The Austrian State Treaty and Beyond

ROBERT KNIGHT

Gerald Stourzh, *Um Einheit und Freiheit. Staatsvertrag, Neutralität und das Ende der Ost-West-Besetzung Österreichs 1945–1955 (4. völlig überarbeitete und wesentlich erweiterte Auflage)*, Studien zu Politik und Verwaltung 62 (Vienna/Cologne/Graz: Böhlau, 1998), 834 pp., ISBN 3–205–98383–1.

Günter Bischof, *Austria in the First Cold War, 1945–55. The Leverage of the Weak* (Basingstoke/London: Macmillan/St. Martin's Press, 1999), 237 pp., ISBN 0–333–72547–6.

Lothar Höbelt, *Von der vierten Partei zur Dritten Kraft. Die Geschichte des VdU* (Graz/Stuttgart: Leopold Stocker Verlag, 1999), 303 pp., ISBN 3–702–00866–7.

Anton Pelinka, *Austria. Out of the Shadow of the Past*, Nations of the Modern World: Europe (Boulder/Oxford: Westview, 1998), 256 pp., ISBN 0–813–32918–3.

Since the entry of Jörg Haider's Freedom Party (FPÖ) into the Austrian government, Austria's dealings with national socialism have become a talking point, prompting reflections on racism by Immanuel Wallerstein and, less surprisingly, pronouncements by John Gray and Bernard-Henri Lévy.[1] Austria has become widely identified abroad as a country which has failed to 'learn the lesson' of national socialism. This view seems to have filtered down into the sediment of outside perceptions. It can even get a knowing laugh on BBC radio comedy.

It was not always so. Insofar as it was noticed at all, Austria used to be seen as special for quite different reasons: because of its success in avoiding a putative Soviet take-over attempt and then (after the 1955 State Treaty) in evading Cold War polarisation with its status of 'perpetual neutrality'; and as a society of enviable stability and industrial peace, which had learned how to regulate social and economic conflict by what some political scientists called 'consociationalism,' others 'neo-corporatism.'[2] In

[1] Immanuel Wallerstein, 'The Uses of Racism', *London Review of Books*, 22, 10 (18 May 2000), 11–14; Bernard Henry Lévy, 'Die Stimmen des anderen Österreich', in Isolde Charim and Doron Rabinovici (eds.), *Österreich. Berichte aus Quarantinien* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2000), 156–71; John Gray, 'A rich state riddled with hatreds', *Guardian*, 2 February 2000; for a more informed discussion see Robert Wistrich, 'Letter from Vienna', *Times Literary Supplement*, 3 March 2000, and letters from Steven Beller and Ernst Wangermann, *ibid.*, 17 March 2000.

[2] See inter alia Kurt Richard Luther and Wolfgang Müller (eds.), *Politics in Austria. Still a case of Consociationalism?* (London: Frank Cass, 1992); Peter Katzenstein, *Small Nations and Change: Austria,*

Contemporary European History, **10**, 1 (2001), pp. 123–142 © 2001 Cambridge University Press
Printed in the United Kingdom

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777301001060 Published online by Cambridge University Press

general these three areas – Austria's Nazi legacy, its international position and its domestic stability – have been treated separately. Of the books under review this applies most evidently to Stourzh, but less so to Bischof and Pelinka. Höbelt touches on the domestic theme but is more interesting as a primary source for the Nazi issue.

Gerald Stourzh's massive history of the Austrian State Treaty is a model of scholarly precision and investigative energy. It is based on deep and broad archival research and, although highly detailed, is written with great lucidity. Only towards the end, when Stourzh examines a range of new sources, particularly Soviet and Austrian, on the diplomacy of 1955 does the detail begin to seem excessive – the last year of negotiations receives 230 pages compared with the 100 pages given to the years 1947–50.

Stourzh's concern is the 'trinity' (Dreiheit) of State Treaty, the end of occupation and neutrality. His story is of the twists and turns, obstacles and pitfalls, and hopes raised and dashed before the triple settlement of May 1955 was agreed. It was made possible in the first place by the changes in the Kremlin following Stalin's death, in particular Khruschev's besting of Molotov. But it also depended on the shift in Austrian foreign policy after 1953 under Chancellor Julius Raab, who toned down Austria's pro-Western stance and put out feelers to the Soviet government. The winning formula of 'neutrality on the Swiss model' had been floating around diplomatic circles since 1953; on Soviet insistence it was finally agreed – after some Austrian hesitation – in Moscow in April 1955.

Stourzh places the Soviet shift in four contexts: (i) the establishment of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet aim of weakening NATO; (ii) the Soviet wish for a rapprochement with Yugoslavia, which would appear more genuine after withdrawal from Austria; (iii) Soviet policy towards Germany and (iv) Khruschev's 'grand dessein' for a post-Stalinist foreign policy reorientation, which had started with the handover to China of the naval base at Port Arthur in 1954 and was to continue with the handing back to Finland of the naval base at Porkkala Udd in January 1956. Of these four the German issue is perhaps the most controversial: was Austrian neutrality intended by Khruschev as a model for Germany to follow?[3] Stourzh thinks it was not. He argues, plausibly in my view, that by 1955 the Soviet leadership had given up any hope of preventing or – at least in the short term – of reversing West Germany's membership of NATO and had shifted to a policy of building up the GDR. At the same time he distinguishes two further levels of Soviet ambiguity: a policy of spreading uncertainty in West Germany, which still left the possibility of concessions which might at some stage lead to German reunification;

Switzerland and the Politics of Industry (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984), 34–83, refers to Austria's 'social corporatism'.

[3] The case that it was is put by Michael Gehler, 'Österreich, die Bundesrepublik und die deutsche Frage 1945/49–1955', in Michael Gehler, Rainer F. Schmidt, Harm-Hinrich Brandt and Rolf Steininger (eds.), *Ungleiche Partner? Österreich und Deutschland in ihrer gegenseitigen Wahrnehmung. Historische Analysen und Vergleiche aus dem 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, Historische Mitteilungen der Ranke-Gesellschaft, Beifhefte 15 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1996), 535–80.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777301001060 Published online by Cambridge University Press

and public pronouncements which still stressed the importance of 'the Austrian way' towards a solution of the German problem.

For Austrians the unexpectedness of the Soviet shift and the break-neck speed with which agreement was reached between February and May 1955 was sensational and – after initial uncertainty – a cause for much celebration. There was more scepticism in London and Washington about what was seen as a dangerous weakening of the West. Unflattering comparisons were made with Gaderene swine and (of Austria's foreign minister and former Chancellor Leopold Figl) a 'paralysed rabbit'(p. 504). In Bonn Adenauer raged against 'the whole Austrian scandal' ('die ganze österreichische Schweinerei'). Stourzh's own position, tempered by due scholarly restraint, is on the side of celebrators. The State Treaty was not merely a matter of Soviet and Austrian shifts, it crucially depended on the ability of diplomats and politicians to find a 'common denominator ['gemeinsamer Nenner'] which could meet the interests and the security need of Austria, the Western powers and the Soviet Union' (p. 450). Here Stourzh bestows his praise in suitably even-handed manner: Dulles receives plaudits but so does Molotov, who opposed agreement within the Kremlin but nevertheless negotiated it with the skill of an old pro. In conclusion, Stourzh calls the history of the State treaty an 'exemplary history of the art of negotiation ['exemplarische Geschichte über die Kunst des Verhandelns'] and of those artists of negotiation', the diplomats and statesmen of five countries, who achieved 'one of the most durable peaceful compromise solutions in the history of the twentieth century' ('eine der dauerhaftesten friedlichen Kompromißlösungen in der Geschichte des 20. Jahrhundertes errungen haben'). They achieved this not by military force but by the classical instruments of the diplomat – 'eloquence and strength of intellect' ('nicht mit der Waffe in der Hand, sondern mit Beredsamkeit und Geisteskräften')[4] (pp. 605–6).

At this point there are some reservations. Stourzh seems to elide three related but distinct points: the final phase of negotiations in 1955, which clearly did lead to a successful compromise; the whole period of negotiation, when the spirit of compromise was often conspicuous by its absence; and the forty years following the State Treaty when Austria's neutrality gained international standing in a way which few could have predicted in 1955, in large part as a result of the political landscape of détente.

This elision and Stourzh's identification, however restrained, with Austrian euphoria at its 'annus mirabilis' points to the way in which neutrality has become a central element in Austrian self-esteem and national identity. The myth-making, nation-building aspects of this process cannot be overlooked. They can be seen, for example, in the comment of the People's Party (ÖVP) politician, Felix Hurdes, a Catholic anti-Nazi champion of Austrian national identity (and of a new Austrian national anthem). He noted that the return of the Austrian delegation from Moscow had triggered off an outburst of national feeling: 'The fact that for the first time the population started spontaneously to sing the allegedly unknown national anthem

[4] The Latin original, from a text of 1598, is 'non militari manu sed eloquio et viribus ingenui'.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777301001060 Published online by Cambridge University Press

also proves that Austria's people have now really found their sense of nationhood' ('Auch der Umstand, daß zum ersten Mal aus eigenem Antrieb die Bevölkerung die Volkshymne, die angeblich unbekannte Volkshymne anstimmte, beweist, daß Österreichs Volk nun wirklich ein Nationalbewußtsein gefunden hat') (p. 492). In this perspective the difference from Germany becomes more than a matter of which options might or might not have been available in 1955. It meant that Austria had regained its sovereignty in a way which Germany did not and – if one accepts Stourzh's argument – could not have done.

Much of the sense of wonder about the 1955 settlement arose from a very basic sense of reversal, the sudden achievement of a goal which had appeared unattainable for so long. It also arose from the overturning of two assumptions about Soviet policy which had by now become axiomatic: first, that the Soviet Union was incapable of negotiating in good faith (especially in bilateral negotiations with a much smaller country such as Austria), and secondly, that it would never willingly give up any territory which had once been conquered by the Red Army. As Chancellor Julius Raab told the ÖVP parliamentary party (Klub), 'since the start of the Second World War [sic!] Russia has never set out on a withdrawal like this' ('seit Beginn des 2. Weltkrieges hat Rußland einen solchen Rückzug noch niemals angetreten') (p. 491).

But what if this last assumption was itself unfounded? The earlier phase of negotiations on Austria provides evidence that it may have been. In spring 1948 – under the impact of the communist take-over in Czechoslovakia – it was Western diplomats who were negotiating in bad faith, seeking not a compromise but a way to break off further negotiations so that they would not need to evacuate Austria. Furthermore, there is strong evidence that by now the Soviet Union had 'written off' Austria and wanted to leave. Some of this evidence is, in a rare exception, overlooked by Stourzh, for example the Soviet message to the Austrian communist leaders in February 1948 that they intended to pull out since 'the independence of the country [i.e. from the West] cannot depend on the presence of foreign troops'.[5]

But if the Soviet Union was ready to leave in 1948 (and probably 1949) it gave no indication that Austrian neutrality would be a condition. This in turn suggests that Austrian incorporation into NATO, one of the three theoretically possible 'outcomes' (apart from the actual one of neutrality) which Stourzh discusses at the end, may have come closer to realisation than he concedes. In 1948–9 Austrian politicians of both coalition parties expressed (admittedly tentative) interest in enjoying what they saw as the protection offered by NATO membership. At this stage no Soviet objections were heard. Admittedly this changed by the autumn of 1949, once the Federal Republic of Germany was established. Thereafter Austria's increasingly deep involvement in Western defence planning, which Stourzh discusses at length, almost certainly ran counter to the aim of regaining sovereignty.

[5] Meeting between Andrei Zhdanov and Austrian communist leaders on 13 February 1948 cited by Silvia Pons, 'The Twilight of the Cominform', in Giuliano Procacci, ed. *The Cominform: Minutes of the Three Conferences 1947/1948/1949* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1994), 489–90.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777301001060 Published online by Cambridge University Press

But for the earlier period it is at least arguable that there had been a 'window of opportunity', albeit a smaller one than that of 1955. And the position of neutrality in Stourzh's trinity may appear less clear as a result.

Stourzh's contrast between the diplomatic arts and those of the 'military hand' leads to a broader point. A more critical view of diplomacy – and of diplomatic history – is that it glosses over the conflicts, tensions and power relations which underlie it. To state the obvious: the negotiations described here took place in a Europe which had just been devastated by the 'military hand' of Greater Germany. Furthermore, Austria's loss of sovereignty – and thus also the discussions about its restoration – was bound up with the complicity of significant parts of Austrian society in that devastation. The fact that the Soviet Union both instrumentalised this complicity or – as in 1955 – quickly forgot it when necessary, or that the West also shifted its ground does not affect the point. It meant that Austrian diplomacy did not need only to bridge the gap between East and West, it also had to bridge or circumvent the gap between the recent reality of war (experienced personally by negotiators from Mark Clark to Kurt Waldheim) and the post-war fiction, or if one prefers, construction, of Austrian non-liability.

It would be unfair to say that Stourzh ignores this dimension, but in my view he fails to give it sufficient weight. For example, the disagreement about the disposal of German assets in East Austria was in essence a dispute about the spoils of war: who should gain from the investment made in the German war economy (for example in the form of oil exploration), including the products of forced labour? The question of restitution of Jewish property was even more bound up with Austrian complicity with Nazi despoliation, this time of its own citizens. Stourzh gives the subject more prominence than in earlier editions – summarised in two characteristically accurate sections – but it is still marginal. He fails to bring out the extent to which at the start of 1947 Austrian diplomacy was overshadowed by the fear that former Austrian, now American, Jews would have their wishes for the restitution and compensation anchored in the Treaty. Neither does he say much of the anti-Semitic under- and over-tones with which the issue was discussed in the Austrian cabinet.[6] A later footnote refers to the talks between the Claims Committee and the Austrian government over restitution and 'heirless property' after 1955 as 'partly very drawn-out negotiations' ('teilweise sehr schleppernde Verhandlungen') (p. 544), without further explanation.

On the much debated issue of Austria's 'victim status' and its responsibility for participation in the war, referred to in the Moscow Declaration on Austria in 1943 but removed from the text of the State Treaty twelve years later,[7] Stourzh has two

[6] See Robert Knight, *'Ich bin dafür, die Sache in die Länge zu ziehen.' Die Wortprotokolle der Bundesregierung von 1945–1952 über die Entschädigung der Juden* 2nd edn (Vienna: Böhlau, 2000).

[7] *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1947, II, Washington, 1972, 518: 'Whereas, following this annexation, Austria, as an integral part of Hitlerite Germany, participated in the war against the Allied and Associated Powers and other United Nations, and whereas Germany made use for this purpose of Austrian territory, troops and material resources and Austrian cannot avoid certain responsibility arising from this participation in the war . . .'

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777301001060 Published online by Cambridge University Press

main lines of argument. The first could be called a 'realist' defence. He counters the charge of Austrian opportunism or hypocrisy by arguing that this is how politics in the real world is. Austrian diplomats were doing no more than their job by interpreting the ambiguous Moscow declaration in the most favourable possible light (p. 26). But this brings us back to the issue of power. Ultimately the acceptance of Austrian interpretations was not due to either the eloquence or strength of intellect with which they were presented. Nor was Austrian success in stringing out restitution negotiations due to the absence of these qualities in Nahum Goldmann and other Jewish figures. The Austrians were successful in large measure because they were supported, or not seriously hindered, by the US government. What then of those victims of national socialism with little clout in Washington?[8] And what of those victims living in Austria who were largely marginalised in both main Austrian parties? Stourzh clearly sympathises with them – but in doing so he moves away from his earlier realism to a position which apparently equates morality with effectiveness. Thus he criticises 'firstly, above and beyond legal responsibility [rechtlicher Verantwortlichkeit] the absence of the moral understanding [Einsicht], that shame for the misdeeds of co-nationals can also be called for from those who bear no individual guilt; and secondly, the practice, in line with a long Austrian tradition, of dealing juridically [juridifizieren] and of reacting, in line with the law [juristisch . . . zu agieren], but also narrow-mindedly formalistically [enherzig formalistisch], even where voluntary generosity, underpinned by far-sighted political will, *would have been the better policy because it would have been morally more convincing*' ('erstens, jenseits rechtlicher Verantwortlichkeit, das Fehlen der moralischen Einsicht, daß Scham für die Untaten von Landsleuten auch seitens jener angebracht sein kann, bei welchen individuelle Schuld nicht vorliegt; und zweitens, die einer langen österreichischen Tradition entsprechende Übung zu juridifizieren und juristisch, auch engherzig formalistisch, dort zu agieren, wo freiwillige Großzügigkeit, von weitsichtigem politischem Willen getragen, *die bessere, weil moralisch überzeugendere Politik* gewesen wäre') (p. 27, my italics).

Secondly, Stourzh strongly suggests the notion – though not the phrase – of 'the other Austria', embodied by those victims of national socialism who now represented the restored Austrian state. He notes (p. 26) that 'The "victim thesis" corresponded to the personal experience of numerous responsible politicians of the first hours and first years of the Second Republic and they could identify spontaneously with it' ('"die Opferthese" den persönlichen Erfahrungen zahlreicher verantwortlicher Politiker der ersten Stunde und der ersten Jahre der Zweiten Republik entsprach und sie sich mit ihr spontan identifizieren konnten'). Here he is referring to politicians such as Hurdes or Figl, both former inmates of Dachau and Mauthausen,[9] but is probably also thinking of those Austrian diplomats, such as the lawyer Rudolf Blühdorn, who had been purged at the Anschluss and had come

[8] See Oliver Rathkolb, *Washington ruft Wien. US Großmachtpolitik und Österreich 1953–1949* (Vienna: Böhlau, 1997), 173–5, 212–32.

[9] On this Stourzh, p. 26 n. 38, p. 522. But see also the contrasting evidence in Knight, *Ich bin dafür*, and *idem*, 'The Politics of Memory in post-Nazi Austria', in Edward Timms and Andrea Hammel, eds.,

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777301001060 Published online by Cambridge University Press

back at the start of the Second Republic. Even if they were not perhaps as numerous as Stourzh believes,[10] these figures were undoubtedly an important element in the early history of the Second Republic. Yet their later careers also underline the problematic aspects of Austria's claim to collective 'victimhood'. It suggests that much of the rest of Austrian society did not make the same identification, or did so far from spontaneously. The question of power relations thus returns, this time in the form of the domestic manoeuvring around the re-integration of former Nazis.

Günter Bischof uses some of the same archival material as Stourzh and discusses many of the same issues, but he attempts much more besides and in a far smaller space. Their books crossed, so that their disagreements are aired on the basis of earlier publications. These are not on the whole about Austria's international position in the Cold War. Here both stress Austria's far from neutral involvement in the Western defence planning in the early 1950s, although Bischof lays more stress on the formula of 'armed neutrality' in allaying the fears of the US military. The significant differences lie elsewhere. First, Bischof takes a rather less Austro-centric approach than Stourzh. His aim is to bridge the gap created by the parochialism of both Austrian and US historiography; while the former has largely neglected 'Anglo-Saxon' Cold War historiography the latter has generally ignored Austria as a far-off country in central Europe. Secondly, Bischof moves Austria's Nazi legacy from the margins to the centre of his account. These projects are surely justified and indeed overdue. Unfortunately, in both cases the execution leaves much to be desired.

Bischof's analysis of the Cold War lacks clarity and consistency. The trouble starts with the title itself. Leaving aside the validity of the 'First Cold War',[11] itself hardly a universally accepted term, the 'leverage of the weak' surely implies some conceptualisation of power relations in the Cold War in general. This could delineate the theoretical possibilities and limits of small 'client' states vis-à-vis their superpower 'patrons'. Bischof points initially to the way in which determined anti-communism gave the Germans and Austrians 'considerable leverage'. But two pages later he shifts to the pathos of Austrian smallness – the state as a '"small bird" that dared to soar' (p. 5) – which would presumably not apply to Germany. In what follows Bischof certainly does show how the breakdown of four-power unity over Austria was utilised by Austrian governments after the war. In the process they also overstated to the West the likelihood that they would give in to Soviet pressure. Alarm bells duly sounded in Washington (and London) and Austria began to gain the benefits of being a de facto junior ally of the United States. But it is not clear

The German–Jewish Dilemma. From the Enlightenment to the Shoah (Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 1999), 291–304.

[10] Stourzh cites the introduction by Getrude Enderle-Burcel in Rudolf Jeřábek and Leopold Kammerhofer (eds.), *Protokolle des Kabinettsrates der Provisorischen Regierung Karl Renner 1945* vol. I (Horn/Vienna: Verlag Berger, 1995), v, to the effect that that twelve to fourteen out of an average of seventeen members of Figl's cabinet had been victims of Nazi persecution. This claim and the nature of the persecution remain to be substantiated.

[11] See Fred Halliday, *The Making of the Second Cold War* (London: Verso, 1983), 3, who dates the First Cold War from 1946 to 1953.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777301001060 Published online by Cambridge University Press

that this amounted to 'leverage', and even less clear that 'Austrian diplomacy created manoeuvring space between the occupation powers' (p. 52).

Leverage seems even more inappropriate for the next phase, roughly from 1947 to 1953. Now Austrian policy-makers came up against the limitations of their freedom of manoeuvre vis-à-vis the United States, first at the Moscow Council of Foreign Ministers in April 1947 and again in late summer 1949. On both occasions Austrian leaders wanted to make more concessions to the Soviet Union than Americans thought wise or safe. The Austrians found that first, they could not force the United States to shift ground and secondly, that they had nowhere else to go. In the third phase, by contrast, after 1953, Raab's emancipation of Austrian foreign policy depended on US unreadiness but also on its inability to stop Austria's leaders negotiating bilaterally with the Soviet Union. One reason was presumably Austria's growing economic and financial strength, another could be called its moral or – more sceptically – its public relations leverage; a country which had for so long featured in public polemics as a victim of Soviet obduracy could not be stopped from accepting an invitation to negotiate in Moscow. At some point, as Stourzh shows well, US leaders had to live up to their publicly proclaimed values.

As his rich footnotes show, Bischof has an extensive knowledge of the historiography of the Cold War. The trouble is that he is so eclectic that his focus is often blurred. He makes several bows in the direction of Melvyn Leffler and the centrality of 'geo-strategy' (as opposed to ideology?), but this does not seem to be much more than the reluctance of the US military after 1949 to retreat from a forward position. More importantly, Bischof is inconsistent in interpreting Soviet policy aims: sometimes they are described as strictly limited, sometimes as limitless unless resisted, sometimes as purely economic, sometimes as economic and security-based. Bischof himself often appears critical of 'traditionalist' Cold War interpretations and individual cold warriors, and his description of the Cold War as a 'tit-for-tat exchange' implies a degree of equivalence between the two superpowers; at other times he seems himself very much a traditionalist, dismissing Gabriel Kolko and invoking John Lewis Gaddis. In short it is often hard to see where he stands.

On Bischof's second major theme – Austria's Nazi legacy – there is no such difficulty. He nails his colours to the mast early on, referring to 'the myths of Austria as victim and a nation resisting the Nazis . . . the wily founding fathers of the Second Austrian Republic *invented* a version of history' (Bischof's italics). Then comes a narrative of duplicity: 'First the world was persuaded to accept the construct of the ''occupation doctrine''. This ''Rip Van Winkle myth'' of dormant Austrian statehood during the war presented Austria as Hitler's ''first victim'', not liable to pay reparations. This lawyers' version of the past expunged Austrians' complicity in Nazi war crimes. The Foreign Office [i.e Austrian Ballhausplatz] spearheaded this *invention* of collective victimhood' (p. 52). 'The ''occupation theory'' held that Austrian statehood had lain dormant during the war. Since Austria had not declared war on anyone it could not be held legally responsible for German war crimes. Thus was born *Austria's Rip Van Winkle legend* [sic] – a country blissfully sleeping through seven years of war while the Germans committed horrific war crimes.' This was

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777301001060 Published online by Cambridge University Press

'elevated to *official state doctrine* quickly and quietly in August 1945'. Then it 'had to be implemented at home and marketed abroad' (p. 62). This involved a 'brazen deception of Clio in the service of the state' (p. 65). By the end of 1946 the US recognition of Austria as a liberated country was 'the most important victory in the postwar success story of the Austrian Rip Van Winkle mythology' (p. 67). Now 'the basic doctrine was in place'.

As his italics suggest, Bischof's indignation is palpable and far removed from Stourzh's restrained realism. The difference is seen clearly in their different opinions on postwar Austrian usage of the Moscow Declaration.[12] This moral concern does lead Bischof to make the kind of connections which Stourzh fails to, for example between German assets and forced labour. But it involves a degree of caricature and a rather simplistic understanding both of the dynamics of collective memory within Austria and of international relations. It also overlooks an important difference between the two. Though Austria's international room to manoeuvre did become more limited as it effectively joined the West, by the same token Austrian sovereignty at home was constantly being extended. It was precisely this domestic freedom of movement which allowed Austria's political class to accommodate former Nazis individually and ideologically. They were secure in the knowledge that the Western allies would almost never back Soviet attacks on Austria's denazification record.

Overall Bischof has much to say on both the Cold War and the Nazi question which is both interesting and new. But many of his points are marred by sloppy and inaccurate language, or factual errors. For example: the Moscow Declaration 'was destined to extricate the painful memory of the war from the complicity in a hideous race war against legions of innocent people' (xi); Schuschnigg 'embarked on his long descent of resistance and retreat *vis-à-vis* Hitler, which in March 1938 would lead to the absorbtion [sic] of Austria into the Third Reich' (p. 8); 'In 1946/7 trading with Western Europe without hard currency was forbidding' (p. 97); for Jewish refugees 'Rebuilding their lives was harsh' (p. 16); the Austrian resistance movement was 'small, atomized and highly incoherent' (p. 19); 'The conquest of females became a compliment [complement?] to the ultimate defeat of the enemy' (p. 32); 'the Truman Administration brokered this Anglo-Soviet feud' (p. 51); 'The crucial decisions were made by the patronizing elites . . .' (p. 53); 'Renner's silence about the suffering of the Jews and other minorities was ringing' (p. 58); Renner had to rely on the 'fast-churning rumour mill' to gather information (p. 60); Justice Minister Gerö certainly did not refer to the crime of 'consecration of the body' but to desecration (Leichenschändung) (p. 59); and it seems unlikely that the Soviet general Konev attacked the Austrian failure to eliminate 'Nazi theology' (p. 83); it seems equally unlikely that Renner distributed 'alimony' among the three parties (p.56); the inter-allied London declaration of January 1943 was not a UN declaration, it did not declare invalid all forced property transfers in Nazi-occupied territories but reserved the right to declare them null and void, and its applicability

[12] See Günter Bischof, 'Zur Instrumentalisierung der Moskauer Deklaration nach dem zweiten Weltkrieg', *Zeitgeschichte*, 20 (1993), 345–66; see also Stourzh's comment on p. 26.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777301001060 Published online by Cambridge University Press

to Austria did not, as Bischof implies, simply follow from the Moscow Declaration on Austria several months later. The communist minister Karl Altmann (incorrectly termed Altman on p. 69 and in the index) did not resign after Stalin's change of mind on the Marshall Plan (if indeed there was a change of mind) – but several months later in November 1947, well after the Soviet campaign against it had started; in spring 1948 the 'age of McCarthyism' had not yet arrived in Washington (p. 110); 'Negotiations bogged down [sic] over Austrian complicity in the Second World War' (p. 107); later they 'faultered [sic] on the rock of "German assets"' (p. 108). Whether these and many other mistakes and infelicities are the responsibility of the publishers, the editor or the author is unclear. It still seems astonishing that they were allowed past the proof stage.

Lothar Höbelt's study of the League of Independents/Verband der Unabhängigen (VdU), which was founded in 1949 and succeeded by the FPÖ seven years later, is in stark contrast to both Stourzh and Bischof. International politics hardly impinges – except to the extent that the occupation powers helped or hindered the creation of the fourth party (the third party was the Communist Party). Neutrality and the State Treaty negotiations are also marginal. Austria's domestic social stability is touched on at various points. But – apart from a few half-hearted dips into political science jargon – Höbelt's interest is not in the structural changes in the party system or Austrian society but in the inner life of Austria's German national camp (generally termed 'national', sometimes 'deutschnational', or, more tendentiously, 'deutschfreiheitlich'). The question he is interested in – not suprisingly for a champion of Haider's FPÖ[13] – is why did the VdU fail where Haider succeeded thirty years later? In particular, why was it not able to gain support outside the German national 'camp'? The questions he is interested in avoiding are what the leaders and supporters of the VdU had done in the war and what they now thought about the cause for which they had recently worked, fought and in some cases suffered? This is post-Nazi politics with the national socialism left out.

This purpose is, admittedly, well buried in the detailed and breathless narrative style Höbelt favours; he is not one for the clearly stated proposition where a convoluted or paradoxical (a favourite word) argument will do. Most of the book is a blow-by-blow account (sometimes literally) of the intrigues, calculations and miscalculations, infighting, backstabbing and other manoeuvres, surrounding the rise and decline of the VdU. Here Höbelt is in his element, his knowledge of the minutiae, personal and political, of the actors is considerable and he tells his story with great self-assurance. And the advantages of being an FPÖ insider are evident in the way in which party veterans, their widows, children or their private papers have been tapped. Many readers will doubtless appreciate this sense of being taken behind the political scene. Others, including this reviewer, will find the minutiae a little too minute and the worldliness a little too arch. They may also suspect that the casually

[13] On Höbelt's right-wing activism see Christa Zöchler, *Profil*, 5 October 1992 ('Ethnisch deutsch'), his journalism in the FPÖ weekly *Zur Zeit*, and his contribution to David Irving's Festschrift, Reinhard Uhle-Wettler (ed.), *Wagnis Wahrheit: Historiker in Handschellen? Festschrift für David Irving* (Kiel: Arndt-Verlag, 1998).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777301001060 Published online by Cambridge University Press

authoritative tone conceals as much as it reveals. The frequent designation of incidents as 'legendary' or 'famous' (as in 'the meeting in the station restaurant of Attnang-Puchheim which later became so famous' ('das später so berühmt gewordene Treffen im Bahnhofsrestaurant von Attnang-Puchheim') (p. 202)), or knowing references to the voice of the people (der Volksmund), with no indication of how or where Höbelt heard it, do not help. Though Höbelt undoubtedly provides a mass of new and interesting details about the power struggles around and within the VdU, the plain fact is that a high proportion of his assertions are simply that, and quite devoid of any empirical back-up. Readers are asked to take a great deal on trust. As we shall see, there are plenty of reasons not to.

Höbelt starts off with the old theory of Adam Wandruszka of the god-given 'gottgewollte' three Lager, which, he says, his study confirms: 'The history of the VDU is a demonstration of the persistence of the old camps (Lager), which not even the shocks caused by war and dictatorship could cover over' ('Die Geschichte des VdU ist eine Demonstration des Beharrungsvermögens der alten Lager, die auch von den Erschütterungen durch Krieg und Diktatur nicht zu verwischen waren') (p. 7). Yet much of his subsequent account seems to demonstrate precisely the opposite. It would probably have helped if he had defined Lager at the start because it is far from clear from his account whether – or in what sense – the gulf between its agrarian and urban elements makes it sensible to talk of a German national Lager at all. It is even more doubtful whether, as Höbelt claims, the agrarian side, which he traces back to the pre-war Landbund (Agrarian League), had any realistic chance of being revived after the war, as the former vice-chancellor Karl Hartleb, the Graz publisher Leopold Stocker (also, not by chance, Höbelt's publishers) hoped. In order to be eliminated by ÖVP machinations, as Höbelt claims it was in 1948 (p. 35), the old Agrarian League (der alte Landbund) would have had to be re-established in the first place. Höbelt's further claim that in the process the People's Party, in the person of State Secretary Ferdinand Graf, missed an historic chance for a genuine accommodation with the German national camp by not including it in a reorganised ÖVP, is equally tenuous. It is also hard to see how this argument fits in with the thesis of Lager continuity and Höbelt does not make it easier (p. 61).

Höbelt's current political interests make the point of some of his acrobatics clearer. Behind the invocation of the Landbund and its traditions is the old project of the German national right since 1945: to construct a genealogy unsullied by National Socialism. Thus we learn that the Landbund – unlike the urban Grossdeutsche Volkspartei – asserted itself better (against both the 'Ständestaat' and the Third Reich), that its leadership went into an 'inner immigration' ('innere Immigration') or like Hartleb held subordinate functions ('untergeordnete Funktionen') (p. 18). The Landbund embodied the 'hardly compromised' variant of the old national Lager (p. 66). The evidence for this is flimsy, to put it mildly. Höbelt himself concedes this for the VdU's 'undisputed stronghold' of Carinthia (with a 20 per cent share of the vote in 1949) (p. 71). Here many Landbund voters and functionaries had gone over to the Nazi party before and after it was banned in 1933. One reason they did so was precisely because their traditions were not just

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777301001060 Published online by Cambridge University Press

anti-clerical, as Höbelt states, but also anti-Slav and anti-Semitic, as he does not. After 1945 anti-Slav continuities were evident in the VdU's fight to eliminate Slovene language education in Carinthia, clothed as the battle for 'parental rights' and the defence of the Carinthian *Heimat* against the threat – real and invented – from Yugoslavia. Höbelt ignores this.

Part of the cleansing of the VdU pedigree takes the traditional form of selective curricula vitae. Bruno Brehm, the Nazi laureate, is merely 'the southern Moravian writer' ('der südmährische Schriftsteller') (p. 157). Hartleb's alleged differences with the Nazis come from a letter he wrote in 1946. Of Heribert Jordan we are told merely that he had 'already been a controversial figure in the Landbund' ('schon im Landbund eine kontroverse Figur gewesen') (p. 21). No reasons are given, but at least we can infer that Höbelt does *not* consider controversial Jordan's propaganda activities for the Nazi Carinthian Bauernschaft (farming organisation) ('Heading for victory with Adolf Hitler's banners' ('Mit Adolf Hitlers Fahnen dem Sieg entgegen')).[14] Similarly we learn nothing of the role of another Landbund and VdU leader, Valentin Maierhofer, in the forced Germanisation of southern Carinthia, including the deportation of Slovene families in 1942. Another Carinthian bigwig, the timber magnate Adolf Funder, is described here as a victim of British 'Animosität' (pp. 71, 267). What actually happened was that in 1948 a courageous Austrian judge tried to press charges against him under the denazification laws, but was defeated by concerted political pressure (which the British were unable or unwilling to resist). Hans Steinacher, who though not actually a Landbund figure played an important part in Carinthia by deciding not to switch from the People's Party to VdU, is wrongly described here as not having been a Nazi party member. His role as head of the *Volksbund für das Deutschtum im Ausland*, for example in support of Konrad Henlein, are ignored. So is his autobiography *Victory in German night (Sieg in deutscher Nacht)* (1943), a hymn of hatred for all things Slav, supporting the German war effort.[15] All these are perhaps minor distortions and omissions but they and others are cumulatively important. They certainly make one make wonder what evidence (or whose opinion polls) allows Höbelt to describe Egon Denz, Bürgermeister in Innsbruck between 1938 and 1945, as 'popular'(p. 190).

At one point Herbert Kraus, the VdU's first leader, is called the voice of 'the less compromised parts' ('die weniger kompromittierten Teile') of the Third camp (p. 61). Logic suggests that there must therefore have been a *more* compromised part. But they never make an appearance. On Höbelt's account they were not in Allied internment camps. They were not among the mass of former Nazi members whose exclusion from the franchise in 1945 he sees as such an affront to civil liberties. Nor were they among the remaining 60,000 incriminated (belastete) Nazis, who remained excluded from the franchise until 1950. Nor among the Styrian VdU, who were not extreme right but really 'Radicals, who dreamed of a National

[14] *Kärntner Bauernkalendar* (Klagenfurt, 1943), 30–3.

[15] On Steinacher's early career see Ulfried Burz, *Die nationalsozialistische Bewegung in Kärnten (1918–1933); Vom Deutschnationalismus zum Führerprinzip*, Das Kärntner Landesarchiv 23 (Klagenfurt: Kärntner Landesarchivs, 1998).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777301001060 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Workers' Party' ('Radikalen, die von einer Nationalen Arbeiter-Partei schwärmten') (p. 185). The very term 'extreme right-wing' ('rechts-extremistisch') is so suspect that it needs to be swaddled in inverted commas and 'allegedly' (angeblich) for good measure (p. 37). The 'Soucek conspiracy', uncovered at the end of 1947, is for Höbelt only a conspiracy in the sense that it was the authorities who conspired to fit Soucek up. It comes as something of a shock when on page 244 Höbelt actually concedes, however sarcastically, that three FPÖ candidates standing in 1956 elections 'could on a normal use of language be considered ''right wing extremists'', or at least as extremists with all sorts of suspecious connections' ('konnten nach allegemeinen Sprachgebrauch als ''Rechsextremisten'' gelten, als Extremisten zumindest mit allerlei verdächtigen Verbindungen'). On what grounds, or with what connections, we never find out.

Kraus hoped that the VdU would become 'a movement of ''Sammlung'', transcending the Lager' ('eine lagerübergreifende Sammlungsbewegung') (p. 160). The 1949 elections, in which it won 11.7 per cent of the vote and took eight seats from each of the two main parties, appeared to show that it might. Höbelt (on a thin empirical basis) claims here that in terms of voting structure 'the VdU really was a fairly classless party' (p. 136). Thereafter, he argues, the VdU's sociological basis narrowed as it lost support both in agrarian areas and among workers. In the first case – oddly, given its Landbund antecedents – it 'lacked the smell of the stable' ('Dem VdU fehlte der bäuerliche Stallgeruch' – p. 133). However, the 1951 presidential elections, when the VdU found a popular non-Party candidate, the doctor Burghard Breitner, seemed to give the VdU a second chance to go beyond Lager boundaries by attracting more bürgerliche voters and to become a 'broad-based movement of renewal [breitgefächerte Erneuerungsbewegung], ideologically heterogenous but perhaps socially more homogenous than the original VdU electorate' (pp. 136–7).

For Höbelt this movement had to wait another thirty-five years before, under Jörg Haider, it would succeed.[16] Part of his explanation, which seems plausible enough, though hardly original, is that many voted for the VdU in 1949 for an essentially negative reason, that is, as a protest against denazification penalties, and then withdrew their support as those penalties were wound down. As the economy entered a period of growth and high employment, discontent became more muted (obscurely, Höbelt also claims credit for the VdU for this economic prosperity). As well as these broad factors Höbelt blames the machinations and calumnies of the VdU's rivals, but he does not spare the dilletantism of some of its own leaders either. And he argues that in the early 1950s the VdU was at a disadvantage compared with

[16] Lothar Höbelt, '"Daß der nationale Gedanke eine Ausweitung auf das europäische erfahren hat''. Die europäische Integration in den fünfziger und sechziger Jahren aus der Sicht von WdU/VdU und FPÖ', in Michael Gehler and Rolf Steininger (eds.), *Österreich und Europäische Integration 1945–1993* (Vienna: Böhlau, 1993), 364. 'By chance these developments [in international politics RK] ... went hand in hand with that extension of the Freiheitlich Lager-party into a broad-based ''movement of renewal'' which at the start of the 1950s had failed' ('Zufällig ging mit diesen Entwicklungen in Österreich auch jene Verbreiterung der freiheitlichen Lager-Partei zur breitgefächerten ''Erneuerungsbewegung'' einher, die Anfang der fünfziger Jahre noch mißlungen war').

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777301001060 Published online by Cambridge University Press

the People's Party because of its limited patronage resources. Many German national civil servants and employees were won over by the patronage of the Proporz system. Last but not least the party was outmanoeuvred by Julius Raab after the 1953 election, when it seemed to be on the verge of joining the People's Party and the Socialists in a coalition. What this says about the thesis of Lager continuity is rather mysterious. At any rate, by page 241 the undisputed German national Lager – now a 'Milieu' – seems to have shrunk to a small area of Carinthia. The old Lager structures and mentalities, however, continued to exist 'even if the factors which created them – from Kulturkampf to agrarian ownership structure – were no longer current' (p. 256). At the same time 'The national element remained a sociological constant, not an ideological one' ('Das nationale Element blieb eine soziologische Konstante, keine ideologische') (?).

Höbelt identifies with the VdU attacks on the corruption of Proporz and the Grand Coalition. He does not notice the incongruity of blaming, as if it had been in power for fifty years, a 'system' which had just taken over the wreckage created by national socialism.

Above all he has difficulty accepting that recent memories of the Nazi regime might have prevented its opponents and others from seeing the VdU as the innocents they claimed to be. Here he adopts the classic tone of the German national camp: injured innocence at its opponents' 'calumnies'. This leads him to an account of the tensions within the VdU at variance with the account of its own leader Kraus. Höbelt disagrees with the traditional account which sees a growing gulf between the 'liberal' leadership of Kraus (and Viktor Reimann) and the 'national' elements which were stronger in the (western) Länder. It is true that this distinction has become something of a cliché but – if 'national' is taken to mean not just a belief in Austria's membership of a German nation but also an unapologetic view about National socialism – then it still makes a great deal of sense. Höbelt gives a characteristically oblique explanation that Kraus was concerned to place the liberal element to the fore 'after the bad experiences with the chauvinistic excesses of the national idea' ('nach den schlechten Erfahrungen mit den chauvinistischen Auswüchsen des nationalen Gedankens') (p. 63). Kraus himself is more direct. After the crisis unleashed by Gordon Gollob at the 1950 summer solstice (!) in the course of which the Styrian VdU was banned, he blamed Gollob for diffusing 'an atmosphere which can be called neo-nazi-romantic' ('eine Atmosphäre, die neo-nazistisch-romantisch genannt werden kann') (p. 112) (Kraus, unlike Höbelt, needs no inverted commas). And on the foundation of the FPÖ six years later (7 April 1956), he recalled in his memoirs (a passage not cited by Höbelt) how he had been 'shocked' (entsetzt) 'at how little concern there was [among FPÖ politicians] to distance themselves from the awful Nazi past' ('wie wenig man darauf aus war, sich von der grauenvollen Nazi-Vergangenheit zu distanzieren').[17]

Even more important is that the opponents of the VdU are invariably, on

[17] Herbert Kraus, '*Untragbare Objektivität*'. *Politische Erinnerungen 1917 bis 1987* (Vienna: Amalthea, 1988), 269.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777301001060 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Höbelt's account, motivated by cynicism and hypocrisy, revenge or hatred. The other 'black' i.e. clerical victims of national socialism – with a few exceptions – come in for particular scorn. In the case of Hurdes and Weinburger they supposedly pursued 'a policy of revenge and wanted, if they could, to imprison them all' ('Rachepolitik betrieben und sie am liebsten alle einsperren wollten') or, like Alfred Missong, indulged in 'defamation of the German evil spirit [Ungeist]' ('Schmähungen des deutschen Ungeistes'). Stourzh's 'other Austrians' are Höbelt's Bourbons, emerging from concentration camps having forgotten nothing and learnt nothing ('die nichts vergessen und nichts dazugelernt hatten'). On the socialist side there were 'highly strung comrades' ('zartbesaiteten Genossen') (p. 217) who in the 1950s had to be instructed in Realpolitik by their leaders. The year 1945 itself was in both Germany and Austria of 'onesidedness' ('Einseitigkeiten'). (p. 62). The mind boggles at what Höbelt 's idea of an even-handed treatment of national socialism might look like.

Of course Austria's two main parties did show plenty of cynicism in their dealings with former Nazis. But their contradictions have also been an essential ingredient of the VdU/FPÖ's own evasions and displacements. Höbelt is too close to his subject to analyse these. The VdU, he tells us, was 'a movement which was born of the dislocation of war' ('eine Bewegung, die aus der Dislokation des Krieges geboren war'), yet he mentions the war as little as the Nazi regime. We learn that it produced heroes, flying aces like Gordon Gollob who 'had been the leading flying ace on the Eastern Front in 1942' ('1942 das führende Flieger-As der Ostfront gewesen') or Strachwitz 'a highly decorated Narvik fighter' ('hochdekorierte Narvik-kämpfer') (p. 46). Despite warning against generalisations Höbelt takes over the collective clichés of the *Landserhefte*. Thus the 'sense of comradeship' ('Kameradschaftsgefühl') of the front (though not necessarily practical for peace-time politicking) had not been 'devalued through its accompanying circumstances' ('nicht durch seine Begeleitumstände entwertet wurde') (p. 130). Could this be a discrete reference to the murder of civilians? Later we learn that 'In crises and moments of stress [Spitzenzeiten] the old officers, even if they were still really young, were used, so it was said, to standing their ground . . .' ('Die alten Offiziere, auch wenn sie noch recht jung waren, waren gewohnt, so hieß es, in Krisensituationen und zu Spitzenzeiten ihren Mann zu stellen . . .' (p. 242). This front generation bears no trace of the weariness, apathy or cynicism noted by so many contemporary observers and later historians. It posesses 'Elan' (p. 107), and a 'robust set of nerves' ('robusten Nervenkostüm'), which allowed it to withstand the offensiveness ('Anzüglichkeiten') of its opponents (p. 86). As for the war in the East the 'anti-communistic crusade' ('antikommunistische Kreuzzug' had been 'der respektabler Teil des Hegemonialkrieges') (p. 37).[18]

But what of the *less* 'respectable' part? Höbelt is determined not to be affected,

[18] See also Höbelt, 'Daß der nationale Gedanke', 349; 'Furthermore the USA was also the power which alone was in a position to continue the ''antibolshevic crusade'' as the part of the German hegemonial war which continued to be respectable' ('Die USA waren darüber hinaus auch die Macht, die als einzige in der Lage war, den ''antibolschewistischen Kreuzzug'' fortzuführen, als den auch weiterhin respektablen Part des deutschen Hegemonialkrieges').

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777301001060 Published online by Cambridge University Press

above all to be *unimpressed*, by all those corpses. Hartleb is quoted as referring after the war only to 'alleged crimes' (''angebliche Verbrechen') which he had dismissed as enemy propaganda during the war (p. 16). Höbelt does not say if he changed his mind thereafter. Those who remained in Soviet prisons after the bulk of Austrian POWs were released may have been accused of war crimes, but for Höbelt they were merely those who had the bad luck to land in the Soviet Union. He does not say how they got there. In 1950 Fritz Stüber caused uproar in the Nationalrat (parliament) by comparing the treatment in Nazi concentration camps and Allied post-war internment camps. After all, the camp where he had been interned in 1945 'had not been a picnic either' ('die Herrengasse war auch kein Honiglecken'). Höbelt's specious gloss on this is that Stüber had merely meant that 'there had also been political prisoners after 1945' ('es auch nach 1945 politische Häftlinge gegeben habe') (p. 98).

Apart from occasionally quoting VdU anti-Semitism without comment (e.g. 'neo-American emigrant cabal' ('neoamerikanischen Emigrantenklüngels') (p. 210)), Höbelt is sensible enough to steer clear of Jews and the Holocaust. Yet this bypassing is itself highly misleading, since even a brief look at the VdU press shows that these subjects – Jewish DPs, compensation and restitution – were running topics. In case of restitution VdU supporters had much to lose from a return of 'arianised' property (no inverted commas for Höbelt) (p. 122). Höbelt reinvents their lobbying to prevent or reverse this as a campaign against corrupt administrators ('öffentliche Verwalter'), who had been given temporary charge of property whose title was unclear or disputed. These he describes as 'the ''carpet baggers'' of the Liberation' ('die ''Carpet bagger'' der Befreiung') (p. 253). Whether this means Jewish former owners or not is left unclear. What *is* clear is that the simplistic legalism which leads Höbelt to conclude that since the Nazi party had been 'a party which at the given time had been legal' ('einer zum gegebenen Zeitpunkt legalen Partei') (p. 68), and denazification was an infringement of democratic rights, would equally have precluded any action to reverse the 'legal' theft of Jewish property.

The way former Nazis were integrated in the 1950s, which Stourzh notes, and Bischof attacks as immoral is for Höbelt the assertion of Realpolitik or, alternatively, a product of Austrian tolerance. The ÖVP leadership saw sense and demoted or sidelined its 'concentration camp crew' (KZ-Garnitur) (p. 249) of anti-Nazis, thus taking the winds out of the VdU sails. But he also gives the decline of the VdU something like the nimbus of statesmanship, as part of the 'reasonable equilibrium' ('auskömmlichen Äquilibirum') which became established in the 1950s. A generation later, however, Höbelt detects, for reasons which are not explained, a second wave of intolerance to hit Austria, that of political correctness, spearheaded by educationalists. They and other Aunt Sallies (psychology, 'self-appointed exposers [of the truth]' ('selbsternnante Aufdecker')) are effortlessly knocked down. In the process Höbelt makes the startling claim that no Austrian amnesia or repression of the Nazi past took place. Why not? Because 'repression' would presuppose that 'the Austrians of 1955 [sic]' thought they had been involved in something 'reprehensible'

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777301001060 Published online by Cambridge University Press

('Verwerfliches') over the previous quarter century. But they did not believe that they had. Therefore no repression took place. Q.E.D.

Höbelt clearly agrees with his imagined Austrians. And it is his (carefully calculated) insouciance about national socialist crimes which makes his book as much an illustration as an analysis of Austria's German national milieu and thus indirectly of Austria's present isolation as well. Naturally Höbelt should not be taken as typical of either society or academy in Austria, much less of historical research at Vienna University. Nevertheless his arguments are probably closer to the mainstream in Austria than they would be in any other country of western Europe.

A comparison with two recent works on the early politics of the Federal Republic, by Norbert Frei[19] and Ulrich Herbert,[20] which cover some of the same ground – that is, the relationship between 'national conservative', right-wing and neo-Nazi politics in the early 1950s – illustrates the point. It is not just the superiority of scholarship that is striking, but the way in which that scholarship is unambiguously rooted in values which are the antithesis of National Socialism. Part of the explanation may be that the 'anti-Nazi foundation consensus' ('antinationalsozialistischen Gründungskonsensus') of which Frei speaks never became established in Austria in the same way as it did in West Germany. The VdU and even more the FPÖ were open to the extreme right in a way that the FDP, after Allied intervention against its penetration in 1952, was not. The 'normative Abgrenzung' – the drawing of a line in the sand to keep out the extreme right – which Frei analyses, did not take place in Austria.

Anton Pelinka is not normally shy of sticking his head over the parapet in criticising Austrian attitudes to national socialism or in defending left-liberal values.[21] He is also a political scientist who takes history seriously. His account of Austria's Nazi question (much less melodramatic than the subtitle 'Out of the shadow of the past' suggests) goes broadly along the following lines: Nazi rule helped modernise Austrian society, for example by increasing educational opportunities for the working classes (many of whom were later recruited by the SPÖ). It also wrought changes among Austrian elites, who came to see the need for the development of a distinct Austrian national identity (p. 14) and to co-operate with each other. However, in Austrian society as a whole an extremist, racist and anti-Semitic potential survived the end of the Third Reich, while Austrian national identity also remained 'a fragile product'. In the following years consociationalism brought many benefits. Later it began to outlive its purpose and since the early 1980s has gone into decline. The causes include well-known factors such as

[19] *Vergangenheitspolitik. Die Anfänge der Bundesrepublik und die NS-Vergangenheit* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1996).

[20] *Best: biographische Studien über Radikalismus, Weltanschauung und Vernunft, 1903–1989* (Bonn: J. H. W. Dietz, 1996).

[21] E.g. Pelinka and Erika Weinzierl, eds., *Das Grosse Tabu, Österreichs Umgang mit seiner Vergangenheit* (Vienna: Österreichische Staatsdruckerei, 1987). Recently Pelinka was found guilty of defamation for a (restrained) criticism of Haider's stance on national socialism and given a 60,000 Schilling fine. See the open letter by US academics to President Klestil in *Der Standard*, 15 June 2000. The case has gone to appeal.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777301001060 Published online by Cambridge University Press

increased voter volatility and the reduced pull of party patronage, as well as Austria's opening to the world economy. In addition both Catholic and Socialist Lager have experienced a decline in the importance of ideology. Secularisation means that the Catholic milieu is 'practically dead', which Pelinka describes as 'the final triumph of the Reformation over the Counter-Reformation' (!).

Pelinka does not mourn the decline of corporatism (of which social partnership is 'the friendly Austrian version' (p. 139)); in fact he sees it as part of Austria's move towards a western European norm. However, it does mean that elites are no longer able to control the 'xenophobic, racist, anti-Semitic potential' as they could after the war when 'the benign power cartel of consociational democracy satisfied some of the extremists' needs by accepting and defending ordinary and not so ordinary former Nazis (some of whom were not always just former) in the 'affairs'. This contradictory behaviour of the old power cartel has now lost its grip on society and its problems so different from the post-1945 era'.

As for Haider's FPÖ, Pelinka concludes, not entirely satisfactorily, that it both is and is not a neo-Nazi party (p. 195). He argues that the wider decline in ideology also means that its old German national core has lost much of its importance. Hence the 'austrianisation' of Haider's message, since 'To bind [sic] his new electorate, it was necessary for Haider to integrate Austrian patriotism with whatever was left of (Austrian) pan-Germanism' (p. 199). And even though 'the roots [sic] are fertile still' (p. 183), anti-Semitism is not necessarily becoming more important within Austria, though it may be taking on a 'new candour' (p. 192). Despite Haider's mobilisation of xenophobia, Pelinka warns against equating modern Austria with Austria in 1938. The first reason he gives may appear ironic (or prophetic?) since February 2000, namely that there is now 'the European framework since Austria's membership of the EU'; the second is the democratic continuity of the past fifty years.

As for Austria's international position, Pelinka thinks that neutrality is passé. The neutrality declaration of 1955 expressed two logics. The first, a foreign policy one, following Stourzh, arose from the window of opportunity of the mid-1950s. In the second, 'domestic logic', neutrality was 'an oppportunity to define Austria's role with a maximum degree of independence, especially independence from any pan-German interpretation' (p. 159). Both logics were 'designed, controlled and promoted by the political and diplomatic elites of the ÖVP and SPÖ'. Here too popular support was lacking in the first ten years. But then neutrality began to 'fulfil some emotional functions' which Pelinka – in contrast to Stourzh – describes in a rather satirical fashion: 'Neutrality became seen as a value in itself and represented different things to different parts of the political spectrum: a bit of island mentality, some leftovers of the old empire's glory, a pinch of pacifism, and a good dollop of xenophobic resentment. These ingredients can be mixed together in different recipes: for some Austrians, neutrality is first and foremost an antithesis to militarism; for others, neutrality's primary function is distinguishing Austria from other countries' (p. 169).

According to Pelinka the changed international situation since 1989 and a new

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777301001060 Published online by Cambridge University Press

generation within Austria's elite led to the application to join the EU. Today there is a gulf between popular and elite perceptions. The upshot is that 'most Austrians still have not realised how dead neutrality already is. They still believe there is much to defend'. Austrian elites will therefore need to apply 'all their political skills to convince public opinion in Austria. Their main task is to present the fait accompli of discarded neutrality in such a way that most Austrians support or at least accept it' (p. 172).

Pelinka weaves these strands together with the skill of a veteran political analyst. The resulting pattern is neat – perhaps too neat. The kind of functionalist argument he adopts raise many questions, and some doubts, especially for an historian. The way in which needs are simply met by the system seems to iron out much of the tension of historical situations, avoid questions of agency and overlook alternative routes which might have been taken. For example: 'Consociational democracy not only *had to* answer bread-and-butter questions; it also *had to* deal with highly emotional factors of national identity.' Or: 'Not speaking about the major failures both camps had to hide was *instrumental* in establishing mutual trust. Both sides were *necessarily* grateful for this official silence' (my italics). A related point might be made about the relationship between elites and the rest of the society, which appears as one-way traffic from above to below. Finally, it seems questionable whether consociational democracy is really as appropriate a model for national identity and collective memory as it may be for wage bargaining or welfare provision.[22] Despite these reservations, Pelinka's study can be recommended as one of the best introductions to contemporary Austria currently available in English.[23]

The books reviewed here are only a small segment of current Austrian historiography on the Second Republic.[24] Nevertheless, some tentative conclusions can be drawn. Stourzh represents a benchmark in terms of sheer scholarship, and as a history of the State Treaty his work is unlikely to be surpassed. This does not mean that there are not still gaps (Stourzh himself identifies some). The occupation regime in the Soviet Zone is one example, following Kurt Tweraser's exemplary study of the US occupation in Niederösterreich.[25] But, as I have tried to argue, the focus on the recovery of sovereignty could usefully be broadened to other aspects of the legacy of war and national socialism. Bischof moves in this direction, though his rampant moral indignation – vastly preferable though it is to Höbelt's evasions – risks missing its target altogether. Höbelt attempts a rehabilitation, not perhaps of National Socialism but certainly of the bulk of its supporters, in order to construct an unsullied 'deutschfreiheitlich' tradition for use after the Third Reich. Both Bischof and Höbelt, coming from opposite directions, suggest that an 'historicisa-

[22] Luther and Müller, *Politics in Austria*.

[23] See also Volkmar Lauber, ed., *Contemporary Austrian Politics* (Boulder: Westview, 1996).

[24] For a useful and wide-ranging collection see Rolf Steininger and Michael Gehler, eds., *Österreich im 20. Jahrhundert*, 2 vols (Vienna/Köln/Weimar: Böhlau, 1997).

[25] Kurt Tweraser, *US Militärregierung in Oberösterreich 1945–1950*, Vol. 1 (Linz: Oberösterreichisches Landesarchiv, 1995).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777301001060 Published online by Cambridge University Press

tion' of postwar Austrian history, understood as history which avoids moralising but is still informed by the moral enormity of national socialism, is some distance away.

At a more basic level it is striking that there has been no monograph on Austrian society under Nazi rule since Radomir Luźa's study was published in 1975.[26] The work of two non-Austrians, Tim Kirk's study of the working class and Evan Bukey's recent publication on 'Hitler's Austria', are important steps in this direction;[27] equally desirable would be a solid examination of denazification to replace the Dieter Stiefel's outdated work.[28] Finally, at the risk of being misinterpreted, it is noticeable how little there is in Austria to compare with recent German monographs such as those by Peter Reichel on the politics of memory or Helmut Dubiel on parliamentary discussions,[29] or those of Herbert and Frei already mentioned.

[26] Radomir Luźa, *Austro-German Relations in the Anschluss Era* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975); a partial exception is Hermann Hagspiel, *Die Ostmark: Österreich im Großdeutschen Reich 1938 bis 1945* (Vienna: Braumüller, 1995). It is striking that the two most important works on Nazi rule are a handbook (Emmerich Tálos, Wolfgang Neugebauer and Ernst Hanisch (eds.), *NS-Herrschaft in Österreich. Ein Handbuch*, 2nd edn, Vienna: Österreichischer Bundesverlag, 2000) and a regional study (Ernst Hanisch, *Gau der guten Nerven. Die nationalsozialistische Herrschaft in Salzburg 1938–1945*, Salzburg / Munich: Verlag Anton Pustet, 1997).

[27] Evan Bukey, *Hitler's Austria. Public Sentiment in the Nazi Era 1938–1945* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

[28] Dieter Stiefel, *Entnazifizierung in Österreich* (Vienna: Europaverlag, 1981).

[29] Peter Reichel, *Politik mit der Erinnerung: Gedächtnissorte im Streit um die Nationalsozialistische Vergangenheit* (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1995); Helmut Dubiel, *Niemand ist frei von der Geschichte. Die Nationalsozialistische Herrschaft in den Debatten des Deutschen Bundestages* (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1997).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777301001060 Published online by Cambridge University Press