"Never forget that you are a German"

_Die Brücke, "Deutschtum" and National Socialism in Interwar Australia_
Glossary

Below are definitions of the key German terms referred to in the text. Other German terms are used but they less frequently referred to and are thus explained within the body of the text itself. All of the terms relating to German identity have long histories pre-dating the Nazi era. The definitions below are in accordance with the Nazi understanding of these terms.

**Auslandsdeutsche** refers to a German living abroad who no longer holds German citizenship. For the Nazis, in their desire to reclaim all of those with even a small amount of ‘German blood’, it also encompassed people of German descent who made no overt connection with a German identity. *Auslandsdeutsche* were of particular concern for the Nazis because they were at least partly German but did not always sufficiently acknowledge their race, often because of their assimilation into ‘hostile’ cultures.

**Deutschtum** can most simply be defined as that which delineates what it is to be German. The question of how Germanness could be defined was at the core of German political and social debate long before Germany’s national formation, and only intensified following it.

**Reichsdeutsche** refers to a citizen of the German Reich.

**Stützpunkt** refers to a small branch of the Nazi Party. Each Australian state had its own *Stützpunkt* (*Stützpunkten* is the plural). Literally, it means ‘stronghold’.

**Volk**, taken literally, refers to people as in ‘a people’. But it also suggests much more. In Nazi terms it was also suggestive of certain racial characteristics.

**Völkisch** is explained in detail in chapter two below. Briefly, however, it can be described as a movement which had its beginnings in the nineteenth century and whose broad umbrella of thought encompassed elements of the pro-German, pro-spiritual, pro-nationalist, pro-imperialist, anti-Semitic, anti-materialist, anti-feminist and anti-liberal. Of most significance was *völkisch* thought’s understanding of race and the natural environment.

**Volksdeutsche** refers to those of German descent but without German citizenship. They differed from *Auslandsdeutsche* in that they lived outside the Reich but within occupied German territories.

**Volkstumpolitik** refers to government policy regarding the nature of German nationality or *Deutschtum*. It pre-dates the Nazi era.
Introduction

On 21 November 1939, the member for Denison, Gerald Mahoney, asked the minister for Defence Co-ordination (and Prime Minister) Robert Menzies, the following questions, upon notice, in the Australian House of Representatives:  

1. Was *Die Brucke* [sic], a German journal published in Sydney, in receipt of considerable sums of money from Berlin for propaganda purposes?
2. Is it a fact that, although registered as an Australian company, all its shareholders were Germans or naturalized Germans?
3. If so, is the company an enemy concern, and should it be wound up under supervision of the Controller of Enemy Property, after a close scrutiny of its affairs?  

This brief reference, spotted by chance while undertaking research into an altogether different topic, first ignited my interest in the nature of Nazi allegiance on the far-removed and fiercely Anglo-Celtic shores of interwar Australia and then, when considered in more detail, the conduit by which that allegiance was expressed, the pages of *Die Brücke*.

The official membership of the *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (National Socialist German Workers Party, hereafter NSDAP) in interwar Australia was undeniably small. Hans-Adolf Jacobsen puts the membership at 160 in 1937. Australian security service archives could identify only 91 members in March 1938, a number that rose to 105 in September of the same year and peaked at 136 in July 1939. It is estimated that there were 3,600 German citizens living in Australia in 1937, with those of German descent but Australian citizenship numbering 50,000—100,000, which leaves the membership figures of the NSDAP looking especially pallid. But it is not merely by direct party membership numbers that the spread of Nazi ideas in Australia should be gauged. The local NSDAP, at least partially under the instruction of their parent organisation in Germany, created and made good use of ‘front’ organisations which were off-shoots of the Party itself and also sympathetic non-Party groups,
both of which often possessed a much larger membership than the Party itself and provided an excellent opportunity through which to disseminate information.\(^6\) The history of National Socialism in Australia cannot be told, therefore, by its official party membership alone. Its ideology reached far more people than were pledged concomitants and the greatest means through which it extended beyond its immediate circle of Parteigenossen (party comrades) and sympathisers was through its newspaper, Die Brücke. This book is the first to undertake a detailed ideological study of National Socialism in Australia as it was depicted most vividly in the pages of Die Brücke.

Die Brücke (The Bridge), was launched in Sydney in 1934. It was the brainchild of the League of Germans in Australia and New Zealand and the German-Australian Chamber of Commerce.\(^7\) Deutschtum was at the heart of its mission, as it was at the heart of National Socialism itself. Deutschtum can most simply be defined as that which delineates what it is to be German. The question of how Germanness could be defined was at the core of German political and social debate long before Germany’s national formation, and only intensified following it. National Socialism provided a new means of defining Deutschtum. Die Brücke, seeking to lead a renewed embrace of Germanness among members of the German-Australian community, hoped that German identity would be exhumed from its perceived anglicised entombment by wholly adopting a Nazi understanding of German self. As a result, Die Brücke was partially funded by Germany’s Nazi government. Die Brücke’s publication represents, therefore, the most significant statement made in Australia of a naziified Deutschtum.

Die Brücke’s version of Deutschtum was a combination of pre-existing German social and cultural traditions with a racialised, National Socialist inspired understanding of self.\(^8\) As well as straightforward examinations of Nazi

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\(^6\) These front organisations will be examined in chapter one of this book.

\(^7\) German Consul-General Rudolf Asmis to Australia established the Bund des Deutschtums in Australien und Neuseeland (League of Germans in Australia and New Zealand) in 1934, in the name of the Nazi government. The Bund, it was hoped, would become an umbrella organisation encompassing various local German clubs and societies. It was depicted as an apparently apolitical organisation, intended to be linked to Volksbund für das Deutschtum im Ausland (VDA) in Germany (the VDA was a pre-Nazi organisation formed to maintain contact with German communities abroad. It was taken over by the Nazis following their takeover of power). Together, the Bund and the German-Australian Chamber of Commerce formed German Australian Publications, which published Die Brücke.

\(^8\) It is noted, for example, that, “[w]ith the cessation of the publication of German-language church newspapers, Die Brücke became the main channel of information for the Melbourne German community.” See Richard Morton, “The Dark Days of War: 1935-45”, in ed. Herbert D. Mees, A German Church in the Garden of God: Melbourne’s Trinity Lutheran Church 1853-2003, (Melbourne: Arbeitskreis für Kirchengeschichte, 2004), 262-283, 269. The Gemeindebote publication from the Trinity Lu-
race ideology, it sought to portray German culture as well as questions of faith through the racial lens. This version of "Deutschtum" reflected one which was to be employed by the Nazis in varying degrees throughout the world as part of their implementation of a "Volkstumspolitik." As a result, "Die Brücke" can also be seen as an important document in the broader examination of National Socialism’s dissemination outside Germany. It is not enough to examine "Die Brücke" and local National Socialist cells as small and isolated examples of fringe politics solely within the Australian context. Rather they are examined in this book as Antipodean examples of a confronting and influential ideology spread across a far greater, international framework.

As well as presenting a reworking of the overall German-Australian understanding of "Deutschtum," "Die Brücke" also depicted a revised role for women, presenting them as potential leaders in a rejuvenated German-Australian (Nazi) community. While traditional female roles combined with biological duty were certainly key elements of this revision, it must be acknowledged that it was towards women that much of "Die Brücke"’s racial doctrine was directed. They were the mothers of the German race but they were also the bearers of its culture. It was to be with their hands that a racialised German culture would be constructed. At first a racialised German culture would be built up within each German home, then throughout the whole community, to build a wall against the gentle but persistently lapping tide of anglicisation. This notion particularly broadens the understanding of women’s role within the Greater German Reich and redefines depictions of women as passive figures, acted upon rather than acting.\(^9\) German women outside the confines of the Reich were to be especially important agents of National Socialism\(^10\) Their role certainly remained strictly feminised but it is worth emphasising that it was to be played out against not only a gendered conception of society but also a racial one. It was not only women who were to be racial instruments in a Nazi world but, significantly, it was women who were assigned a considerable portion of the foundation-laying tasks of building it. Women would create “model communities and a model domestic culture as a bedrock” of a renewed "Deutschtum."\(^11\)

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9 There has been considerable depiction of women’s role in Nazism in this vein but a most thought-provoking examination of the complex nature of gender in Hitler’s Germany can be found in Gisela Bock, “Equality and Difference in National Socialist Racism” in ed. Joan Wallach Scott, *Feminism and History*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 267-90.

10 This reconsidered depiction of woman’s role within National Socialism is proffered by Elizabeth Harvey, *Women of the Nazi East: Agents and Witnesses of Germanization*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003).