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## **Gehler, Michael. *From Saint-Germain to Lisbon: Austria's Long Road from Disintegrated to United Europe 1919–2009***

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Michael Gehler has long been recognized on both sides of the Atlantic as a leading historian of international relations and diplomatic history. His *From Saint-Germain to Lisbon* is an updated edition of *Österreichs Weg in die Europäische Union* (Innsbruck, 2009)—a kind of “everything you’d want to

know about Austrian integration into European institutions,” including fits and starts, failures and successes. It is a massive tome: 933 pages of detailed narrative, plus another 210 pages devoted to 100 primary sources (speeches, Austrian Foreign Ministry and foreign documents, treaties, and position papers).

Systematic chronological presentation begins with World War I and the First Republic's attempts to adapt after the Treaty of St. Germain dismantled the Habsburg Empire. Gehler takes up a series of key initiatives that include the pan-European vision advanced by Richard von Coudenhove-Calergi, Ignaz Seipel's notion of a broader Central European confederation, and the Curtius-Schober effort to form an Austro-German customs union. He shows clearly how each of these ventures met with resistance from the empire's successor states, the League of Nations, and, particularly, former enemies such as Italy and France.

Gehler is at his best when he picks up the narrative after the Nazi regime's defeat. He acknowledges the difficulties Austria's coalition partners faced negotiating a host of challenges: four-power occupation; attempts to instrumentalize the Moscow Declaration's statement on Austria as first victim of Nazi aggression (the *Opferthese*); Marshall Plan assistance; coordination with the European Payments Union; and, with the State Treaty that ended postwar occupation in 1955, permanent neutrality—all without antagonizing the Soviet Union or drawing too close to potential Western partners. Austrian leaders enjoyed hard-won success positioning the Second Republic for integrative contact points with the emerging ECSC, OEEC, and the Council of Europe, and with membership in the European Free Trade Association. These steps involved difficulties of their own, especially given the 1956 Hungarian and 1968 Czechoslovak crises, ongoing disagreements with Italy over South Tyrol, lingering French suspicions, and Austrian concerns about West German economic hegemony.

Austria's ability to work with other European neutrals where practical and yet pursue its own distinct interests vis-à-vis Western European institutions marked Second Republic foreign policy from the 1960s through the end of the Cold War. Gehler skillfully treats Bruno Kreisky's efforts as foreign minister—and later as chancellor—to position Austria as a site for East-West dialogue, on the one hand, and for enhanced cooperation with the European Community and other supranational western institutions, on the other. The fall of the Iron Curtain allowed for a certain degree of continuity in foreign policy; Austria could capitalize on an established position as the easternmost of western states but proceed as an honest broker during the Yugoslav civil war and the Kosovo conflict. An orientation toward regional stability, peace, human rights, and economic cooperation characterized Austrian policy through the 1990s and beyond. Even as it assumed membership in the European Union, observer status with the Western European Union defense organization, and a consultative role with NATO, Austria preserved its neutrality.

The encyclopedic volume showcases Gehler's strengths as a diplomatic and international historian—he designates his approach as source-based, “basic research” through which history “can continue to exist as an innovative discipline” (18). In the same breath, he is critical of theoretical approaches that he refers to, in blanket terms, as “cultural studies” and “postmodern.” While no historian would dispute that source-based research is the cornerstone of our discipline, one can profitably—even *innovatively*—interrogate the power dynamics inherent in the formulation of policies and promulgation of decrees or proclamations. Gehler's rejection of other approaches to interpreting sources creates an *either/or* dichotomy rather than a *both/and* approach that would allow social and cultural considerations to inform diplomatic history.

Thus, Gehler's politicians and diplomats during both republics operate almost entirely independent of concerns and pressures from the population. Exceptions are limited to growing unease about potential challenges to Austrian neutrality during the later Cold War years, the two-thirds favorable vote with respect to Austria's EU membership (892–94), or popular responses regarding the European Union's attitude toward the post-1999 ÖVP-FPÖ coalition (749ff). Notably, he offers two summary statements: “What was favorable for the building of an Austrian identity was the socioeconomic development that was connected with the economic reconstruction after 1945, the Marshall Plan, the establishment of the social partnership in the domestic policy, and the foundation of neutrality in foreign policy”; and “Elite self-interest and public self-perception intermeshed with each other and led to an

instrumental politicization and a cultural interpretation” (911). These concessions notwithstanding, Gehler sees state identity formation—understood as a neutral, European, democratic republic uniquely situated between East and West—as a purely elite exercise rather than as a negotiation between constituents and their economic, cultural, or political representatives. (To be fair, he acknowledges the importance of industrial, agricultural, and trade union lobbies for Austrian policy making with respect to EFTA and later EU negotiations, but largely in passing). As a result, Gehler’s commendably meticulous account takes place in ministerial offices, plenary sessions, and conversations between diplomatic elites (as recalled in memoirs or in interviews).

As impressive as this book is, its intended audience is unclear. Only readers initiated into the intricacies of Austrian domestic affairs will appreciate underlying issues. Biographical sketches appear designated for those unfamiliar with Austrian history. The impressive annex of primary sources is not referenced in the text, and sources are not annotated. German-language sources are not translated, whereas the book itself has been. The translation is highly problematic—it is rendered almost entirely in the passive voice, there are problems with syntax, plurals, capitalization, and even outright inaccuracies. This results in what many will find a laborious reading experience, one that would have been smoother in the original German.

In the end, the work would have benefited significantly from a clearer sense of audience, closer editorial supervision, and greater attention to translation. This is unfortunate; readers may find that the limits of presentation work at cross purposes to appreciation of the topic. Still, those interested in diplomatic history and high politics will find much of value in Gehler’s volume, even with the challenges identified.