1996

The "Long Shadow" of the State: Austrian Social History in the 20th Century, 1890-1990 - German - Book Review

Harry Ritter

Western Washington University, harry.ritter@wwu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://cedar.wwu.edu/history_facpubs

Part of the European History Commons

Recommended Citation


https://cedar.wwu.edu/history_facpubs/32

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the History at Western CEDAR. It has been accepted for inclusion in History Faculty and Staff Publications by an authorized administrator of Western CEDAR. For more information, please contact westerncedar@wwu.edu.
Der lange Schatten des Staates: Österreichische Gesellschaftsgeschichte im 20. Jahrhundert, 1890-1990 by Ernst Hanisch
Review by: Harry Ritter
Published by: Cambridge University Press on behalf of Conference Group for Central European History of the American Historical Association
Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/4546636

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.
Ernst Hanisch's new survey of Austrian *Zeitgeschichte* is one of the first volumes to appear in Ueberreuter Verlag's projected ten volume history of Austria from ancient times to the present, edited by Herwig Wolfram. If the other contributions equal this work in quality, the series will be a brilliant success. Hanisch's book will be a touchstone for all future efforts to synthesize and extract meaning from Austria's turbulent twentieth-century experience. The study is lavishly illustrated in both black and white and color, and liberally sprinkled with statistical tables relating to Austria's economic, social, and demographic history—all of which form an integral part of its rhetorical design (the tables usually compare Austrian development with trends in Germany and Switzerland). Though beautifully produced, this is not just an attractive panorama, nor yet another evocation of Habsburg nostalgia or contribution to the post–1945 political project of building a distinctive (i.e., non-German) "Austrian identity." Over the past twenty years Hanisch, a Salzburg historian, has earned a reputation as one of the leading students of the First Austrian Republic and Dollfuss-Schuschnigg and Nazi dictatorships, concentrating mainly on the local history of the Salzburg region. In a post-Waldheim setting, the spirit behind his work is summed up in the last sentence of the book: "It is the noblest duty of history to stand watch on the critical memory of a society." In fulfilling this task his text, in its analytical and narrative power, matches the publisher's superb production standards.

Methodologically, the book falls into two parts. The first third, roughly, constitutes a sweeping excavation of the deep structures of Austria's modern *longue durée*—cultural traditions, mental habits, demographic and economic trends, social classes, patterns of political behavior, attributes of elite and popular culture—reaching back to the conflicting legacies of the age of the Baroque and the Josefinian Enlightenment. (Despite formidable tensions between these two grand traditions, they nonetheless interlaced to cast the "long shadow" of bureaucratism and the state over subsequent Austrian history, right down to the present; equivocal in its implications, the shadow rendered Austrians ill-prepared for liberal democracy, yet in the long run eased the path to the late twentieth-century "social partnership" and today's social-liberal welfare society.) This highly generalized initial section is inspired by the *Annales* tradition of social history, informed by the concepts of "modernization" and "political culture," and marked by the employment of Weberian ideal types.

The last two thirds of the book unfold in a more conventional narrative of specific events and short-term processes from the 1890s to the mid-1980s. (Although he begins in the late imperial, multinational pe-

This is an exemplary monograph, a delight to read. It makes a well-defined argument, is clearly written, and demonstrates a remarkable command of the relevant sources, both primary and secondary. Berger is unusually