaftspolitik im Kontext von Autarkie, Aufrüstung und Krieg* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2008), 444, footnote 684; Jens Thiel, “Akademische ‘Zinnsoldaten’? Karrieren deutscher Geisteswissenschaftler zwischen ‘Beruf’ und ‘Berufung’ (1933/1945),” in Rüdiger vom Bruch, Uta Gerhardt and Aleksandra Pawliczek, eds., *Kontinuitäten und Diskontinuitäten in der Wissenschaftsgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2006), 167–94, here 191.

82. As stated by the head of the planning office at the Reich Research Council, Werner Osenberg, in a letter to the Party Chancellery, May 30, 1944: BArchB, R 26 III, no. 43, fol. 19.

83. BArchB, R 26 III, no. 43, fol. 20.

84. BArchB, R 26 III, no. 43, fol. 19.

85. Ibid.

86. In the words of SS *Standartenführer* Dr. Wilhelm Spengler on behalf of the Security Police and the Security Service (SD, *Sicherheitsdienst*) to Osenberg, August. 8, 1944: BArchB, R 26 III, no. 112, fol. 125.

87. PA/AA, R 100462/000074, "Schreiben des Geschäftsführers der Südostdeutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft, Dr. W. Krallert, an das Auswärtige Amt, 2.10.1944."

88. I am indebted to the courtesy and generosity of my Japanese colleague Prof. Dr. Akihiro Misagawa, Department of History, Occidental History Course, Tokai University (Tokyo), for a PDF document that contains the already page-numbered proofs, which Brunner called the *Probabogen*. According to Brunner, these were in his possession "in the fall" of 1944: UAW, Dekanat der Philosophischen Fakultät, Studienjahr 1945/46, Verwaltungsstelle für wissenschaftliche Hochschulen in Wien 4581/Z: "Undatierte Stellungnahme Brunners 'Zu dem Buch 'Der Schicksalsweg des deutschen Volkes' im Zusammenhang seines 1945 eingeleiteten Entnazifizierungsverfahrens."

89. Brunner, "Schicksalsweg," 5; in the following, the "Schicksalsweg" page reference is given in parentheses directly after each quote.

90. Ibid. (*Vorwort* – preface).

91. In 1986 the library of the University of Chuo acquired Brunner's private library and thereby also his personal papers, including his *Probabogen* (global.chuo-u.ac.jp/english/general/libraries/libraries03/, accessed November 13, 2019). "Schicksalsweg des deutschen Volkes" has been in Japan since then and was considered lost until now; see, e.g., Heiss, "Wiener Schule," in Ash, Nieß and Pils, eds., *Geisteswissenschaften*, 61; Stoy, *Österreichisches Institut*, 313: "However, a verification is not possible because there is no trace of any of these *Probabögen*."

92. Alfred Rosenberg, *Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts: Eine Wertung der seelisch-geistigen Gestaltenkämpfe unserer Zeit*, 34th ed. (Munich: Hoheneichen-Verlag, 1934), 399.

93. Cited by *Race and Race History: And Other Essays by Alfred Rosenberg*, ed. and introduced by Robert Pois, New York 1970, 47. On the historical background of the National Socialist teachings about an allegedly racial identity linking the Germanic world and Hellenism, which dates back to Adolf Hitler's argument from the early 1920s that all high cultures share Aryan origins, and on the history of the "scientific" elaboration of these teachings during the Nazi period, see Johann Chapoutot, *Der Nationalsozialismus und die Antike* (Darmstadt: Philipp von Zabern Verlag, 2014), here 46–49, 75–78 (on Rosenberg's influence in shaping the Nazi image of Greece).

94. UAW, Dekanat der Philosophischen Fakultät, Studienjahr 1945/46, Verwaltungsstelle für wissenschaftliche Hochschulen in Wien 4581/Z.

95. See Hans-Henning Kortüm, "Otto Brunner über Otto den Großen: Aus den letzten Tagen der reichsdeutschen Mediävistik," *Historische Zeitschrift* 299, no. 2 (October 2014): 297–333, here 315–17.

96. Ibid.

97. BArchB, NS 15/72, "Hausrundschreiben Nr. 93/44 des Abschnittsleiters Zölffel, 'An alle Politischen Leiter,' 21.11.1944."

98. On the historians giving lectures, see Kortüm, “Otto Brunner über Otto den Großen,” 319–24.

99. On the circumstances leading to Brunner’s Hamburg appointment, which had been preceded by a failed application in Cologne, see Thomas Etzemüller, *Sozialgeschichte als politische Geschichte: Werner Conze und die Neuorientierung der westdeutschen Geschichtswissenschaft nach 1945* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2001), 243–44.

100. HStA, Nachlass (personal papers) Carl Schmitt, RW 265–2112, Letter, Brunner to Carl Schmitt, September 1, 1950. For more background on this, see Kortüm, “Wissenschaft im Doppelpaß,” 604, footnote 76.

101. Hamburgisches Staatsarchiv, Rektorakten, vol. VII 364–5 I, “Einbürgerungsurkunde, 3.5.1956.”

102. See Brunner, Conze and Koselleck, eds., *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*. Christof Dipper, “Die ‘Geschichtlichen Grundbegriffe’: Von der Begriffsgeschichte zur Theorie der historischen Zeiten,” *Historische Zeitschrift* 270, no. 1 (December 2000): 281–308, has suggested that Brunner wrote only a single lemma. But Reinhard Blänkner warns that there is a “questionable flipside to the current Koselleck-hype,” which results in “losing sight of Brunner’s contribution to ‘Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe.’” Blänkner appears convinced that “neither the ‘saddle period’ nor the encyclopedia ‘Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe’ is conceivable without Brunner’s *Alteuropa*”: idem, “Begriffsgeschichte in der Geschichtswissenschaft: Otto Brunner und die ‘Geschichtlichen Grundbegriffe,’” *Forum Interdisziplinäre Begriffsgeschichte* 1, no. 2 (E-Journal 2012): 102–8, here 106–7, accessed April 29, 2020, www.zfl-berlin.org/publication/forum-interdisziplinäre-begriffsgeschichte.238.html.

103. See Otto Brunner, *Neue Wege der Sozialgeschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1956); idem, *Neue Wege der Verfassungs- und Sozialgeschichte*, 2nd expanded ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1968).

104. On Brunner’s important contribution to the coining of the term *Alteuropa*, see Christian Jaser, Ute Lotz-Heumann, and Matthias Pohlig, “Alteuropa, Vormoderne, Neue Zeit: Leistungen und Grenzen alternativer Periodisierungskonzepte für die europäische Geschichte,” in Christian Jaser, Ute Lotz-Heumann and Matthias Pohlig, eds., *Alteuropa, Vormoderne, Neue Zeit: Epochen und Dynamiken der europäischen Geschichte (1200–1800)* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2012), 9–24, here 12–14.

105. The quote was taken from an as yet unpublished lecture by Ulrich Herbert on the subject “Zum Wandel des ‘Europa’-Konzepts während des Nationalsozialismus,” given on March 14, 2001, at the Max Planck Institute for History in Göttingen. See also Oexle, “Leitbegriffe,” in Lehmann and Oexle, eds., *Nationalsozialismus*, vol. 2, 17.

106. See *ibid.*

107. On the relevant concepts of Europe, see Vanessa Conze, *Das Europa der Deutschen: Ideen von Europa in Deutschland zwischen Reichstradition und Westorientierung (1920–1970)* (Munich: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2005).

108. The quotation is from the speech of the foreign minister at the time, Heinrich von Brentano, who spoke in Augsburg’s Rosenau Stadium to “sixty thousand devout Catholic and Protestant Christians.” See the evidence provided by Axel Schildt, “Zur Hochkonjunk-

tur des 'christlichen Abendlandes' in der westdeutschen Geschichtsschreibung," in Ulrich Pfeil, ed., *Die Rückkehr der deutschen Geschichtswissenschaft in die "Ökumene der Historiker": Ein wissenschaftsgeschichtlicher Ansatz* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2008), 49–70, here 52–53.

109. Otto Brunner, "Die alteuropäische 'Ökonomik,'" *Zeitschrift für Nationalökonomie* 13, no. 1 (August 1950): 114–39, here 122–23.

110. Rosenberg, *Mythus*, sections 51 ("Griechische' Demokratie") and 52 ("Griechenlands Untergang"), according to which the "psychic-racial decline of the Homeric Greeks" begins with the emergence of democracy, which is interpreted as "the domination of the Near East over the Greek tribes, [...] whose manpower and strengths were being rapidly dissipated." Plato serves as the witness of an alleged "longing for the heroic race's heroic men." Cited by *Race and Race History*, 52–53. For Brunner, "Schicksalsweg," 116–17, the heroic era also ends with "Plato immediately."

111. See Otto Brunner, "Abendländisches Geschichtsdenken (Hamburg 1954)," in idem, *Neue Wege der Verfassungs- und Sozialgeschichte*, 26–44.

112. Ibid., 43.

113. See Schildt, "Hochkonjunktur," in Pfeil, ed., *Rückkehr*, 57–58.

114. Brunner, "Abendländisches Geschichtsdenken," in idem, *Neue Wege der Verfassungs- und Sozialgeschichte*, 43–44.

115. Ibid., 39.

116. Walther Hofer, "Wege und Irrwege geschichtlichen Denkens," in *Schweizer Monatshefte* 30 (April 1950–March 1951): 238–45, here 240.

117. Brunner, "Alteuropäische 'Ökonomik,'" 122–23.

118. On the debate, see Valentin Groebner, "Außer Haus: Otto Brunner und die 'alteuropäische Ökonomik,'" *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 46, no. 1 (January 1995): 69–80; Claudia Opitz, "Neue Wege der Sozialgeschichte? Ein kritischer Blick auf Otto Brunners Konzept des 'ganzen Hauses,'" *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 20 (1994): 88–98.

119. See Otto Brunner, *Adeliges Landleben und europäischer Geist: Leben und Werk Wolf Helmhards von Hobbeg 1612–1688* (Salzburg: Müller, 1949).

120. Ibid., 339.

121. Ibid.

122. See Brunner's reflections on the *Reiter* (horseman) and *Ritter* (knight) as "the prototype of the noble man" (247).

123. See Andreas Dornheim, *Rasse, Raum und Autarkie: Sachverständigengutachten zur Rolle des Reichsministeriums für Ernährung und Landwirtschaft in der NS-Zeit* (Bamberg: 2011), 51–55, accessed November 3, 2020, https://www.bmel.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/_Ministerium/Geschichte/sachverstaendigenrat-zur-rolle-ns-zeit.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=3.

124. Karl Brunner has recommended it as a "work on constitutional history" that sets "standards" and has become a "classic": idem, *Kleine Kulturgeschichte des Mittelalters* (Munich: C.H.Beck, 2012), 248. Christine Reinle has also expressed her unreservedly positive assessment of Brunner's concept of the feud in her article "Fehde" in Albrecht Cordes et al., eds., *Handwörterbuch zur deutschen Rechtsgeschichte*, vol. 1, 2nd fully revised

and expanded ed. (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 2008), 1515–25. The great attention paid to *Land and Lordship* is also explained by the fact that the original German book was translated not only into English but also into Italian.

125. See Oexle, “Leitbegriffe,” in Lehmann and Oexle, eds., *Nationalsozialismus*, vol. 2, 40.

126. See Jan Eike Dunkhase, *Werner Conze: Ein deutscher Historiker im 20. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010).

127. See Etzemüller, “Kontinuität,” in Weisbrod, ed., *Akademische Vergangenheitspolitik*.

128. In the first three editions (1939, 1942, 1943), the subtitle was *Grundfragen der territorialen Verfassungsgeschichte Südostdeutschlands im Mittelalter*, which was changed after the Second World War to *Grundfragen der territorialen Verfassungsgeschichte Österreichs im Mittelalter*. For more detail, particularly concerning the spelling of *Baiern* in the original German book *Land und Herrschaft*, see Kortüm, “Otto Brunner über Otto den Großen,” 311, footnote 70.

129. Klaus Schreiner, “Führertum, Rasse, Reich: Wissenschaft von der Geschichte nach der nationalsozialistischen Machtergreifung,” in Peter Lundgreen, ed., *Wissenschaft im Dritten Reich* (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1985), 163–252, here 208–11; Etzemüller, *Sozialgeschichte*, 85.

130. Karl S. Bader, “Rezension zu Otto Brunner, *Land und Herrschaft: Grundfragen der territorialen Verfassungsgeschichte Österreichs im Mittelalter*,” *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte* 77 (1960): 378–80, here 379.

131. Ibid.

132. See Dominik Reither, *Rechtsgeschichte und Rechtsgeschichten: Die Forschung über Fehde, autonome Gewalt und Krieg in Deutschland im 19. Jahrhundert* (Marburg: Tectum Verlag, 2009).

133. This becomes evident, to use the words of Horst Dreier, through a threefold “negative consensus”: their “anti-liberalism,” their “anti-parliamentarism and anti-federalism,” and their “antisemitism”: idem, “Die deutsche Staatsrechtslehre in der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus. 1. Bericht von Prof. Dr. Horst Dreier, Würzburg,” in *Berichte und Diskussionen auf der Tagung der Vereinigung der deutschen Staatsrechtslehrer in Leipzig vom 4. bis 6. Oktober 2000* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2001), 10–72, here 24–31.

134. On Brunner’s interpretation of war and feud, see Hans-Henning Kortüm, *Kriege und Krieger 500–1500* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2010), 70–74.

135. Otto Brunner, *Land and Lordship: Structures of Governance in Medieval Austria*, trans. and introduction by Howard Kaminsky and James van Horn Melton (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992), 92.

136. See Kortüm, “Mittelalterliche Verfassungsgeschichte,” in Dendorfer and Deutinger, eds., *Lehnswesen*, 68–69, footnote 51.

137. On the concept of order as conceived by Carl Schmitt and advocated by Brunner, see Raphael, “Ordnung,” in Lehmann and Oexle, eds., *Nationalsozialismus*, vol. 2, 134; Algazi, “Otto Brunner,” in Schöttler, ed., *Geschichtsschreibung*.

138. A typical example is Gerd Althoff, “Schranken der Gewalt: Wie gewalttätig war das ‘finstere Mittelalter’?,” in Horst Brunner, ed., *Der Krieg im Mittelalter und in der Frühen*

Neuzeit: Gründe, Begründungen, Bilder, Bräuche, Recht (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1999), 1–23, with several explicit references to Otto Brunner's *Land and Lordship*.

139. Christof Dipper, “Keine Neigung, die ‘Väter in die Pfanne zu hauen’: Der Jahrgang 1943 im Feld der deutschen Historiker,” in Christoph Cornelißen, ed., *Geschichtswissenschaft im Geist der Demokratie: Wolfgang J. Mommsen und seine Generation* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 2010), 277–92, here 277.

140. This had already been noted by Gerhard Dilcher in the concluding discussion of the first section of the Otto Brunner Conference in Trent in 1987: *Annali dell'Istituto Storico Italo-Germanico in Trento* 13 (1987), 181–84, here 183.

141. On the concept of alterity and its origins, linked with a call to abandon it due to its *Unterkomplexität*—its underdeveloped degree of complexity—see Manuel Braun, “Alterität als germanistisch-mediävistische Kategorie: Kritik und Korrektiv,” in idem, ed., *Wie anders war das Mittelalter? Fragen an das Konzept der Alterität* (Göttingen: V & R unipress, 2013), 7–38.

142. See Kortüm, “Mittelalterliche Verfassungsgeschichte,” in Dendorfer and Deutinger, eds., *Lehnswesen*, 73–76.

143. See Elmar Wadle, “Zur Delegitimierung der Fehde durch die mittelalterliche Friedensbewegung,” in Brunner, *Krieg im Mittelalter*, 73–91, here 78–91, on attempts to contain the feud by way of the *Friedenstexte* (peace documents) of the Peace of God movement and through the *Landfrieden* laws, particularly of Staufian rulers.

144. Cited in Spreitzer, “Harold Steinacker,” in Hruza, ed., *Österreichische Historiker*, vol. 1, 217.

145. An overview of German research on feuds, the acceptance of or distancing from Brunner's interpretation of the feud, and the emergence of the new concept of “conflict” in recent German research is provided by Florian Dirks, *Konfliktaustragung im norddeutschen Raum des 14. und 15. Jahrhunderts: Untersuchungen zu Fehdewesen und Tagfahrt* (Göttingen: V & R unipress GmbH, 2015), 21–67, quotation on 66.

146. On this, see Algazi, *Herrengewalt*; idem, “Otto Brunner” in Schöttler, ed., *Geschichtsschreibung*; On the criticism of Algazi, see Alexander Jendorff and Steffen Krieb, “Adel im Konflikt: Beobachtungen zu den Austragungsformen der Fehde im Spätmittelalter,” *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung* 30, no. 2 (2003): 179–206, here 180–81.

147. *Ibid.*, 202–5.

148. See Stuart Airlie, Walter Pohl and Helmut Reimitz, eds., *Staat im frühen Mittelalter* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2006); Walter Pohl and Veronika Wieser, eds., *Der frühmittelalterliche Staat: Europäische Perspektiven* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2009).

149. Wadle speaks of the “agents of public power, the traditional rulers”: idem, “Delegitimierung der Fehde,” in Brunner, ed., *Krieg im Mittelalter*, 89. On the concept of the public sphere and its role in current medieval research, see Jörg Feuchter, “Oratorik und Öffentlichkeit spätmittelalterlicher Repräsentativversammlungen,” in Martin Kintzinger, ed., *Politische Öffentlichkeit im Spätmittelalter* (Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 2011), 183–202, here 188, footnote 22.

150. Quotation taken from Peter von Moos, “Das Öffentliche und das Private im

Mittelalter: Für einen kontrollierten Anachronismus,” in Gert Melville and Peter von Moos, eds., *Das Öffentliche und Private in der Vormoderne* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1998), 3–83, here 14.

151. Feuchter, “Oratorik,” in Kintzinger, ed., *Politische Öffentlichkeit*, 196.

152. On this, see the numerous examples found in Kortüm, *Kriege und Krieger*, 219–64; idem, “Krieg im Mittelalter: Der Blick auf die Kinder,” in Alexander Denzler, Stefan Grüner and Markus Raasch, eds., *Kinder und Krieg: Von der Antike bis in die Gegenwart* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2016), 201–18, here 211–12.

153. Hans Boldt pointed out Brunner’s “deficient perspective for historical development”: “Brunner combined this with an odd and problematic reinterpretation of the subject of constitutional history, the constitution.” And further: “The methodological approach to historiography that Brunner offered in various versions remains unclear and unsatisfactory.” Christof Dipper argued in a somewhat similar way: “The long and short of it is that Brunner’s concept, summed up by the catchword *Alteuropa*, does not satisfy the needs. The elimination of the state and the society, along with their conflicts—all of which were important features precisely of that era—leads to reductions and errors that distort the entire picture.” The essays by Hans Boldt, “Otto Brunner: Zur Theorie der Verfassungsgeschichte,” and Christof Dipper, “Otto Brunner aus der Sicht der frühneuzeitlichen Historiographie,” are found in *Annali dell’Istituto Storico Italo-Germanico in Trento* 13 (1987): 39–66, 73–96; the quotations are on 43, 53, 92.

154. Peter Moraw, “Kontinuität und später Wandel: Bemerkungen zur deutschen und deutschsprachigen Mediävistik 1945–1970/75,” in Peter Moraw and Rudolf Schieffer, *Die deutschsprachige Mediävistik im 20. Jahrhundert* (Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 2005), 103–38, here 127–28.