

Northwestern University statistician Martin Tanner, and University of Zurich finance professor Alexander F. Wagner say that most previous analyses of German electoral results of the early 1930s were flawed. The “catch-all” theory—which describes the National Socialist Party as a protest organization that attracted people dissatisfied with other non-mainstream alternatives—doesn’t say anything useful about the Nazi election since it “applies to most groups and almost all big or growing parties in almost all countries.”

“Mass society” theory, which holds that citizens—primarily nonvoters—on the “social periphery” feel the strongest response to extremist parties, has rarely been tested against hard voting data, the authors say. “Class theory,” which suggests that various social groups were radicalized in different ways, has foundered because researchers disagreed on who precisely was radicalized to vote for the Nazis. Sociologist Seymour Martin Lipset wrote that the typical Nazi voter was a middle-class self-employed Protestant who lived on a farm or in a small community. By contrast, sociologist Richard F. Hamilton concluded that the upper classes (white-collar and self-employed Germans) were the bedrock of Nazi electoral support.

Germany suffered from hyperinflation in the 1920s and began sliding into economic depression in



Workers trudge ahead in the popular 1932 poster *Our Last Hope: Hitler*.

1927. The gross national product of the Weimar Republic contracted by a quarter; unemployment soared and incomes fell dramatically. Support for the Nazi Party, less than three percent of eligible voters in 1924, rose to 31 percent in July 1932, 27 percent in November 1932, and 39 percent in March 1933.

The new statistical analyses by King and his coauthors show that the two groups most affected by the Depression followed separate political paths. The unemployed turned primarily to the Communist party, which catered to them with a program calling for community property. The working poor, including independent artisans, shopkeepers, small farmers, lawyers, domestic workers, and family members of the working poor, disproportionately

supported the Nazis. These groups responded positively to Hitler’s denunciations of big business and government, promises of intensive development of Germany’s own economic resources, support of private property, and plans for expropriation of land from Jewish real estate owners and resettlement of the landless in eastern Germany. Hitler’s support was higher in Protestant areas than in Catholic regions, in part because the Catholic church strongly encouraged the faithful not to vote for the Nazis, and in part because the church ran relatively well-financed social welfare programs.

In the years after World War II, some leading Westerners argued for limiting democracy to stop the masses from electing demagogues like Hitler. King and his fellow researchers say the best way to stop such unhappy repetitions of history is to implement successful economic policies.

#### HISTORY

## Repeating History in Juárez

**THE SOURCE:** “Drug Gangs and Politics in Ciudad Juárez: 1928–1936” by Nicole Motier, in *Mexican Studies*, Winter 2009.

IN EARLY MARCH MEXICAN soldiers rolled into Ciudad Juárez, which lies just across the border from El Paso, to stop a murder campaign

by rival narcotics gangs that was killing an average of four people a day. From an American vantage point the military operation seemed extraordinary. But Nicole Mottier, a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Chicago, writes that from 1928 to 1936, long before the modern Juárez Cartel began terrorizing residents, Ciudad Juárez was already wracked by violence between competing drug kingpins.

During the Mexican Revolution (1910–20), the state of Chihuahua, where Juárez is located, was devastated by fighting and an ensuing economic depression. The state legislature was unable to meet between 1913 and 1920, and no governor managed to complete his term between 1920 and 1929. Agriculture, mining, and smaller industries in the state were ruined. Then the United States handed Mexican entrepreneurs a lucrative opportunity: Prohibition.

When Prohibition shuttered nightlife in El Paso in 1920, action hopped across the Rio Grande to Juárez. Gambling establishments flourished, and alcohol revenues were augmented by sales of drugs. At first,

The violence now wracking Ciudad Juárez has a long history.

the narcotics industry was run by Enrique Fernández, the popular “king of morphine,” who financed rural schools and paid for the funerals of paupers. Fernández contented himself with placing members of his drug gang in municipal offices and on the police force, while making strategic loans and payments to state and local officials, Mottier says. But in early 1931, he refused a loan request from the governor of Chihuahua. That turned out to be a serious miscalculation. The governor promptly “discovered” that Fernández was the “narcotic king of Ciudad Juárez” and stripped him of a profitable casino concession. Fernández was assassinated on a Mexico City street corner in 1934.

Meanwhile, the Quevedo family was rising to political power in Chihuahua. Rodrigo Quevedo, who had fought in the Revolution, became governor. His brothers, Jesús and

José, who ran drug operations that competed against the gangs of Fernández, according to Mottier, held various official posts, including such offices as *presidente municipal*, tax collector, state legislator, city councilor, and mayor. After Fernández was shot, the evidence he was carrying in his coat pocket against the Quevedo family disappeared. The Quevedo brothers won the drug war and the rival gangs merged.

The repeal of Prohibition in December 1933 nearly wiped out Juárez tourism for a time, and the Quevedo family lost wealth and influence. José Quevedo was eventually ousted from the municipal presidency, but only with the aid of federal troops.

HISTORY

## The First Rule of Holes

**THE SOURCE:** “The American Colonies” by Stanley Weintraub, in *Dissent*, Winter 2009.

ARE THERE LESSONS FOR America in its own revolution that can be applied to Iraq and Afghan-

EXCERPT

## Immodest Abe

*In the end, it is not Lincoln the dreamer who is interesting, or Lincoln the poet, or Lincoln the lover, or Lincoln the backwoodsman, or Lincoln the autodidact, or even Lincoln the idealist. It is Lincoln the greatly intelligent—not Honest Old Abe but Shrewd*

*Old Abe. His ability to combine ambition with an innate ethicism, high idealism with Machiavellian craftiness, has perhaps never been matched. So far from being humble, as his image seemed to imply, he was supremely confident. As John Hay stated, “It is absurd to call him a modest man. No great man was ever modest.”*

—**BROOKE ALLEN**, author of *Moral Minority: Our Skeptical Founding Fathers* (2006) and other books, in *The Hudson Review* (Spring 2009)