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The Silent Reich: Austria's Failed Denazification

Henry F. Goodson
Gettysburg College

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Abstract

Between 1945 and 1956, the Second Austrian Republic failed to address the large number of former Austrian Nazis. Due to Cold War tensions, the United States, Britain, and France helped to downplay Austria's cooperation with the Nazi Reich in order to secure the state against the Soviets. In an effort to stall the spread of socialism, former fascists were even recruited by Western intelligence services to help inform on the activities of socialists and communists within Austria. Furthermore, the Austrian people were a deeply conservative society, which often supported many of the far-right's positions, as can be seen throughout contemporary Austrian newspaper articles and editorials. Antisemitism, belief in the superiority of Austro-Germanic culture, disdain for immigrants, and desire for national sovereignty were all widely present in Austrian society before, during, and after the Nazi period. These cultural beliefs, combined with neglect from the Western powers, integrated the far-right into the political decision-making process. This has made parties with Nazi affiliations, such as the VdU and the FPÖ legitimate parts of Austrian political culture and prevents the political disarmament of the far-right due to the deep roots which they have in Austrian culture.

Keywords

Austria, Nazism, Nationalism, Far-Right

Disciplines

European History | History | Holocaust and Genocide Studies

Comments

Written for History 319: Europe since 1945.

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The Silent Reich: Austria's Failed Denazification

Henry Goodson

History 319: Europe Since 1945

Professor Bowman

28 April 2020

Abstract: Between 1945 and 1956, the Second Austrian Republic failed to address the large number of former Austrian Nazis. Due to Cold War tensions, the United States, Britain, and France helped to downplay Austria's cooperation with the Nazi Reich in order to secure the state against the Soviets. In an effort to stall the spread of socialism, former fascists were even recruited by Western intelligence services to help inform on the activities of socialists and communists within Austria. Furthermore, the Austrian people were a deeply conservative society, which often supported many of the far-right's positions. Antisemitism, belief in the superiority of Austro-Germanic culture, disdain for immigrants, and desire for national sovereignty were all widely present in Austrian society before, during, and after the Nazi period. These cultural beliefs, combined with neglect from the Western powers, integrated the far-right into the political decision-making process. This has made parties with Nazi affiliations, such as the VdU and the FPÖ legitimate parts of Austrian political culture and prevents the political disarmament of the far-right due to the deep roots which they have in Austrian culture.

I affirm that I have upheld the highest principles of honesty and integrity in my academic work and have not witnessed a violation of the Honor Code. Henry Goodson

In the aftermath of Nazi Germany's defeat by the Allied forces in 1945, Germany was subjected to a more public denazification process which captured the world's attention. The Nuremberg Trials of 1945 and 1946 were the subjects of intense media scrutiny from around the globe. While the Germans grappled with the fallout of the war, however, a very different process emerged in Austria. Austria's culpability in the Holocaust and the rise of the Third Reich went largely uninvestigated, with limited legal measures brought against high-ranking officials and a brief disenfranchisement of Austrian Nazis. In this atmosphere, former Nazis and their supporters were able to reorganize and become the 'Third Camp' in Austrian politics under the auspices of the Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ). This work endeavors to examine Austrian political culture through contemporary Austrian newspapers from the end of the war in 1945 to the FPÖ's inaugural election in 1956 to determine the factors which established the FPÖ as an integrated part of Austrian politics, despite the party's Nazi origins.

In the study of Austrian politics, few scholars are as prominent as Günter Bischof. His works, as well as the collections which he has edited, provide meticulous accounts of the evolution of Austrian politics throughout the latter half of the twentieth century, paying particularly close attention to the post-war period. Bischof's work has established the school of thought, which argues that a large part of the lack of post-war denazification in Austria was due to the international political situation of the time. According to Bischof, the priorities and negotiations of the Allies were the primary reason behind the failure to denazify.¹ He most effectively argued this point in his work, *Austria in the First Cold War, 1945-55*,² where he

¹ Günter Bischof, et.al., *Austrian Lives*, New Orleans: University of New Orleans Press, 2012, Accessed February 27, 2020, www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1n2txnx

² Günter Bischof, *Austria in the First Cold War, 1945-55 : the Leverage of the Weak*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999).

outlined how denazification ran contrary to many of the foreign policy goals which the English, Russians, French, and Americans sought during the political reconstruction of Austria.³ In this environment in which the Allies had already declared Austria to be Germany's first victim, he argues, there was far more pressure for Austria to remain neutral than there was pressure to properly grapple with the country's Nazi past.

Another scholar associated with this school of thought is Ferdinand Karlhofer, whose piece, *The Rise and Decline of Austria's Radical Right*, was a part of a collection which he wrote with Bischof. While he agreed that the international community was largely to blame for the failure to denazify, Karlhofer's work focused more on domestic politics and the ways in which the FPÖ developed as a party in the post-war period.⁴ His work also stretched beyond the immediate post-war period, tracking the electoral fortunes of the FPÖ through the 1980s. Other authors such as Robert Jackman and Karin Volpert expanded on this using political science methodology. The two's work examined what political and economic environments provided the most fertile ground for extremist parties to grow and examined the FPÖ as one case study.⁵ These scholars presented detailed arguments based on quantifiable data such as unemployment rates and levels of immigration; however, their conclusions were not set among cultural or social contexts, limiting their usefulness in explaining the myriad factors behind a political party's success.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ferdinand Karlhofer, "The Rise and Decline and Rise of Austria's Radical Right", In *Austria's International Position after the End of the Cold War*, edited by Ferdinand Karlhofer and Günter Bischof, 245-68, (University of New Orleans Press, 2013), Accessed February 27, 2020, www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1n2txd9.13.

⁵ Robert W. Jackman, and Karin Volpert, "Conditions Favouring Parties of the Extreme Right in Western Europe", *British Journal of Political Science* 26, no. 4 (1996): 501-21, Accessed March 26, 2020, www.jstor.org/stable/194094.

Other scholars argue that the Austrian failure to denazify cannot be entirely attributed to the allies' lack of interest in such a program, but that blame also or primarily falls upon the political and social culture of Austria itself. These authors, including Peter Thaler,⁶ Maria Fritsche,⁷ and Dagmar Lorenz,⁸ approached Austrian culture as ground zero for the integration of far-right political parties within the public sphere. Lorenz highlighted literary responses to the lingering scars of antisemitism, the Holocaust, and Austrian Nazism, concluding that there was a far greater effort to protect Austria's image rather than uncover and deal with the country's Nazi past. Fritsche and Thaler have examined subjects such as film or historical imagery to examine Austrian responses to the world wars and their role in them. Thaler, for example, concluded that Austrian historians seeking to construct a national identity and history post-war have intentionally guided attention away from Austria's Nazi past in order to develop a more positive national story. This view was supported and referenced by Judith Beniston,⁹ Ruth Wodak,¹⁰ and Anthony Bushell,¹¹ whose individual arguments all came to the same general conclusion: Anti-Semitism, xenophobia, and nationalism are all deeply rooted in Austria's conservative culture

⁶ Peter Thaler, "National History: National Imagery: The Role of History in Postwar Austrian Nation-Building", (Central European History 32, no. 3 (1999)): 277-309, Accessed March 27, 2020, www.jstor.org/stable/4546885.

⁷ Jacqueline Vansant, "Maria Fritsche, Homemade Men in Postwar Austrian Cinema: Nationhood, Genre, and Masculinity (New York: Berghahn, 2013)," In 1914: Austria-Hungary, the Origins, and the First Year of World War I, edited by Günter Bischof, Ferdinand Karlhofer, and Samuel R. Williamson, 365-70, (New Orleans: University of New Orleans Press, 2014), Accessed March 20, 2020, www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1n2txft.24.

⁸ Dagmar C. G. Lorenz, "Austrian Responses to National Socialism and the Holocaust," In A History of Austrian Literature 1918-2000, edited by Kohl Katrin and Robertson Ritchie, 181-200. (Rochester, NY, USA; Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK: Boydell & Brewer, 2006), Accessed March 27, 2020, doi:10.7722/j.ctt7zsvdg.16.

⁹ Judith Beniston, "'Hitler's First Victim'? — Memory and Representation in Post-War Austria: Introduction", Austrian Studies 11 (2003): 1-13, Accessed March 24, 2020.

¹⁰ Ruth Wodak, "Turning the Tables: Antisemitic Discourse in Post-war Austria", *Discourse & Society* 2, no. 1 (1991): 65-83, Accessed March 24, 2020.

¹¹ Anthony Bushell, "AUSTRIA AND CONCEPTS OF IDENTITY", In *Polemical Austria: The Rhetorics of National Identity from Empire to the Second Republic*, 55-74, (University of Wales Press, 2013), Accessed March 24, 2020, www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt9qhc5j.6.

which was resistant to any efforts to expand denazification until the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

This piece draws on the methods of literary analysis conducted by Lorenz and Karlhofer's focus on domestic politics to examine newspapers from 1945-56 to determine the prevalence of far-right ideologies in post-war Austrian political culture. Contemporary newspapers are a valuable resource, for several reasons. By analyzing them in the original German rather than in translation, culturally specific context surrounding certain terms will be more evident and easier to analyze. In addition, there are many different papers archived on ANNO (the Austrian National Library's digital archive of newspapers), providing a broad range of opinions from papers with different ideological affiliations and target audiences.¹² This range helps to make these newspaper articles more representative of the opinions of the citizens for whom the journalists and columnists wrote. The application of Karlhofer's study of domestic politics will help to focus this work's analysis on political pieces, particularly around election times. It is in these pieces that the present work will look for evidence of far-right sympathies, or lack thereof. The far-right in Austria has evolved since the FPÖ's founding in 1956. However, the general concerns of the party and far-right have largely remained the same for decades. There are several key themes which the FPÖ emphasizes in its current party platform, which was released in 2011: promotion of Austro-Germanic culture, rejection of socialism, reducing immigration, and foreign policy which focuses on preserving Austrian sovereignty.¹³ These

¹² Nationalbibliothek, Österreichische, "AustriaN Newspapers Online Historische Österreichische Zeitungen Und Zeitschriften Online", ANNO, Accessed February 27, 2020, <http://anno.onb.ac.at/>.

¹³ "Party Programme of the Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ)", Parteiprogramm (englisch) – Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs, Accessed April 30, 2020, <https://www.fpoe.at/en/themen/parteiprogramm/parteiprogramm-englisch/>.

consistent goals of the Austrian far-right serve as useful guides to examine the newspapers of 1945-1956 for indicators of popular support for the far-right.

In the immediate post-war period, Austrian culture was called into question by the country's participation in the Second World War on the side of the Axis powers. Despite the Moscow Declaration, the Soviets were keen to emphasize the Nazi connections of the Austrians as a tool for leverage. The closer the Soviets were able to tie the Austrians to the Third Reich, the more they would be able to extract from Austria in terms of industrial equipment and product, taken as reparations for Austria's part in the war.¹⁴ The Austrians responded by leaning heavily on the Moscow Declaration and emphasizing its classification of them as a victim of Nazi German aggression, a response encouraged by the Americans. The *Wiener Kurier*, a paper published by the US Armed Forces, frequently ran stories with articles detailing Austrians asking for liberation from Nazi oppression.¹⁵ Some, such as one piece published on April 12th, 1946, discussed how Austrian Nazis turned traitor to the Reich and helped pass information to the Allies prior to the invasion of Norway.¹⁶ The Austrian-published papers leaned into this as well: On October 8th, 1946, an article in the *Wiener Zeitung* declared on the front page that Austria had been found in the Nürnberger Judgement to be of "keine Mitschuld an Hitlers Aggressionspolitik," or of no complicity with Hitler's aggression.¹⁷ The piece also condemns Soviet attempts to "verbergen," or obscure Austria's status as "das erste Angriffsziel," the first target of the Nazi Reich.¹⁸

¹⁴ Bischof, "Austria in the Cold War", 107.

¹⁵ "Schleichhändler schreiben Bettelbriefe nach Amerika," *Wiener Kurier*, April 12, 1947.

¹⁶ "Nazispion arbeitete gegen die Nazi," *Wiener Kurier*, April 12, 1946.

¹⁷ "Österreich und das Nürnberger Urteil", *Wiener Zeitung*, October 8, 1946

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

These pieces formed a part of the broader narrative in which Austrians, “having mentally mislaid the Hitler years, they filled the void with Austrian patriotism.”¹⁹ What this sudden surge in public displays of Austrian pride and victimhood glossed over was widespread support for Nazi ideals and participation in the Nazis prosecution of the Holocaust and Second World War. More than a million Austrian men had joined the German Wehrmacht during the war,²⁰ and it was primarily Austrian army units which slaughtered the Jews of Serbia.²¹ As Bischof notes, “Austrians were also *over*-represented” among the SS and those who directly served in the industrialized death-system that was the Holocaust. For example, the Viennese strategy of ‘aryanizing’ Jewish property was so successful, Nazi officials made it common policy throughout the Reich.²² Furthermore, many of the commanders of major camps were Austrian, such as those commanding Sobibor, Treblinka, Terezin, Cracow, Castle Hartheim, and Mauthausen, the latter two being located within Austria’s borders.²³ While there is debate over the degree to which the Austrians wished to be incorporated into Nazi Germany, they carried out violence for the Reich with unquestionable effectiveness. The camps run by Austrian commanders alone killed nearly 1,245,000 people according to statistics from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. This number does not take into account deaths at the hands of Austrian death squads in Yugoslavia, Norway, Greece, and Russia, which likely raises the number by thousands more.²⁴

¹⁹ Pick, “Guilty Victim”, 45.

²⁰ Bischof, “Austria in the Cold War”, 13.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 15.

²² *Ibid.*, 15.

²³ *Ibid.*, 16-17.

²⁴ United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Accessed April 30, 2020, <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/documenting-numbers-of-victims-of-the-holocaust-and-nazi-persecution>.

This violence against enemies of the Reich had gone on long before Hitler's government began implementing the Final Solution. *Der Jüdische Arbeiter*, a Jewish-Communist paper, describes as far back as 1933 how Hitler's speeches were inspiring pogroms and violence against Jews in Poland, Slovakia, and Austria, among other states.²⁵ This violence was lauded in Austria throughout the Nazi period in the papers, although there is a clear bias due to Nazi control over mass media in Austria post Anschluss. Austrian papers which had existed before the Anschluss shifted their narratives to wholeheartedly support Nazi ideals, demonstrating at minimum a complicity with the Nazi propaganda machine. The *Agrarische Post*, for example, praised Hitler's integration of Austria into "ein neues, großes, einiges, deutsches Reich," a new, large, united, German state.²⁶ The same article argued that Austrians and Germans were "ein Volk," one people, and that the years after the Anschluss were some of the best which Austrians had seen since the days of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.²⁷ This view was one broadly supported, as seen in the appeal which groups like the Österreichisch-Deutscher Volksbund had to not only Germanic nationalists, but also socialists, rural workers and even Jewish organizations.²⁸ Other papers took on decidedly antisemitic tones to their reporting, such as the *Österreicher Beobachter*. The paper's front page on May 1st, 1944, assured Austrians that the government and the army were well prepared amidst rumors of invasion which had been circling and to not believe "jüdischer Terrorpropaganda," Jewish terror-propaganda, that the Atlantic Wall could be breached.²⁹ That same day's issue also praised the actions of the Nazis in Hungary with the

²⁵ "Hitler- Papen und die Juden", *Jüdische Arbeiter*, March 10, 1933

²⁶ "Ein Volk – ein Reich", *Agrarische Post*, March 19, 1938.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Erin R. Hochman, "ANSCHLUSS BEFORE HITLER: The Politics of the Österreichisch-Deutscher Volksbund", In *Imagining a Greater Germany: Republican Nationalism and the Idea of Anschluss, 195-236*. (ITHACA; LONDON: Cornell University Press, 2016), Accessed March 26, 2020, www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctt1d2dn27.11, 196.

²⁹ "Auf alles vorbereitet, auf alles gefaßt", *Oesterreicher Beobachter*, May 1, 1944.

article “Judapest wird wieder Budapest!”, a crude play on words declaring that ‘Judapest’, or a Budapest of Jews, was now being returned to Christians through deportation and aryazation. Austrian media culture in this period broadly embraced Nazi ideals, but there was not a similar period of post-war reckoning for Austrian Nazis’ crimes the way there was in Germany. Instead, former members of fascist groups were allowed to quietly bury their uniforms and build up a national mythos around the idea that Austria had ceased to exist in the Hitler years and now it was once again returning to its pre-Nazi past.³⁰

One of the major reasons that former fascists were allowed to reintegrate into society with relatively little in the way of denazification was the American, British, and French desires to check Soviet influence in Austria. Despite early post-war electoral defeats for the Communist Party in Austria, the Americans were particularly concerned by the vocal socialist and communist movements there. Communist papers were often encouraged by Soviet intelligence to challenge the status quo in Austria and emphasize the country’s Nazi past. The popular communist paper, *Der Neue Mahnruf*, frequently published pieces about the Federation of Independents (Auf Deutsch: Verband der Unabhängigen or VdU). The VdU was a precursor to the FPÖ, a fringe political party comprised of hardline conservatives and former Nazis³¹ which heavily pushed the narrative of a guiltless Austria. The communist papers of Austria found this party’s very existence to be an affront, asking in one article, “Wo bleibt das Verbot des VdU?,” or ‘Where is the ban on the VdU?’³² In the article, the writers highlight that fascist and Nazi parties are banned in Austria, yet the supporters of the VdU and its leaders largely celebrate their ties to the Nazi past. The article quotes the foreman at a Vostalpine steel plant in Linz as

³⁰ Bushell, “Polemical Austria”, 170.

³¹ Karlhofer, “The Rise and Fall”, 246.

³² “Wo bleibt das Verbot des VdU?“, *Neue Mahnruf*, December 1949.

speaking for the workers during a meeting and declaring, “Jawohl, wir sind Faschisten!”³³ As a communist paper, there is a risk of bias, as the Soviets would benefit greatly from playing up residual Nazi sentiment in Austria. However, it is well recorded that former Nazis were not shy about displaying their connections, as one former British intelligence officer described, “many young men who had served with the Nazis showed him their SS tattoos ‘without any sense of guilt.’”³⁴

These former Nazis had reason to feel safe in revealing their fascist credentials. As that same intelligence officer put it, “We were certainly not averse to former Nazis; they were not seen as a security risk.”³⁵ Few groups hated socialists and communists like fascists did, and so Western intelligence services were eager to recruit former stormtroopers to help monitor socialist activity. Anti-communism was deeply rooted in the Austrian psyche, particularly after the Soviet treatment of Austrians during the invasion and occupation of the country. The Soviets had requisitioned homes and property, raped women, pushed Communists into government positions, and stole rampantly during their occupation, actions which the Austrians did not forget.³⁶ The papers made sure to remind citizens of the dangers of communism as well, such as the *Salzburger Nachrichten*’s report on the communist takeover in Czechoslovakia. In the article, the paper described the takeover in terms of “kommunistischen Terrors” with arrests of around 600 government officials and “Blutvergießen in Prag”, bloodshed in Prague.³⁷ The article goes a step further, warning that there have been communist challenges to the SPÖ, one of the two major Austrian parties, in the past and that socialism still threatens Austria.³⁸ Other articles, such as

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Pick, “Guilty Victim”, 47.

³⁵ Ibid., 47.

³⁶ Ibid., 38.

³⁷ “Kommunistische Machtübernahme in der CSR” *Salzburger Nachrichten*, February 27, 1948.

³⁸ Ibid.

“Die Risse im Ostblock”, ‘The Cracks in the Eastern Bloc,’ portray the Eastern Bloc as weak and conflicted due to the rivalry “zwischen Tito und Moskau,” or between Tito and Moscow.³⁹ In this piece, cultural similarities between the Catholic Yugoslavs and Catholic Austrians were highlighted, implying that religiosity was another dividing factor between Yugoslavia and the secular, communist Russians. Another article from this period applauds the Swiss for standing up to the Soviets in protest, with the *Weltpresse* reporting in great detail that the Swiss were enraged by the seizure of industrial equipment from an Austrian Brown-Boveri factory by the Soviets.⁴⁰ These pieces point to a larger trend of the rejection of socialism and communism, even before Austria regained status as an independent state. Limiting government intervention was very important to the VdU and those voters who formed the voting bloc which would later become the base of the FPÖ. While socialist and communist parties were separate, the international failure to distinguish between these two ideologies based around a larger government allowed the FPÖ to tie socialist opponents to the historical wrongs committed by the Soviets during their occupation of Austria.

Despite their enmity, communist Austrians and far-right Austrians both agreed on not trusting the Americans and defending Austrian sovereignty, albeit for different reasons. For the far-right of Austria, there was a cultural war at stake with the division of Austria by the great powers. Art exhibits such as “Österreich amerikanisiert,” or Austria Americanized, appeared in gallery shows, criticizing the liberalizing cultural impact which Americans were having on the conservative population.⁴¹ Other critics of music and theater scorned American style shows in the culture sections of papers, such as one column which asked, “Und wozu ist das gut?”,

³⁹ “Die Risse im Ostblock,” *Salzburger Nachrichten*, July 24, 1948.

⁴⁰ “Die Schweiz Protestiert,” *Weltpresse*, September 17, 1947

⁴¹ “Galerie der Karikaturen”, *Weltpresse*, September 22, 1947.

translated to “And what is that good for?”⁴² Nazi ideology held that Germanic culture was the height of humanity, and the Austrians were included in that as a part of the Germanic nation. To have American soldiers occupying their home and bringing their Western culture over with them was an insult to many of the predominately Catholic far-right, particularly considering the more ethnically diverse forces of the occupying Americans.

For the communists, American presence was considered an interference in the natural political cycles of Austria’s economy. The *Österreichische Volksstimme* published an exposé on June 8th, 1948 titled „Wird Österreichs Energiewirtschaft amerikanisiert?“, or “Will Austria’s Energy Industry be Americanized?”; the piece went into detail about “verdächtige Verhandlungen,” suspicious negotiations, between American firms and the standing Austrian government regarding the reconstruction of the Austrian energy industry.⁴³ The piece claimed that Americans were seeking to export the reconstruction to foreign companies, bringing millions to American power conglomerates. Their concerns about American economic involvement were valid, as Austrian acceptance of Marshall Plan funds to rebuild Austria’s war-torn infrastructure had brought the Americans closer economically than ever before. The ties were deepened to such a degree that even hotels in Salzburg’s mountainous areas Americanized themselves to attract Hollywood film companies looking to shoot films in the Alps.⁴⁴

American economic interventions, however, ran into a wall when confronted with nationalistic pride and concerns about Austrian sovereignty. The far-right, seeing the US and USSR as two sides of the same coin began to push back on American intervention with a proven strategy: target foreign workers. As a part of the Marshall rebuilding of Europe, foreign

⁴² “Keller-Show in Waizenfitchen”, *Oberösterreichische Nachrichten*, August 3, 1945.

⁴³ “Wird Österreichs Energiewirtschaft amerikanisiert?“, *Österreichische Volksstimme*, June 8, 1948.

⁴⁴ “Film im Dienste des Wintersports”, *Salzburger Nachrichten*, November 8, 1945.

investment and companies flowed into Austria, bringing many workers from around the globe to help with the rebuilding process. This had an immediate impact as Austrians often culturally and socially rejected these newcomers. Early in the rebuilding process, *Die Weltpresse* published a report which found that Austrians had overall negative views for the “ausländische Firmen” which had been brought in for work.⁴⁵ The article presents findings that those in Austria “vor dem Krieg sind besser Arbeiter und Bürger.” This statement that native citizens who had been there before the war started were better workers and citizens than the immigrants and foreign workers who had come post-war fits perfectly into classic far-right ideologies.

For the future voters of the FPÖ, US economic intervention amounted to little more than an excuse to flood the country with immigrants and refugees, as argued in a front-page article in the *Linzer Volksblatt*, “Eine schwere Belastung für Österreich.” This piece, titled ‘A Heavy Burden for Austria’, laments the wave of more than a million refugees from across Europe who had arrived in Austria after the war and the financial burden they posed.⁴⁶ What made this wave of refugees even less tolerable to many Austrians was the fact that among those refugees were some 27,000 Jews who had fled from Hungary into Austria in 1946, escaping violence, homelessness, and continued persecution in Eastern Europe.⁴⁷ The Hungarians were not alone, with the *Wiener Kurier* informing Austrians that thousands of Polish Jews displaced by pogroms might fleeing Poland for Germany and Austria.⁴⁸ Those Jews housed in Austria understood well that they were in hostile territory, made even more clear by the US military units presence to protect them. The US Joint field commander in charge of guarding the refugees wrote, “They

⁴⁵ “Schlechte Aussichten für Ausländer”, *Weltpresse*, September 17, 1947.

⁴⁶ “Eine schwere Belastung für Österreich,” *Linzer Volksblatt*, 23 May 1947.

⁴⁷ Rebekah Klein-Pejšová, “Across the Iron Curtain—Hungarian Jewish Refugees in Austria, 1945–49: The Letters to Enns”, in *The Holocaust in Hungary: Seventy Years Later*, edited by Braham Randolph L. and Kovács András, 195–212, (Budapest; New York: Central European University Press, 2016), Accessed February 27, 2020, 201.

⁴⁸ “Tausende von Juden wollen Polen verlassen”, *Wiener Kurier*, July 11, 1946.

know too well that the Austrian people resent their very existence here and constantly agitate for their removal.”⁴⁹ These refugees were a part of the ‘heavy burden,’ which many Austrians felt had been placed on their country in the aftermath of the war by powers which did not respect Austrian sovereignty. That many of the refugees were the same peoples whom the Austrians had tried to destroy less than a decade before only made the political situation more fraught and riper for exploitation by the Austrian far-right.

It is because of this tense political environment that the VdU’s able to become the first major far-right party founded in the post-war period. Despite this early start, the VdU and its successor, the FPÖ, were not a part of a government until 1983, despite the FPÖ’s formation in 1956. Even then, the party was only a minor member of a coalition government with one of the two major parties.⁵⁰ It was not until the 1990s that the FPÖ, then led by the influential Jörg Haider, would win twenty-seven percent of the federal vote.⁵¹ Its long-running, central presence, however, demonstrates a level of acceptability not seen in other European states. While in Germany, for example, it has taken decades for the far-right to reemerge in a politically viable way under the banner of the Alternative for Germany (AfD), the far-right in Austria were able to reorganize and establish a new party the same year as the end of the war. Austria had a chance to denazify between 1945 and the elections of 1956, and it failed to do so. Some of this blame does fall on the Allies, who placed their concerns about the great power politics of the Cold War above ensuring that Germany’s junior partner in the war was cleared of fascist presence.

However, the blame is largely on a conservative Austrian society which sought to ignore the

⁴⁹ Ibid., 203.

⁵⁰ Thomas Fillitz. “‘Being the Native’s Friend Does Not Make You the Foreigner’s Enemy!’: Neo-nationalism, the Freedom Party and Jörg Haider in Austria,” In *Neo-Nationalism in Europe and Beyond: Perspectives from Social Anthropology*, edited by Gingrich Andre and Banks Marcus, 138-61. (New York; Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2006), Accessed March 24, 2020, www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt9qdftc.11, 139.

⁵¹ Karlhofer, “The Rise and Fall”, 245.

difficulties of denazification and downplay the country's Nazi past. While instances of Austrian workers singing "Nazilieder," Nazi songs, while they worked is a matter of debate,⁵² contemporary newspapers demonstrate that the far-right was a well-rooted part of the Austrian political landscape in this time. Denazification required both outside pressure by the occupying powers and internal reckonings driven by political necessity, neither of which occurred in this key period when the trauma and shock of the war could have sparked massive political and social reorganizations. By 1956, however, the FPÖ had won seats in the legislature under the leadership of former SS officer Anton Reinthaler, and it had firmly established itself as the third 'Lager' or camp of Austrian politics.⁵³ This victory for the ideological descendants of Nazism, whose emphasis on values held by many Austrians, such as limiting immigration, Euroscepticism, and nationalism, showed that attempts to denazify Austria had failed, and the far-right was to have a place in Austria's political ecosystem for decades to come.

⁵² "Wo bleibt das Verbot des VdU?" *Neue Mahnruf*, December 1949.

⁵³ Karlhofer, "The Rise and Fall", 247.

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I used the digitized newspapers found on ANNO to critically examine contemporary news reports and editorials, which will provide more insight into the views, concerns, and desires of Austria in the 1945-1956 period.

"Party Programme of the Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ)." Parteiprogramm (englisch) – Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs. Accessed April 30, 2020. <https://www.FPÖe.at/en/themen/parteiprogramm/parteiprogramm-englisch/>.

I used this party platform to help create themes to center my research around when examining primary texts from 1945-56.

Secondary Sources:

Beniston, Judith. "'Hitler's First Victim'? — Memory and Representation in Post-War Austria: Introduction." *Austrian Studies* 11 (2003): 1-13. Accessed March 24, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/27944673.

I used this piece to examine the views of Austria as the first victim of German aggression in Austria and its representation as such within Austria.

Bischof, Günter. *Austria in the First Cold War, 1945-55 : the Leverage of the Weak* . Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999.

I used this piece to help provide detailed background on the Austrian experience during and after the Second World War. The piece nearly encompasses my entire chronology, serving as a historical base to expand outward from.

Bischof, Günter, Fritz Plasser, and Eva Maltschnig, eds. *Austrian Lives*. New Orleans: University of New Orleans Press, 2012. Accessed February 27, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1n2txnx.

I used this piece to extrapolate the political, social, and economic situations of Austrians from the piece's biographical examination of important political and social figures in Austria in the post-war period.

Anthony Bushell. "Austria and Concepts of Identity." In *Polemical Austria: The Rhetorics of National Identity from Empire to the Second Republic*, 55-74. University of Wales Press, 2013. Accessed March 24, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt9qhc5j.6.

I used this piece to examine Austrian constructions of identity in the post-war period.

Cronin, Audrey Kurth. *Great Power Politics and the Struggle over Austria, 1945–1955*. Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 1986. Accessed February 27, 2020. doi:10.7591/j.ctvv412nv.

I used this piece to examine the international relations impact on Austrian politics in the period of 1945 to 1956. This will provide a background on the negotiations with the great powers and their effect on the domestic politics of Austria in this period.

Fillitz, Thomas. "'Being the Native's Friend Does Not Make You the Foreigner's Enemy!': Neo-nationalism, the Freedom Party and Jörg Haider in Austria." In *Neo-Nationalism in Europe and Beyond: Perspectives from Social Anthropology*, edited by Gingrich Andre and Banks Marcus, 138-61. New York; Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2006. Accessed March 24, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt9qdfc.11.

I used this piece to discuss modern developments in the case of the Freedom Party and its positions in modern politics.

Hochman, Erin R. "ANSCHLUSS BEFORE HITLER: The Politics of the Österreichisch-Deutscher Volksbund." In *Imagining a Greater Germany: Republican Nationalism and the Idea of Anschluss*, 195-236. ITHACA; LONDON: Cornell University Press, 2016. Accessed March 26, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctt1d2dn27.11.

I used this piece to better illustrate previous trends in Austrian politics, particularly regarding pan-Germanism prior to WWII.

Jackman, Robert W., and Karin Volpert. "Conditions Favouring Parties of the Extreme Right in Western Europe." *British Journal of Political Science* 26, no. 4 (1996): 501-21. Accessed March 26, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/194094.

I used this article to provide more modern takes on the conditions in which far-right parties such as the FPÖ grow and thrive electorally.

Karlhofer, Ferdinand. "The Rise and Decline and Rise of Austria's Radical Right." In *Austria's International Position after the End of the Cold War*, edited by Karlhofer Ferdinand and Bischof Günter, 245-68. University of New Orleans Press, 2013. Accessed February 27, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1n2txd9.13.

I used this piece to help discuss the origins of the FPÖ. In addition, I used it to help transition into a discussion on the more contemporary impacts of the 1956 elections and the role which the FPÖ has played in Austrian politics.

Klein-Pejšová, Rebekah. "Across the Iron Curtain—Hungarian Jewish Refugees in Austria, 1945–49: The Letters to Enns." In *The Holocaust in Hungary: Seventy Years Later*, edited by Braham Randolph L. and Kovács András, 195-212. Budapest; New York: Central European University Press, 2016. Accessed February 27, 2020.

I used this piece to discuss how Austrians reacted to the linked issues of displaced persons within their borders and to Jewish communities in the aftermath of the Holocaust. This will help further develop my conclusions about Austrian culture and its impact on the swift return of far-right political parties to political life.

Lorenz, Dagmar C. G. "Austrian Responses to National Socialism and the Holocaust." In *A History of Austrian Literature 1918-2000*, edited by Kohl Katrin and Robertson Ritchie, 181-200. Rochester, NY, USA; Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK: Boydell & Brewer, 2006. Accessed March 27, 2020. doi:10.7722/j.ctt7zsvdg.16.

I used this piece to examine how Austrians participated in the Holocaust and Nazi regime and how they responded to that participation.

McVeigh, Joseph. "Popular Culture in Austria, 1945–2000." In *A History of Austrian Literature 1918-2000*, edited by Kohl Katrin and Robertson Ritchie, 247-64. Rochester, NY, USA; Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK: Boydell & Brewer, 2006. Accessed February 27, 2020. doi:10.7722/j.ctt7zsvdg.19.

I used this piece to provide background on the methods by which Austrians received information about political parties, elections, and world events between 1945 and 1956. I will also use it to help establish cultural backgrounds which may help explain the rise of a far-right party so soon after the end of Nazi rule in Austria.

Pick, Hella. *Guilty Victim : Austria from the Holocaust to Haider*. London ;: I.B. Tauris, 2000.

I used this book to examine the extent to which the Austrian population was complicit with or supportive of Nazi rule and to connect it to the rise of far-right parties in Austria..

Thaler, Peter. "National History: National Imagery: The Role of History in Postwar Austrian Nation-Building." *Central European History* 32, no. 3 (1999): 277-309. Accessed March 27, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/4546885.

I used this piece to look at visual responses to the war in Austria and the ways in which they were used to reinforce nationalistic narratives about Austrian guilt.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Accessed April 30, 2020.

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/documenting-numbers-of-victims-of-the-holocaust-and-nazi-persecution>.

I used this page to gather statistical data on the number of victims in concentration camps run by Austrian Nazis.

Vansant, Jacqueline. "Maria Fritsche, Homemade Men in Postwar Austrian Cinema: Nationhood, Genre, and Masculinity (New York: Berghahn, 2013)." In *1914: Austria-Hungary, the Origins, and the First Year of World War I*, edited by Bischof Günter, Karlhofer Ferdinand, and Williamson Samuel R., 365-70. New Orleans: University of New Orleans Press, 2014. Accessed March 27, 2020.
www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1n2txft.24.

I used this piece to examine how gender roles in cinema may have connected to far-right mentalities among Austrian men.

Wodak, Ruth. "Turning the Tables: Antisemitic Discourse in Post-war Austria." *Discourse & Society* 2, no. 1 (1991): 65-83. Accessed March 24, 2020.
www.jstor.org/stable/42884257.

I used this for background information on the state of antisemitism and relations between Jews and non-Jews in Austria at the beginning of the post-war period.