



Hitler's Austria: Popular Sentiment in the Nazi Era, 1938-1945

By Evan Burr Bukey

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Although Austrians comprised only 8 percent of the population of Hitler's Reich, they made up 14 percent of SS members and 40 percent of those involved in the Nazis' killing operations. This was no coincidence. Popular anti-Semitism was so powerful in Austria that once deportations of Jews began in 1941, the streets of Vienna were frequently lined with crowds of bystanders shouting their approval. Such scenes did not occur in Berlin.

Exploring the convictions behind these phenomena, Evan Bukey offers a detailed examination of popular opinion in Hitler's native country after the Anschluss (annexation) of 1938. He uses evidence gathered in Europe and the United States--including highly confidential reports of the Nazi Security Service--to dissect the reactions, views, and conduct of disparate political and social groups, most notably the Austrian Nazi Party, the industrial working class, the Catholic Church, and the farming community.

Sketching a nuanced and complex portrait of Austrian attitudes and behavior in the Nazi era, Bukey demonstrates that despite widespread dissent, discontent, and noncompliance, a majority of the Austrian populace supported the Anschluss regime until the bitter end, particularly in its economic and social policies and its actions against Jews.

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

That many Austrians welcomed the Anschluss that made Austria into "Ostmark," an integral part of Hitler's Greater German Reich, is well-known to historians. More recently, controversy both inside and outside of Austria has raged over the extent and depth of Austrian anti-Semitism and complicity in Nazi atrocities, as well as the continuation of some of these strains into the post-Cold War era. In this book, Bukey (*Hitler's Hometown: Linz, Austria, 1908-1945*) offers an important contribution to the debate surrounding Austrians' acceptance of Nazism. Even-handed, thoroughly documented, clearly written, and utterly fascinating, the book deals with rural and urban populations, with individuals and social groupings, and with the enormous range of life-changing consequences of the German Anschluss. This is an important and thought-provoking book that should be in all European history collections.

-Barbara L. Walden, Univ. of Wisconsin, Madison

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Review

Now our best study on Austria's embrace of Nazism. ("American Historical Review")

A thorough account of the Austrian embrace of Hitler and Nazism, with some interesting parallels to the present. ("Foreign Affairs")

A fair, conscientiously multifaceted though unsparingly frank picture of the Austrian people during the period of Nazi rule. ("Historische Zeitschrift")

Remarkable for Bukey's ability to distinguish between subtle variations in popular attitudes and his successful attempt to identify ambiguous feelings, uncertainty, and inconsistent, wavering or irresolute behavior among ordinary people. ("Journal of Social History")

Review

Bukey's book is based on solid research in Austrian and foreign archives and on a mastery of the secondary literature. Now our best study on Austria's embrace of Nazism.--*American Historical Review*

[This] book is remarkable for Bukey's ability to distinguish between subtle variations in popular attitudes and his successful attempt to identify ambiguous feelings, uncertainty, and inconsistent, wavering or irresolute behavior among ordinary people. . . . Bukey uses reports of the security service of the SS and other administrative accounts of popular sentiment. . . . [The] book is a convincing example of a productive use of these sources.--*Journal of Social History*

[*Hitler's Austria: Popular Sentiment in the Nazi Era*] is a most welcome addition to the historiography of the period. It is highly readable.--*Patterns of Prejudice*

In this lucid, lively, meticulously argued book, the author. . . [has] produce[d] a crystal clear rejection of the notion of Austria as victim. . . . Bukey has given us a deft analysis that is surely a welcome point of departure for further discussion and study of a host of difficult questions that assemble around the problematic rubric 'Austrian identity.'--*Central European History*

[An] excellent new book. . . . Warmly recommended for those experts on Austria recruited since the arrival of Haider's Freedom Party in Vienna's corridors of power.--*Times Literary Supplement*

This important work analyzes the response of various social groups--workers, farmers, and the Roman Catholic Church--to Nazism and shows that Austrians were among Hitler's most enthusiastic followers between 1938 and 1945.--*Choice*

Drawing on a wide variety of published sources as well as research in Austrian, German, British, and American archives, Bukey provides a nuanced description and analysis of how Austrians reacted to Anschluss, responded to Nazi rule, related to the Church, and behaved toward their Jewish neighbors. Intelligently structured and written in a clear and lively style, this book will not only be of interest to specialists but will also appeal to a wider audience.--Henry Friedlander, author of *The Origins of Nazi Genocide*

Other scholars have addressed major pieces of the story, but Bukey undertakes a comprehensive survey of the way Austrians responded to, and in some instances participated in, events during the years in which they were included in "Greater Germany." His book provides a timely and sobering reminder of the depths of antisemitism in Austria. . . . The results of Bukey's efforts amply demonstrate his dedication and industry. . . . Bukey succeeds in providing a thorough chronicle of the vagaries . . . of popular opinion over seven tumultuous years.--*Journal of Modern History*

Bukey's work is tightly organized, well written, thoroughly researched, and solidly argued. It belongs in every university library collection. Though *Hitler's Austria* has many virtues, not the least of them is the fact that no reader can turn its final page still under the illusion that Austria in the Anschluss era was a nation peopled by morally upright, politically correct von Trapps.--*Historian*

An important contribution to the debate surrounding Austrians' acceptance of Nazism. Even-handed, thoroughly documented, clearly written, and utterly fascinating, the book deals with rural and urban populations, with individuals and social groupings, and with the enormous range of life-changing consequences of the German Anschluss. This is an important and thought-provoking book that should be in all European history collections.--*Library Journal*

From a wealth of previously unknown archival sources, Bukey has put together a fair, conscientiously multifaceted though unsparingly frank picture of the Austrian people during the period of Nazi rule.--*Historische Zeitschrift*

Bukey's magisterial new study constitutes a signal contribution to the study of public opinion in the Third Reich's 'provinces' of occupied Europe and nicely complements previous studies on Bavaria. It shows how most Austrians, despite all ups and downs, supported the Hitler regime from day one of the Anschluss to the final desperate months of the war with remarkable continuity, considerable grumbling, yet relatively little serious dissent. This vigorously argued and engagingly written book will finally put to rest the cherished Austrian myth of 'victimhood' during World War II.--Gunter Bischof, Center Austria, University of New Orleans

A thorough account of the Austrian embrace of Hitler and Nazism, with some interesting parallels to the present.--*Foreign Affairs*

Hitler's Austria is a richly documented and lucidly written book that is sure to appeal to scholars of World War II, the Holocaust, and modern Austria. Bukey argues convincingly that most Austrians supported Hitler, the Anschluss, and the persecution of Jews until late in the war. Strongly recommended.--Bruce F. Pauley, University of Central Florida

Users Review

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