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Franchisement and Election in Vienna 1848 – 1932 – Book Review

Harry Ritter
Western Washington University, harry.ritter@wwu.edu

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Wahlrecht und Wählerverhalten in Wien, 1848-1932: Privilegien, Partizipationsdruck und Sozialstruktur by Maren Seliger; Karl Ucakar
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parliamentary prejudices) that he was moved to undertake his own searching and as
yet inadequately appreciated analysis of the political and cultural crisis embodied in
fascism. It is to this that Prümm devotes a detailed study which is admiring ("ein
Szenario der Krise, dessen Vollständigkeit den heutigen Leser in Erstaunen und
Bewunderung zurückläßt") but not uncritical, particularly as regards the hopelessly
optimistic hypothesis that national socialism, being composed of a "constellation" of
disparate forces, could allow one of these forces, namely socialism, to outflank the
others.

Ironically, it was the strongly anti-fascist Dirks who after the Machtergreifung
fell victim to the ambivalence and compromises of the "inner emigration" while,
from the mid-1930s, Kogon identified himself increasingly with Catholic opposition
to fascism, a fact which ultimately led to imprisonment in Buchenwald. These
experiences changed both men significantly (Kogon declared "Ich bin im Lager ein
anderer geworden" while Dirks admitted of his years in Hitler's Germany "man
hätte mehr tun können") and led directly to that successful post-war cooperation
which from the perspective of Weimar would have seemed so unlikely. It is the main
virtue of Karl Prümm's study to have made this persuasively clear.

IAN WALLACE, Loughborough University

Maren Seliger and Karl Ucakar. Wahlrecht und Wählerverhalten in Wien, 1848-1932:
Privilegien, Partizipationsdruck und Sozialstruktur. Wien and München: Jugend

This volume, conceived as one of several commentaries on the Historischer
Atlas von Wien (appearing in installments since 1981), is a careful survey of franchise
laws, voting procedures, and election results for the city of Vienna from the
beginnings of popular politics in 1848 to the establishment of the Dollfuss
dictatorship. It is designed to be used not only by readers of the Atlas, but by anyone
interested in Vienna's political history. The book is divided into two parts: the first,
by Ucakar, is a narrative history of the laws governing elections to the Vienna city
council as well as the Austrian parliament, so far as Vienna is concerned. This
material is placed in the general context of the history of Austria's political
movements and parties in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Ucakar's
contribution is essentially descriptive; there is little if any new information
in this section, but it is nonetheless a handy summary of existing knowledge. The
second, more original half of the volume, by Seliger, is a suggestive analysis of the
political results of the elections, and an interpretation of their meaning in the light of
Vienna's changing social composition and demographic patterns. Particularly
interesting is Seliger's break-down of election results in terms of each municipal
district and her attempt to relate these results to a reconstructed picture of the social
composition of the various districts. Generally speaking, the conclusions of both
authors are clearly and persuasively presented. The text (177 pages) is punctuated by
many illuminating statistical tables and supplemented by an appendix of seventy-
seven pages which bristles with even more valuable quantitative data.

HARRY RITTER, Western Washington University