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Right-Wing Extremism: History, Organisations, Ideology

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Preliminary Remarks: What is Right-Wing Extremism?

The following contribution is a short summary of the standard work on the Austrian extreme Right, *Handbuch des österreichischen Rechtsextremismus* (handbook of Austrian right-wing extremism), which was issued by our archive and published in its third, revised edition in 1994. In the following we adhere to the definition of extreme right-wing extremism – with its central elements “national community” (*Volksgemeinschaft*) and “integral nationalism” – postulated in that volume by university lecturer Willibald Holzer. *Volksgemeinschaft* is depicted therein as the fictional idea of a natural, harmonious order set in a patriarchal mould and offered as an alternative to modern industrial society. Other ideologies, or any attempts to disturb this – sometimes enforced – harmony, are rejected as being harmful and “unnatural:” conflicts between political parties, liberalism, the labour movement, moves to afford women equal rights, etc. The contrasting range of desirable structures include the State strong in home and foreign affairs, and a labour market defined as a performance-orientated community. From the idea of a community of one people and one culture (*Volks- und Kulturgemeinschaft*), which the Austrian extreme Right always defines as being “German,” springs a type of (German) nationalism based on “biological” and racist premises. These, in turn, spawn an exculpating and trivialising view of the history of National Socialism. Xenophobia and racism derive from such a biologically– based concept of “one people.” It follows that dissatisfaction and aggression are directed against construed “images of the enemy” (*Feindbilder*),

which serve for attacks against scapegoats (Sündenböcke), such as minorities, foreign workers, refugees, etc.

Right-wing extremism can be equated neither with National Socialism nor with neo-Fascism or neo-Nazism. Neo-Nazism, a legal term, is understood as the attempt to propagate, in direct defiance of the law (*Verbotsgesetz*), Nazi ideology or measures such as the denial, playing-down, approval or justification of Nazi mass murder, especially the Holocaust. The term “right-wing extremist” is applied here primarily to describe, on the basis of passages in books and magazines, the political-ideological profile of such organizations and how their representatives and activists act and react in the political arena.

The Development of Right-Wing Extremism After 1945

As a political-ideological current, right-wing extremism has roots in modern society as well as in historical traditions. Especially in Germany and Austria, there is a notable degree of continuity on a political, ideological and individual level between right-wing extremism and National Socialism or, indeed, its predecessor, Pan-German nationalism. Immediately after the Allies had liberated Austria in 1945, the anti-Nazi parties – Socialists (SPÖ), Conservatives (ÖVP) and Communists (KPÖ) – passed important measures to overcome the effects of Nazi rule. According to the law of May 8, 1945, the NSDAP was banned and Nazi activity forbidden, thus giving the Austrian Constitution a strong anti-Nazi character. Up to the present day the main instrument in combatting neo-Nazi activities is a legal one. The “denazification” programme insisted upon by the Allies and designed to purge the State apparatus and society as a whole of Nazi followers, was not successful, mainly because of the sheer size of the problem and the bureaucratic shortcomings apparent in the programme’s administration. This failure was reflected primarily in the fact that ex-members or sympathisers of the NSDAP were not “purged” of their opinions, prejudices or behavioural patterns. Even in the war’s immediate aftermath, there began a fundamental change in the political climate which soon put an end to the oft-cited anti-Fascist “spirit of 1945.” During the Cold War the status of the Nazis, who always purported to be in the forefront of the struggle against “Bolshevism,” was once more enhanced. Over 500,000 registered Nazis were allowed to vote at the 1949 General Election (they had lost the franchise in 1945). Along with their families they represented a reservoir of voters which none of the three parliamentary parties felt they could ignore. As voters, as members or officials of established political parties, a considerable number of ex-Nazis

were integrated into the SPÖ and the ÖVP, in the process of which a whole plethora of political and attitudinal concessions were made to them: suppression of the history/memory of the Nazi era, a fall-off in the prosecution of Nazi war criminals, the re-instatement of Nazi civil servants, teachers, professors, lawyers, policemen, etc. The opportunism of the democratic parties was counterproductive, the “national bloc” (*nationales Lager*) reconstituted and, placing itself, as always, in the Pan-Germanic tradition, came to be partially identified with the extreme right-wing political spectrum. In the aftermath of the 1949 elections, when ex-Nazis, organized in the VdU (*Verband der Unabhängigen*; Association of Independents), put up candidates and won seats, the Austrian Right went through a gradual process of growth. The withdrawal of Allied troops from Austria (1955) encouraged the consolidation of right-wing groups (some had existed before 1933), which now represented the entire Right – from unashamed neo-Nazis to “moderate” Pan-Germans. Because of disagreements between the small liberal and the much more powerful “national” (German) wing, the VdU split in 1955, but re-formed itself one year later as *Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs* (FPÖ; Freedom Party of Austria). Then and now the FPÖ is the only party represented in the Austrian Parliament which declares its adherence to the “German cultural community” (Party Programme). The first leaders of the FPÖ were former Nazis, Anton Reinthaller, for example, had been a Government Minister in the Nazi era, Friedrich Peter a SS officer.

The Austrian public saw itself confronted with the organized Right for the first time in 1959, on the occasion of the “Schiller Celebrations”, when “national” (Pan-German) youth, sport and cultural organizations took to the streets. Within student and university bodies the so-called *Burschenschaften* and *schlagende Verbindungen* (fraternities of male uniformed students), the FPÖ’s students’ organization RFS and its graduate equivalent FAV (*Freiheitliche Akademikerverbände*) attained considerable influence. In 1960, during the so-called “South Tyrol Crisis”, such right-wing extremists, along with German *Kameraden*, gained widespread notoriety by involvement in terrorist acts (“freedom struggle”) in Italy. Prominent among these was Norbert Burger, the ex-RFS leader and subsequent chairman of the neo-Nazi NDP (*Nationaldemokratische Partei*). The influence which the extreme Right had gained in the universities became dramatically apparent five years later, during the so-called “Borodajkewycz Affair”. Hundreds of students demonstrated in favour of the antisemitic university professor Borodajkewycz and were involved in street battles, in the course of which Ernst Kirchweyer, a former concentration camp inmate, was beaten to death.

During the 1960s and 70s, Friedrich Peter, Chairman of the FPÖ, endeavoured to anchor his party within the democratic party system, preparing the ground for the entry of the FPÖ into a Coalition Government with the Socialists in 1983. This development led, on the other hand, to the formation of a group around Norbert Burger (condemned in absentia by an Italian court for terrorist offences in South Tyrol), which split from the FPÖ in 1966 and set up the NDP (*Nationaldemokratische Partei*). In contrast to its German counterpart of the same name which had some electoral successes in the mid-1960s, the Austrian NDP (banned as a neo-Nazi organization in 1988) found little resonance in an electorate moving to the left in the late 1960s. Because of the politically-motivated and misguided tolerance shown by the authorities and Government in Austria, extreme right-wing groupings continued with their activities in the 1970s as well. The volume *Rechtsextremismus in Österreich seit 1945*, issued by DÖW in 1979, listed nearly 50 extreme right-wing organizations active in the country, their true significance and influence, however, waned gradually, due in no small part to effective enlightenment programmes (emphasis on Austrian identity, democratic traditions) carried out in secondary schools and universities. The most striking evidence for this change was the declining vote attained by the RFS at student elections, which fell from 30 % in the 1960s to 2 % in 1987. At the polls for the student representative body (*Österreichische Hochschülerschaft*) in 1995, the RFS could muster only 4 %, in contrast, its “mother party” FPÖ won 22 % of the votes at the General Election in the same year. At the beginning of the 1980s neo-Nazi student groups never attained more than 1 % of the student vote and went through a period of stagnation and defeat. The single exception in this regard manifested itself in Carinthia, Austria’s most southern province. There, old conflicts with Slovenia (then part of Yugoslavia) on the border issue or disagreements concerning the rights of Carinthia’s Slovenian minority were used to orchestrate a permanent fever of *Großdeutsch* resentment. The *Kärntner Heimatdienst* (KHD), an umbrella organization for Carinthian chauvinists of Pan-Germanic persuasion, was able to exert influence on the province’s political parties during various “campaigns:” against bilingual traffic signposts (1972), minority census (1976), abolition of bilingual primary education (1988).

A significant milestone in the further development of the entire Pan-Germanic political spectrum was laid in September 1986 during the conference of the FPÖ in Innsbruck. Norbert Steger, at the time Vice-Chancellor in the Coalition Government, Chairman of the FPÖ and leader of the liberal leadership group which had steered the party’s fortunes since 1980, was defeated in a vote for the chairmanship by Jörg Haider, an exponent of the traditional

“national” (*Großdeutsch*) party wing. The “Nazis in the cellar,” who Steger obviously underestimated as consisting of merely 20 % of the party’s functionaries at lower organizational levels, had masterminded Haider’s victory. Forces polarized in the course of this lurch to the right: on the one hand, the majority of right-wing extremists, along with individual neo-Nazi activists, were impressed by Haider’s dynamism of success and his increasingly radical political statements. They either supported or joined the FPÖ, where they soon assumed posts or FPÖ seats at local, provincial and national level. On the other hand, the remaining neo-Nazi minigroups became more outspoken in propagating Nazi ideology, especially the denial of the Holocaust. An amendment passed in 1992 to the 1945 *Verbotsgesetz* which expressly made the denial or trivialisation of Nazi crimes (including the Holocaust) an indictable offence, afforded the police and judicial authorities a sound basis for the energetic prosecution of such groups. Sentences passed against neo-Nazi leaders Walter Ochensberger, Gottfried Küssel, Hans Jörg Schimanek Jr., Gerd Honsik (escaped detention by absconding to Spain) and against many party functionaries and members of paramilitary groups led to the destruction of neo-Nazi structures, which now exist, if at all, as illegal circles. However, the latter found new means of spreading neo-Nazi propaganda and of communicating with one another by tapping into computer networks at home and abroad. Such communication systems were chosen because the authorities either have no access to or control over such networks; they are not only less dangerous, but also cheaper than traditional channels and have the added advantage that far more people can be reached via computer than through the extreme right-wing press.

As neo-Nazi circles had been decimated by arrests or defections to Haider’s FPÖ, their field of recruitment was much restricted, and, deprived of legal means of expressing their doctrines, they moved from a predilection for violence to open acts of terror. Since December 1993, five series of letter bombs, dispatched by xenophobes and racists, have exploded, as have so-called “pipe-bombs” in Klagenfurt (Carinthia) and in Stinatz and Oberwart (Burgenland). In Oberwart four members of the Roma minority were murdered, among those injured elsewhere was the Mayor of Vienna, Helmut Zilk. Whereas the wave of terror shocked the Austrian public, it did give the violent core of right-wing extremism a degree of publicity which was out of all proportion to its minimal political influence.

At present, the main force of right-wing extremism in Austria is Haider’s FPÖ, which has been constantly moving towards the extreme Right since 1986, as the following examples illustrate. Haider’s utterance in the Carinthian Provincial Assembly on “the proper employment policies in the Third Reich,”

which cost him the post of Carinthian State Governor in June 1991; his petition for a referendum in early 1993, which led to racist incitement against foreigners, especially those from Eastern and Southeastern Europe; this campaign resulted in the FPÖ's remaining liberally-minded M.P.s to leave the party and to form, under Heide Schmidt, a separate parliamentary faction, *Liberales Forum*. The "Third Republic" propagated by Haider, more than anything else, has forced all other politicians to ask themselves if the FPÖ can be treated as a normal party, a party with which one can coalesce or even respect. This is now a central topic in Austrian home affairs. Whereas extreme right-wing groupings are rejected unequivocally by the general public and cannot, with the exception of the KHD in Carinthia, exert any influence on Austrian politics, the FPÖ has many opportunities, mainly because it has gained so many voters from the other parties, despite its undeniably extreme right-wing political profile. Using unrestrained demagoguery, FPÖ-Chairman Haider knows like no other politician in Austria how best to incite fear of foreigners, or of the crime-rate. By "occupying" such themes in a unprecedentedly aggressive style, Haider can dictate to a major extent the political questions of the day.

It is obvious that people with fears for their future, those who believe that "aliens" and other "enemies" are the personification of that fear, serve as a permanent reservoir for extreme right-wing rat-catchers of all hues. The partially negative effects of European economic and political integration are also felt by the Austrian population (rising unemployment, social problems, waves of migration caused by wars and destitution) and promise to supply the extreme Right in Europe with favourable perspectives, and to confront democracy with a perilous challenge which should not be underestimated.

The Organizational Structure of Right-Wing Extremism

Since the decisive new course was inaugurated by the FPÖ in 1986, there have been fundamental structural changes in the organization of Austria's extreme Right. As Haider's FPÖ moved steadily to the far Right, this party became increasingly attractive for traditionally-minded Pan-Germans and other extreme right-wingers. Many former neo-Nazis and militants of the Right were integrated into the FPÖ; they moderated their ideological views for public consumption and now and again party functionaries distanced themselves from old positions. On this level, many connections can be traced from leading FPÖ officials to the extreme right-wing scene. The FPÖ, presenting itself usually as a vehicle for Jörg Haider's personal beliefs, crossed the boundary into the

extreme right-wing sphere and came to be its main driving force. The process whereby extreme right-wingers were absorbed into the FPÖ meant that many traditional far-right groups lost ground. Some of them declined from being leading forces to mere splinter-groups; others ceased all activities or exist only on paper. In the course of the polarisation process between the FPÖ and the Austrian extreme Right the latter underwent a profound transformation. The functions and significance of the extreme right-wing scene outside the FPÖ can be categorised as follows:

In the area of **militant right-wing extremism and neo-Nazism** deep structural upheavals were apparent by the early 1980s. Following the decline of the more important groups NDP and ANR (students), the militant wing of neo-Nazism reformed itself and found a forum in Honsik's periodical *Halt*, which, like Ochensberger's *Sieg* (distributed mainly in Western Austria), concentrated on anti-Semitism, racist incitement against foreigners, anti-Americanism and especially, from ca. 1985 onwards, denial of the Holocaust. Such neo-Nazi factions cooperated closely with one another, with the U. S. Nazi organization of Gary Lauck (NSDAP/AO), and subsequently turned their attention (e. g. Küssel's VAPO) more and more towards ever younger target groups, i. e. 14–20 year olds. The most numerous of these were football hooligans and the growing skinhead scene. As elsewhere in Europe, this youth subculture was prone to violence, xenophobia and racism, and proceeded to disseminate pure neo-Nazi hatred in various periodicals. As a whole, however, it cannot be reckoned to the organized core of neo-Nazi militants, even if such fanatics try to instrumentalise disaffected youths for diverse activities. Because of the different political, social and economic conditions prevailing in Austria, local neo-Nazi militants never achieved that degree of organizational growth, aggressiveness or publicity that their West and East German counterparts did in an explosion of xenophobic violence at the beginning of the 1990s.

The decline of the key neo-Nazi factions NDP and ANR was accompanied by the formation of **“camouflage” and “replacement” organizations or splinter groups**, which, however, were to be just as unsuccessful as previous regroupings initiated by NDP and ANR. In the main, such organizations now support Haider's FPÖ, all the more so since that party's attempt to initiate a referendum against foreign workers. Even militant neo-Nazis like Gerd Honsik and Walter Ochensberger now support Haider, but wholly for tactical reasons and without much enthusiasm. In a letter from his prison cell, the condemned neo-Nazi paramilitary Hans Jörg Schimanek Jr. wrote (22. 7. 1995), “He [Haider] is no great shakes, but at least he is going in the right direction.”

Of the **insignificant minigroups** on the far Right only LKS (*Liste Kritischer Studenten*) warrants mention, as it unfolded a lively publicity campaign against Austria joining the EU.

The **veteran ex-soldier associations**, once a strong bastion of the Austrian Right, have likewise lost members and impact. For biological reasons, the ex-members of the *Wehrmacht*, SS and other Nazi organizations who hold the traditions of the “Third Reich” high in the veterans’ clubs are dwindling fast in numbers. Two bodies are significant in this connection: *Kameradschaft IV* (K IV), an umbrella organization for ex-members of the *Waffen-SS*; *Wohlfahrtsvereinigung der Glasenbacher*, an association of ex-inmates of an American detention camp in Salzburg for incriminated Nazis and war criminals. The chairman of this organization was Hans Lukesch (since deceased), who, as a 90 year-old, stood in 1991 as a candidate for the FPÖ in Upper Austria, thus giving witness to his comrades’ approval of the “new,” Haiderite FPÖ. The presence of leading politicians (e. g. Defence Minister Fasslabend of the ÖVP in 1995) at the annual assembly of *Wehrmacht* and SS veterans from at home and abroad in Ulrichsberg (Carinthia) shows clearly that political parties other than the FPÖ also realise the electoral potential of the ex-soldiers’ clubs.

Culture and sport organizations, while having a long tradition within the Austrian far Right, remained more or less unaffected by the changes set in train by Haider’s usurpation of the FPÖ leadership. By virtue of the specific tasks they set themselves, such clubs do not compete against the FPÖ, but rather serve as one of its political and ideological reservoirs. On the basis of its large membership, its organizational structure throughout Austria and its reputation, the gymnastic association *Österreichischer Turnerbund* (ÖTB) is by far the most important organization within the Pan-Germanic and extreme right-wing spectrum. It sees itself as a body dedicated to teach physical education in the spirit of German racist exclusivism (*Turnvater Jahn*), has manifold links to the FPÖ and other reactionary organizations, and its cadres (*Dietwarte*) receive the requisite ideological brain-washing. Its publications are unequivocally extreme right-wing in tenor, but its membership is not – most of them are primarily interested in gymnastic exercise. A similar twofold function – club officials, committed FPÖ members – can be found in the *Österreichische Landsmannschaft* (ÖLM), notorious mainly for its ideological agitation through the periodical *Eckartbote*. Links between the FPÖ and *Verein Dichterstein Offenhausen*, an association known for honouring “national” and racialist poets, were forged by Andreas Mölzer, at one time Haider’s “ideological” adviser. *Deutsches Kulturwerk Europäischen Geistes* made itself known some years ago by conducting publicity campaigns against avantgarde festivals, and, though in a process of

decline, can still organize yearly meetings to facilitate cooperation between Austrian and other right-wing extremists.

Jahrweiser Selbstverlag (publisher of *Alter Jahreszeitweiser* and *Jahreskreis*) has a special place among cultural initiatives on the far Right, likewise the periodical *Pen Tuisko*, issued by Michael Damböck. Such pamphlets and magazines represent a new strain in extreme right-wing ideology, linking 19th century racial theories with new obscurantism, e. g. “New Heathenism” and so-called myths and values of the “Germanic race.” It is clear that the extreme Right exploits the increasing interest in “New Age,” “New Heathenism” and other esoteric themes, hoping to win new recruits amongst the gullible.

Prominent in such endeavours to bring the FPÖ together with different strains of the far Right is the magazine *Aula*, the mouthpiece of the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft Freiheitlicher Akademikerverbände*. In the last few years *Aula* has become the foremost journal of the “thinking” extreme Right and serves as a bridge-builder between right-wing conservatives in Germany and Austria. In March 1995, after the murderous bomb-attack in Oberwart, a search under court warrant was carried out in *Aula*’s offices. The list of subscribers was confiscated, the paper’s manager Herwig Nachtmann subsequently found guilty of neo-Nazi activities because he had published an article denying the Holocaust. Since then, *Aula*’s fortune have gone downhill. The FPÖ – or so it said in a public announcement – withdrew its subvention, as did the Styrian Provincial Government, many advertisers went elsewhere. A surrogate soon appeared, an Austria-edition of the German “New Right” magazine *Junge Freiheit*. The first edition in new apparel appeared in October 1995 and reads like a re-vamped, extreme Right organ of the FPÖ. The so-called *Arbeitsgemeinschaft für demokratische Politik* (AFP), merely a shell in organizational terms, organizes annual “political academies,” where FPÖ politicians, extreme Rightists from home and abroad and neo-Nazis come together for ideological instruction and the exchange of ideas. Until the AFP was unmasked for what it is in early 1992, it also acted as a refuge for dangerous, neo-Nazi paramilitary groups. The magazine *fakten* provides a comparable bridge-building function. Its editor Horst Jakob Rosenkranz was a candidate on a neo-Nazi platform banned from putting up candidates at the 1990 Local Elections in Vienna. Three years later, his wife Barbara was elected to the Lower Austrian Assembly on the FPÖ ticket.

Other **organizations close to the extreme right-wing Lager** cannot be fully identified with it. Links that exist on a personal or ideological basis do not necessarily reflect the standpoint of the organization as a whole. We can include among such bodies numerically strong and influential organizations as the KHD, confined to Carinthia, or the *Kärntner Abwehrkämpferbund*, dedicated to

diminish the minority rights of the Carinthian Slovenians, *Österreichischer Kameradschaftsbund*, the main organization for *Wehrmacht* veterans, and a small number of Pan-German cultural groups. In the recent past extreme right-wing influence was found also to exist among fundamentalist, sect-like minigroups on the extreme right periphery of the Catholic and other Christian churches.

The Ideology, Propaganda and Practice of Right-Wing Extremism

All European parties of the extreme Right with some electoral successes have placed the main focus of their propaganda on topics with potential for incitement against foreigners, thereby appealing to the prejudices and fears of the electorate. For the last twenty years the rejection of foreign workers and refugees from the Third World has been the staple ammunition of Austria's far right press. These themes did not reach the wider public arena until the early 1990s, when the FPÖ made such topics their central electoral platform, and, as mentioned above, tried to initiate, with the help of all extreme right-wingers, a referendum on the presence of foreigners in Austria. Just as the Nazis in the past condemned the Jews as the cause of all evil, so now the "foreigners" are forced into the rôle of "scapegoats," responsible for society's ills such as crime and unemployment. Neo-Nazi groups spread openly racist ideas in this context, the majority of the extreme Right and part of the FPÖ conceal such racist prejudice behind apparently harmless phrases – preserving Austria's national identity, her cultural inheritance, etc. Such phrases are now part of the extreme Right's strategy to update its vocabulary, as the language used heretofore sounded archaic and did not come across well in public discourse. Therefore, the words *Volk* and *Rasse* are replaced by *Kultur*, "cultural mixture" is employed instead of "racial mixture." Similarly, "Ethnopluralism" is presented as a concept antagonistic to different peoples and cultures coming together (multicultural society) and is basically just a new expression for traditional racist views. In other cases the general reliance on the "seriousness" of scientific findings is misused, for example, by presenting Eysenck's controversial research into intelligence in a positive light, in order to state that variations between individual IQs can be explained by skin colour. Instead of Social Darwinism the extreme Right now preaches Social Biologism: authoritarian hierarchies, traditional female rôles, rejection of social equality, agitation against the integration of foreign workers or refugees by referring to behavioural research based on observations taken from the animal world (Konrad Lorenz, Irenäus Eibl-Eibesfeldt, Desmond Morris).

In 1986 important discussions had consequences for extreme right-wing propaganda. In Germany the *Historikerstreit* clearly showed tendencies to play down the singularity of the Holocaust as well as to trivialize the criminal character of Nazi warfare. In Austria political controversies focussed on the country's Nazi past and were ignited by Waldheim's candidature for the Austrian presidency. For the first time since 1945 open and covert anti-Semitism became part and parcel of political debate, tendencies to "relativise" the entire Nazi system, especially its crimes, could be heard. "Revisionism," a modern form of anti-Semitism, was imported to Austria by neo-Nazi activists like Ochensberger and Honsik from the USA, France, Great Britain and Germany.

A specific characteristic of Austrian right-wing extremism is that the nationalism behind it is not Austrian at all, but German. German nationalism, usually expressed in a declaration of loyalty to "the German cultural and (one) people community" is a central programmatic tenet shared not only by right-wing extremists, but also by the entire *Lager* grouped around the FPÖ. However, polls show that the sense of belonging to "German culture" is diminishing rapidly in Austria, especially among young people. Haider announced, for opportunistic reasons, in August 1995 that the FPÖ had turned its back on *Deutschtümelei*, i. e. German racist jingoism. The FPÖ's new "Austrian patriotism" (expressed in the slogan "Austria first!") is, on closer examination and in the light of how certain FPÖ politicians interpret it, mere label-swapping – the deeper sense of the slogan is the mobilization of Austrian chauvinism in an effort to squeeze out and discriminate against "foreigners."

In contrast to earlier campaigns in which the extreme Right demanded that Austria be integrated into the German State in a "Europe of the peoples," almost all the right-wing groups supported Haider's anti-EU stance on the occasion of the referendum on joining the Union. On the one hand, the process of unity set down in the Treaty of Maastricht was at odds with nationalistic German sentiment, feelings which had been boosted by the reunification of the two German states. On the other hand, "Brüssel," the seat of the EU-Commissariat, was defamed as being a centre for "destructive" elements ("Freemasons," "Bilderberger," "international Jewry," etc.). Such conspiracy "theories," voiced for example by Haider in a TV-discussion with Chancellor Vranitzky, have subsequently gained a prominent place in extreme right-wing propaganda.

From the exclusive "one-people community" (*Volksgemeinschaft*) there logically follows the rejection of liberalism, all varieties of socialist ideology and even of Social Democracy. Socialism and the labour movement are accused of "levelling down," of ignoring "natural laws" and inherited differences in human nature. As anti-Communism lost its propaganda value in the aftermath

of the Eastern bloc's collapse, a kind of anti-Americanism, with a strong anti-Semitic undercurrent, has taken its place. Another essential element of extreme right-wing *Weltanschauung* is its *Frauenbild*, which is hopelessly archaic, its depiction of women has nothing in common with the realities of modern life. The belief that the nature-given rôle of women is that of the mother who devotes herself to household duties, her children and her husband, whose general place in society is defined primarily on the basis of "population growth" politics – all this is directed against women becoming involved in political life, in working outside the home and in demanding equal rights with men.

Just as the street gangs of the SA and the NSDAP in the past, modern right-wing extremist and neo-Nazi elements do not shrink back from using terrorist methods in pursuance of their goals. Groups of the Right are trained in paramilitary camps, draw up plans for armed combat or bomb-making and frequently hoard caches of guns. This militant activity and the aggressive language it uses – denying grey areas between "good" and "evil," whipping up emotions by means of hate-images and "threats from outside" – end, more or less inevitably, in violent and terrorist acts. The strategy behind the letter bomb campaign in Austria (since December 1993) is to bring about, as has happened elsewhere, an increase in police powers at the expense of democratic rights, and finally, a destabilisation of the political system and the destruction of democracy. Another aim, of course, is to intimidate all those who are working to integrate foreigners into Austrian society and to terrify those foreigners. The propaganda and ideology of the extreme Right find, especially in "law and order" and "foreigner" topics, a degree of acceptance in the general population which is disproportionate to the actual size of the militant rightist spectrum. A study carried out in 1992 attributed authoritarian attitudes to 44 % of the population; 16 % of those polled were of the opinion that, under certain circumstances, dictatorship might be better than democracy. Interestingly, FPÖ supporters scored over the average – 70 % had authoritarian tendencies, 27 % were in favour of a dictatorship. However, the figures quoted can be found in other countries as well: The Sinus study found that 13 % of the West German population harbour extreme right-wing views. Other studies, confined to xenophobia and anti-Semitism, produced percentages higher than those registered in Austria. According to an opinion poll conducted in 1995, 24 % of Austrians (36 % of FPÖ sympathisers) would prefer not to have a Jewish neighbour; 17 % of Austrians (28 % of FPÖ sympathisers) believe that Jews "have too much influence in our country." When asked about neighbours they would not like, 42 % of those questioned (60 % of FPÖ sympathisers) rejected "gypsies," 39 % (56 % of FPÖ sympathisers) Turks, 31 % (43 % of FPÖ sympathisers) Croats. Any mobilization of this

potential by right-wing extremists, right-wing populists and the popular press will certainly put democracy under grave jeopardy.

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National Socialism, racism and modern-day right-wing extremism are not only phenomena which can be described and analysed in an impartial way. Value-judgements, opinions and hard answers, however, are inevitable if one does not want to be accused of inhumanity or indifference. This is not the place to discuss in detail how to combat and restrain right-wing extremism and racism. Nonetheless, the approximate areas in which this can take place can be roughly delineated as follows:

- Laws and measures to be taken by the police and the courts are not only necessary for the protection of the State, but can be politically effective and educationally valuable. As experience has shown, periodicals can be banned and leading figures of the far Right more or less silenced by bringing court charges against them.
- Of uncontested importance are debates on a high level among young people in schools, in politics generally, and in the media. Deficits in this regard have negative longterm results, as was evident in the proclivity of certain young males (unemployed, apprentices, marginalised groups) to be attracted by the arguments of the extreme Right.
- If one argues that racism and right-wing extremism have roots also in society, it is only logical to demand countermeasures, e. g. in economic and social policy. A political system which is going in the direction of a “two-thirds society,” which accepts unemployment and poverty, will have to come to terms with a permanent and growing extreme right-wing sector.