

exceptional individuals)? Because, Madsen says, he was able in that way “to excuse the sins

of his fathers by showing that they were incapable of acting otherwise.”

OTHER NATIONS

Europe’s Real ‘Haider’ Problem

A Survey of Recent Articles

Has Adolf Hitler returned in the guise of a smooth-talking Austrian politician with the telegenic looks of an aging rock star? So it might seem from the European Union’s swift imposition of diplomatic sanctions against Austria for allowing Jörg Haider’s Freedom Party into its coalition government. Yet a closer look suggests that the real problem facing Europe today is not a revival of Nazism. Rather, says British historian Mark Mazower, of the University of Sussex, writing in *Civilization* (Apr.–May 2000), it is “the realities of democracy triumphant.”

By winning 27 percent of the vote in last October’s parliamentary elections, Haider’s right-wing populist party edged the conservative People’s Party to finish in second place behind the Social Democrats. The People’s Party conservatives then shattered their long-ruling “Grand Coalition” with the Social Democrats and formed a new government with Haider’s party, which has a long history of xenophobia and sympathy for Nazism. Wolfgang Schüssel, the chairman of the People’s Party, became chancellor. The diplomatic sanctions by the 14 other European Union (EU) members soon followed.

But foreign journalists and other close observers do not see in Haider’s rise a resurgence of “the dark side of the Austrian soul,” notes Rainer Bauböck, a political scientist at the Austrian Academy of Sciences, writing in *Dissent* (Spring 2000). The lesson of Kurt Waldheim’s presidency (1986–92), when his unsavory wartime past resulted in some diplomatic isolation for Austria, was not lost, Bauböck points out, on the conservatives and Social Democrats, who had “publicly accepted Austria’s responsibility for its large share in Nazi atrocities.” Nearly three-fourths of Austrian voters did *not* vote for Haider’s party last October. His electoral support, Bauböck says, represented “a diffuse protest vote rather than [an] endorsement for right-wing extremism.”

Other analysts agree. Robert S. Wistrich, who teaches modern Jewish history at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, writes in *Commentary* (Apr. 2000) that Haider has succeeded by presenting himself as a reformist working for the “little man” and against the status quo created by the conservatives and Social Democrats.

In most respects, that status quo does not seem bad at all. Unemployment is low, inflation is minuscule, exports are high, labor is at peace, tourism is booming, and crime rates are down and falling. But immigrants and refugees—many from central and southeastern Europe—constitute more than 10 percent of the population and have made many Austrians uneasy. Haider’s xenophobic rhetoric, observes Bauböck, often trailed behind the actual immigration policies of the ruling coalition parties, which “kept insisting, contrary to all evidence, that Austria was not a country of immigration [and] radically cut back family reunification.”

Exit polls showed that many Freedom Party votes last October were cast “more in protest against the Grand Coalition’s abuse of its monopoly position . . . than out of agreement with Haider’s views,” notes Richard Rose, director of the University of Strathclyde’s Center for the Study of Public Policy, in Glasgow.

“Party patronage was said to reach down as far as the public lavatories, where the attendant on one side was *rot* [red] (Socialist) and the other *schwarz* [black] (a supporter of the People’s Party),” Rose writes in the *Journal of Democracy* (Apr. 2000). Dissatisfied voters had little choice but to turn to protest parties. Haider’s party attracted not only blue-collar workers but also entrepreneurs and yuppies.

Though Austria has a higher proportion of immigrants in its population than almost any other EU country, public opinion surveys, Rose says, “show that Austrians tend to be *more*

tolerant of immigrants than their neighbors in Central and Eastern Europe.” For instance, Austria accepted some 100,000 refugees from the 1992–95 war in Bosnia.

Indeed, “even as the EU categorically denounces Haider’s anti-immigration agenda,” writes Wistrich, “its own member nations—and especially the richer ones—have been competing with each other to keep out non-white immigrants. . . . In Denmark, for example, once considered one of the EU’s most tolerant countries, the socialist government has been implementing draconian restrictions on immigrants, asylum-seekers, and refugees—without, naturally, evoking the slightest hint of European sanctions.”

Never before, several analysts note, had the EU intervened in the affairs of a democratic member state. It had lodged no protests in the name of morality and democracy against the inclusion of Communists in the French gov-

ernment or against the inclusion of the far-right National Alliance in the Italian government in 1994. Why, then, Austria in 2000?

The answer, says Mazower, author of *Dark Continent: Europe’s Twentieth Century* (1999), seems to be a fear that xenophobic parties may make inroads elsewhere in Europe. “In Italy and France, the established center-right has been challenged by xenophobic parties. . . . In Denmark, Belgium, and Switzerland, too, the new right has recently made electoral gains.” Germany’s scandal-ridden Christian Democratic Union could also face a challenge.

The European Union, in Mazower’s view, ought “to give up interfering in Austrian politics and obsessing about National Socialism.” EU member states should “make good on their own recent lofty rhetoric, supplementing their existing anti-immigration statutes with a genuine commitment to combating xenophobia at home.”

China’s Passé Party

“Membership Has Its Privileges: The Socioeconomic Characteristics of Communist Party Members in Urban China” by Bruce J. Dickson and Maria Rost Rublee, in *Comparative Political Studies* (Feb. 2000), Sage Publications, 2455 Teller Road, Thousand Oaks, Calif. 91320.

It’s long been evident that (to paraphrase George Orwell) though all are equal in communist lands, some are more equal than others. But thanks to the economic reforms in post-Mao China, and the consequent need for professionals and technicians, it appears that membership in the Chinese Communist Party is no longer virtually the only path to “more equal” material rewards.

Party membership, to be sure, continues to provide tangible benefits, especially for cadres, note Dickson and Rublee, a political scientist and graduate student, respectively, at George Washington University. In 1988, when party members made up less than five percent of China’s total population, the average urban party member, a survey the following year showed, earned 191 yuan—40 more than the average urban nonmember did. (And that doesn’t count the income from bribery and other corrupt behavior, widespread among party and government officials.)

Yet, revealingly, party members were not concentrated in all of the most prestigious sorts of jobs. Yes, about 84 percent of the offi-

cially surveyed and 77 percent of the factory managers belonged to the party (in sharp contrast to the seven percent of laborers who belonged)—but 66 percent of the professionals and technicians did *not* belong to the party. Moreover, Dickson and Rublee found, for rank-and-file party members (though not the cadres), a college education provided a bigger wage boost than belonging to the party did.

The post-Mao reforms “created new opportunities for pursuing career goals,” observe the authors. “Individuals could seek advanced degrees from Chinese or foreign universities” and pursue technical careers, or go into business. Many who took those alternative paths “were reluctant to join the party,” because of its restrictions and its demands on members’ time. Despite its diminished appeal, however, party membership remains attractive to aspiring bureaucrats among “China’s best and brightest,” Dickson and Rublee note.

After the 1989 survey, which was conducted by a team of American, British, and Chinese scholars, the Chinese Communist