

Awakening Affinities between Past Enemies: Reciprocal Perceptions of Italians and Austrians

**Josef Berghold
September 1995
Working Paper 95-6**

© 1997 by the Center for Austrian Studies. Permission to reproduce must generally be obtained from the [Center for Austrian Studies](#). Copying is permitted in accordance with the fair use guidelines of the US Copyright Act of 1976. The the Center for Austrian Studies permits the following additional educational uses without permission or payment of fees: academic libraries may place copies of the Center's Working Papers on reserve (in multiple photocopied or electronically retrievable form) for students enrolled in specific courses: teachers may reproduce or have reproduced multiple copies (in photocopied or electronic form) for students in their courses. Those wishing to reproduce Center for Austrian Studies Working Papers for any other purpose (general distribution, advertising or promotion, creating new collective works, resale, etc.) must obtain permission from the [Center](#).

Italy and Austria's heritage of dense cultural and political influence--but at times also particularly sharp conflict--touches upon one of the "raw nerves" of European history. A careful investigation of what has become of this heritage should reveal the general state of European integration; that is, it should indicate the degree to which the peoples of Europe (or at least of Central and Western Europe)--in terms of their mentalities and everyday-life culture--have succeeded in coming closer.

Nowadays, the relations between Austria and Italy do not attract much international interest; it is certainly not a "hot spot" of global politics. Yet it is curious to note that even in academic circles, neither Austria nor Italy has a tradition of studying one another's history and bilateral relations.⁽¹⁾ Furthermore, the "history of mentalities" has essentially been ignored. At times, historians of both countries have described this void in rather harsh terms: Silvio Furlani has spoken of a very serious gap of knowledge⁽²⁾; Fritz Fellner of a "blockade"; and Adam Wandruszka, actually, of a "blank spot."⁽³⁾ Elisabeth Garms-Cornides recently pointed out that her studies on the topic are among the first.⁽⁴⁾

If one considers the importance that both countries have had for each other over long periods of history--and even more so if one considers the highly emotional attitudes that often have come into play in the reciprocal perceptions between Italians and Austrians--this is indeed quite paradoxical. From a psychoanalytic perspective, such a manifest lack of attention may well point not to the unimportance of these perceptions, but on the contrary to a highly sensitive and relevant subject matter.

Consequently, I suggest that the recently developing relations between Austria and Italy deserve more attention--and in fact, examined in a particular light, these relations are exemplary. In a world that in recent times has seen numerous escalations of ethnic, religious, national, and social hostilities, these relations serve as one striking example of a positive trend towards overcoming traditional hostilities between two neighboring countries--a trend that becomes all the more significant by taking into account that for a long period of a still not-so-remote history, the once so-called "hereditary enmity" between Austria and Italy represented one of the most acute nationalistic hostilities in Europe. Against this backdrop, the marked decline of the former enemy imagery in recent decades towards friendlier and more mature perceptions of each other amounts to a quite dramatic turnaround. Examining it closer permits us to trace creative approaches to conflict resolution that have much broader applications.

Of course, it would be unrealistic to assume that no residues of the old enemy imagery between Italians and Austrians remain, or that all possible areas of conflict have been resolved conclusively, or that all elements of prejudice have been eliminated. Such ideal conditions unfortunately have never been reached, and today's global context of economic and social tension is an additional impediment. Moreover, hostilities linked to national or cultural diversity are fundamentally among the most obstinate to overcome; they are also among those most at risk of escalating (as recent years have alarmingly brought home). In other words, leanings toward collective demonizations show a preferential inclination to attach themselves to national, ethnic or cultural differences (without of course being limited to these)--and there are in fact a number of obvious and pertinent psychological reasons to account for this.⁽⁵⁾

On the other hand, any tendencies towards overcoming the readiness to demonize others (and especially various "out-groups") are on principle very arduous psychological achievements. They gain momentum only tentatively, ambivalently, and slowly; and they risk suffering backlashes. The emotional capacity of consistently empathizing with others--the most important basis for overcoming demonizations--is a central characteristic of psychological maturity. As developmental psychology has shown, every individual's development towards maturity is long and precarious, and even under the theoretical assumption of optimal psychological conditions it cannot be completely successful.

Considering these caveats and obstacles, the decline in recent decades of traditional ostracizing and hostile perceptions between Italians and Austrians becomes all the more significant. It clearly points to a sustained tendency in the "mentality" of both societies that can be described in terms of gradually increasing *capacities of psychological integration*; that is, of recognizing as one's own some of the feelings, attitudes, leanings and so on that have traditionally been projected onto the other side, and consequently of a decreasing tendency to demonize "out-groups" (e.g., other national collectives). This change is not least highlighted by the fact that the traditional disdain for each other's lifestyle has to a remarkable extent turned into appreciation and affinity.

To investigate this more profound change in mentalities, I have conducted extensive interviews with an array of Austrians and Italians (of different walks of life and different cultural or political persuasions). In interpreting these interviews, I aim to trace both the tendencies towards collective maturation and the remaining residues of traditional demonizations (as well as the paradoxical relations between them). And, looking also beyond Italian-Austrian relations, my overriding concern is to draw conclusions regarding: How to encourage the overcoming of collective demonizations in general, and how to contribute from a psychological perspective to the building of a culture of dialogue and social cohesion on a global level--since for human civilization to survive, I consider it necessary to become aware of--and to put seriously into practice--the principle that "we're all in the same boat" *as the entire human species* (and not just as various single, competing social groups, nations, economic alliances, or cultural spheres).⁽⁶⁾

Historical Background

Let me start with a preliminary observation: it is very important *not* to underestimate the influence of historic heritage on the grounds that most people's conscious memory and factual knowledge of past events or circumstances is quite limited. Many essential historical experiences and developments are reflected indirectly through formal historical knowledge, while many others are transmitted over many generations through informal and non-verbal communication. What is most important is that major components of historical experience are often being *denied* conscious attention because of their frequently traumatic qualities--which unfortunately gives them not less, but more influence over the course of later events (in the sense of George Santayana's dictum that "[those] who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it"⁽⁷⁾). Thus, a lack of historical consciousness does not decrease the impact of a historical heritage, but increases it, and negatively.

I would like to illustrate the strong influence that past collective experiences--especially if they are not clearly known and discussed--continue to have, with some of the evidence that I have been able to draw from my interviews. One interviewee, an Italian University history professor--after deploring most of his students' lack of knowledge--reports how after the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989, the only clear-cut reaction they had, was a general fear of the Germans, and in a mitigated manner, Austria is included in this perception of a frightening Germanic world. To a large extent, this appears to be the result of traumatic collective experiences of the past that these students have little factual knowledge of, but which has been communicated to them by the older generations through scattered elements of information and informal emotional language--in the first place experiences linked to the German occupation of Italy in World War II. These have all the more influence as they are not clearly known and consciously worked through, in terms of concrete facts, circumstances, responsibilities, and backgrounds.

As an impressive counter-example--to further illustrate this point--I also want to refer to another interviewee who on the face of it, or superficially speaking, would have had much stronger reasons for such undifferentiated fearful perceptions, since he had

personally lived through one of the most violent incidents under the German occupation of Italy. In 1944, as a nine-year-old boy, living in a small village in the area of Marzabotto (in the province of Bologna), he and his family were able to flee only minutes before they would have been massacred by SS troops. It is quite obviously related to the fact that this interviewee has since then reflected on these events and on the political background that had made them possible, that he adamantly opposes sweeping or paranoid accusations against the entire German (or also Austrian) world. Rather, he differentiates very carefully the various concrete motivations and responsibilities that had come into play; and above all, he is convinced of the paramount importance of promoting dialogue and understanding between peoples, especially among the young generations.

Taking a closer look at the historical contrast between Italy and Austria, it becomes apparent that at times it corresponded to a quite common type of conflict between two countries that had formed some kind of "pair relationship" --if even a (negative) *folie à deux*--of mutual "preferential hostility"; or that it was one example of what the psychohistorian Mary Coleman termed "sets of countries 'twinned' by mutual hostility."⁽⁸⁾ Familiar examples of such "pairs" would be: Germany and France, Greece and Turkey, Serbia and Croatia, United States and Soviet Union, Israel and the "Arab nation," Armenia and Azerbaijan, Vietnam and Cambodia, Honduras and El Salvador--to name just a few. However, what goes beyond most of these past or present examples of "enemy pairs" is that in the case of Austria and Italy it also overlapped with a series of larger cultural and political conflicts that coincided and sometimes even concentrated in it.

The bitterness of this historical enmity could for instance be expressed in a declaration by the turn-of-the-century Italian nationalist Scipio Slataper: "Since the days of Giuseppe Mazzini, Austria is the antithesis of our soul, the devil of our divinity"⁽⁹⁾; or also in similar ways, when Karl Kraus in his "Last Days of Mankind" has an Austrian World War I supporter exclaim: "May God punish England and destroy Italy"⁽¹⁰⁾--or when the first thing that Kraus has the Emperor Francis Joseph utter angrily, while still asleep, is "Not with them--I won't make any peace with these darn Italians."⁽¹¹⁾ And if, on the Austrian side, it had been observed during World War I that for many the war front against Italy was "the one really popular war," this could also be mirrored by declarations like the one by the Italian minister Leonida Bissolati, who spoke of Austria as "this monster with many heads that must be killed."⁽¹²⁾

What follows is a broad outline of the most important cultural and political contrasts that have marked the historical background of Austrian-Italian relations. I hope that by breaking it down into *eight* different (if in part overlapping) components, the wide range of these contrasts becomes more comprehensible.

Germanic vs. Latin Mentalities

The contrast in mentalities between the Germanic world and the Latin world is quite traditional and familiar. In this case, it also coincides with a geographic-psychological contrast between Northern and Southern neighbors. While it would be an arduous task to

exactly define such a contrast, I think it is a fair-enough approximation to say that it is a contrast between lifestyles and forms of communication that (among other things) is manifested in certain attributions of typical character traits, both realistic and fantastic. Thus the Germanic side is described as more disciplined, reliable, and efficient, though also stubborn, cold, or excessively law-abiding, while the Latin side is labeled spontaneous, warm, and artistic, but also unreliable, irresponsible, or corrupt.⁽¹³⁾

An anecdotal story might describe the deeper significance of this traditional contrast in more vivid and plausible terms. Here is what the sociologist Robert Michels reported in the Italian journal *Nuova Antologia*, concerning a quite memorable event in 1912 near the Italian-Austrian border at Pontafel.⁽¹⁴⁾ Possibly, this represents the most curious assault on a train that ever took place in the history of railroads. Michels, who was traveling on an international train from Italy to Austria, writes:

Having passed the border, the train was at one point suddenly halted and "stormed by a whole army of women in uniform, seemingly railroad employees, dragging along behind them a load of rags and buckets." The travelers were asked to get off the train, "and these good women devoted themselves for an entire quarter of an hour to pouring torrential floods of drinking water all over the train-cars and into all the compartments, almost as if they wanted to protest in the name of a superior civilization against the quite unsatisfactory state in which the Italian government--and we may add, the Italian travelers--often have the habit of leaving their trains. We--a Venetian gentleman [...], myself, and an Austrian--were stunned as we watched this scene." Finally the Venetian, with a mixture of admiration, irony, but also abhorrence, uttered: "Oh, how one can clearly see that we have now entered the *tedescheria!* Just look at this admirable cleanliness."⁽¹⁵⁾

Surely the contrast between characteristic cultural attitudes or habits highlighted by this strange event is in some ways still familiar today. Anyone who travels between Italy and Austria will have a conspicuous sensation of crossing something like a "watershed of lifestyles" (modern mass tourism, European integration, or "global village" notwithstanding)--a watershed that in this case is certainly more palpable than between most other European countries.

Moreover, the incident points to a conflict that obviously goes beyond clean or dirty trains--it's really about two opposing answers to the fundamental cultural "challenge of discipline," or to the psychological challenge to adapt to the uncomfortable necessities of the 'reality principle.' To the extent that in early personal development such claims of discipline have been *experienced as a forced submission to arbitrary rules* set by parental persons, the reactions to them tend to go in the direction of excessive compliance and identification (exaggerated discipline), as well as in the direction of defiant, excessive opposition (exaggerated lack of discipline). Given the vital importance and closeness of its relationship to parental caregivers, a child will in fact react in *both* ways; but given also the mutual incompatibility of both reactions, one of the reactions will typically be overemphasized and the other repressed. This, in turn, also implies a need for the existence of "outside objects" (other persons or collectives) onto whom one's own

repressed reaction can be projected--and through the outward conflict with whom the (more painful) inner conflict can be kept at bay. In this logic, the contrast of lifestyles between two collectives (groups, nations, cultures etc.) may have the function of mutually projecting what is disowned within oneself and one's own collective--thereby avoiding emotional pain, but also creative potentials that would come with taking a closer look inside, into one's own deeper conflicts, feelings, and motivations.

Already viewed from this one angle, it appears consistent if at times the historical conflict between Italy and Austria has symbolically or intuitively been associated with a generational conflict--Italy taking a role of defiant child, as it were, and Austria the role of a strict or authoritarian parent. Thus, for instance, the historian Eugen Lemberg once described the hostile Austrian-Italian relations as a "father-son complex."⁽¹⁶⁾ And an Italian interviewee, an elderly priest, makes the curious intuitive comment that "after all, in a certain period, at the beginning of the century, we are all children of Austria." While--in real-life terms--different countries cannot of course be parents or children, the relations between them may often lend themselves as projective screens on which personal real-life backgrounds of generational conflict can be symbolically re-enacted.⁽¹⁷⁾

Age-old Memories of Barbaric Invasions

Overlapping somewhat the first contrast between traditional mentalities are the repeated collective experiences of many centuries--if not millennia--of barbaric (mostly Germanic) invasions of Italy from the North--and with the Austrian area (with differing nuances) perceived as part of this barbaric Germanic world. Major events highlighting the often certainly nightmarish experience of being overwhelmed by merciless invaders are in particular the pillage of Rome in 1527 or that of Mantova in 1630. Even Metternich, one of Austria's most important Italophobes, conceded that the old history of invasions gave Italians a valid motive to resent Austrian rule (even though on the whole he of course declared this opposition to be pathetically unwarranted).⁽¹⁸⁾

The German Occupation of Italy in World War II

The Nazi occupation of Italy between 1943 and 1945 still plays an important role (especially in the Italian perception) in keeping alive this Germanic-Latin contrast, surely influenced also by the aforementioned age-old "memory imprint" of barbaric invasions.⁽¹⁹⁾ In the conscious mind of most Italians, Austria appears *not* to be directly implicated, in spite of the foremost importance of several Austrians--most notably perhaps the SS officers Walter Reder and Otto Skorzeny, in major acts of violence committed by the occupying forces. However, this historical background seems to be a major reason why Austria--in a characteristic "blurriness of geographic perception"--is considered by many Italians to be a part of Germany.

One Italian interviewee, for instance--a woman who was born during the occupation and, referring to it as a main reason, speaks of strong tendencies to refuse and fear the German

world--at one point in the interview makes a highly significant erroneous statement about "those big bilingual border regions that we still have with Germany." Since she is an educated person, she certainly knows--as far as formal geography is concerned--that Italy has no common borders with Germany (but of course does border Austria) and that the only time since the creation of the Italian state that it actually did border Germany was from 1938 to 1945, when Austria was incorporated into Nazi Germany. Thus, this past is clearly still present in her mind, and to the extent that this is the case, she appears not to perceive Austria as separate from Germany. Significantly, when she speaks about a need to make a difference between the two countries, she expresses this concern in such ambivalent terms that her words sound more as if they were motivated by the underlying feeling: "it would be good if Austria could be seen as separate from the German world"--perhaps because that would reduce the size and influence of the latter--"but unfortunately they really still belong pretty much to the same frightening reality."

Surely most Austrians who have ever stayed in Italy or visited it for any extended time are familiar with the following experience: if one introduces oneself as an Austrian, often one will afterwards be addressed as a German --and occasionally even insisting that one is Austrian, not German, may be to no avail. This current peculiarity of automatically equating Austrian with German (often with some kind of "unfailing distractedness") appears not to be the same as that older tradition of a common Italian perception, in which Austria was also viewed as part of the German orbit, but nevertheless as a separate entity not to be confounded with Germany proper.

Except for a cursory passage in a recent Austrian book,⁽²⁰⁾ I have not yet found any publication that seriously discusses this characteristic Italian equation of Austrian as German. However, from the elucidations by several Italian interviewees--and especially of two who have a quite profound sense and knowledge of history--it seems highly plausible that this perception dates specifically from the time of Austria's incorporation into Nazi Germany and, closely interrelated to this, of the German invasion of Italy.

Urban vs. Rural Cultural Roots

Another contrast with deep historic roots (and somewhat correlated with the aforementioned ones) results from the circumstance that Italy is by far the oldest continuously urban culture of Europe, whereas Austria has a predominantly agrarian cultural background. Thus the multi-layered (cultural and economic) historical conflicts between urban and rural interests also project themselves into this contrast. To a major extent, the urban weight of Italy's history accounts for the fact that the Italian nationalism of the *Risorgimento* was mainly a city-based movement--as opposed to the much stronger rural base of the Germanic or Slavic nationalisms; and this in turn also helps explain why it was very much influenced by the ideas of the Enlightenment, and essentially *secularist* (anti-clerical) in outlook--as distinguished from the strong clerical element in many other nationalisms, and particularly from the *Catholic traditionalism* of the Habsburgs, which constituted an indispensable basis of multi-ethnic legitimacy in the Austrian empire.

Significantly, the Austrian emperors also bore the title of an "Apostolic" majesty--thereby claiming a special religiously-founded authority for themselves, because they lacked a nationally-based claim of sovereignty to keep their state together. The "religious cement" had to somehow make up for the lack of a "national (or ethnic) cement."

Enlightenment vs. the Old Order

A fierce historical contrast between Italy and Austria also results from the circumstance that the ideas of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution fell on very fertile grounds in Italy's political culture--whereas Austria, on the other hand, constituted one of the most powerful bulwarks against this innovative current that, from Metternich's point of view, had annihilated "the foundation of the life of states, the quietness of its domestic and foreign relations."⁽²¹⁾ As a particularly symptomatic example, Metternich's special envoy to Northern Italy under Austrian rule (Lombardo-Venetia), Karl Ludwig von Ficquelmont, reported just before 1848 that--in contrast to England, France, or even Germany--not one single voice could be found in Italy's entire public spectrum that would oppose the ever-broadening forming of opinion in a liberal, radical (and accordingly also anti-Austrian) direction. Ficquelmont's confidential report to Metternich clearly illustrates this--saying that it was simply impossible for him to find even one person adept at journalistic writing who would have been willing to draft an article in favor of the Austrian regime⁽²²⁾--at a time, that is, when Italian journalism just experienced a burst of activity.

This fact reflects the truly extraordinary cohesion of the Italian (*Risorgimento*) opposition against Austrian domination on the part of the urban and educated classes. When else in history has there been a situation in which an existing power would not have been in a position at least of *buying* some people who would write articles in its favor?

On the other hand, however, the overall popular basis of the *Risorgimento*, specifically among the peasantry, was much weaker (and not only in the South of Italy). This can be substantiated with the observation that in 1848--when virtually nobody able to write articles would favor Austria--the Italian soldiers in Radetzky's Austrian army (predominantly of peasant origin) deserted in relatively small numbers, given Austria's deep crisis of legitimacy in Northern Italy, and very few of those deserting ultimately fought against the Habsburg troops. The American military historian Lawrence Sondhaus has shown in very convincing detail that the traditional historical contention of much more massive, patriotically-motivated defections by Italian soldiers--if it suited the myths of both Italian and Austrian propaganda and partisan historiography--could not be backed up.⁽²³⁾

This highly contradictory situation regarding its social support reflects both the historical strengths and weaknesses of the *Risorgimento* and of the creation of the Italian nation-state. Being based mainly in cities, drawing upon an old urban culture and corresponding civic traditions, strongly informed by the ideas of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, it was a movement that was in part inspired by very advanced and humanistic

political ideas--represented and expressed not least by such outstanding personalities as Carlo Cattaneo, Giuseppe Ferrari, Carlo Pisacane, the brothers Attilio and Emilio Bandiera (not to mention Giuseppe Mazzini), among many others.

On the other hand, its very limited appeal among the peasantry (still then of course the large majority of the overall population) defined a fundamental weakness of the *Risorgimento* movement--which is perhaps most strikingly illustrated by the tragic fate of one of its most devoted protagonists, Carlo Pisacane, who in 1857 was massacred by a crowd of peasants in the kingdom of Naples he had hoped he could help liberate from feudal dependency.

As a logical consequence of this weakness, the realization of the Italian Unity in the wake of 1859 fell decisively short of the ideals of the popular movement that had fought for it. Thus, for instance, the new state adopted the particularly restrictive Piedmont electoral law, which at first gave the right to vote to only about 2% of the population; similarly, the very centralized administrative structure of the new Italy was in blatant contradiction to the enlightened federalist concepts worked out by such leading protagonists as Cattaneo or Ferrari. Mazzini, who was certainly the most important spiritual and political leader of the *Risorgimento*, became an outlaw in the new unified Italy (even though he got elected into its first parliament), because he was unwilling to renounce to his republican convictions⁽²⁴⁾--whereas Giuseppe Garibaldi, who was ready to put up with the Savoy monarchy--if even against his personal preferences--became the foremost official hero of the new fatherland.

The conspicuous limit of popular support for the *Risorgimento* also reflects the generally agreed-upon fact that the political and military unification of Italy largely failed its aim of creating a unified nation, in the sense of a social cohesion within a national framework, with a minimum degree of common civic responsibility: "the masses, most of them illiterate peasants, were passive bystanders. They justified the later quip: 'We have made Italy; all that remains to do is to make Italians.'"⁽²⁵⁾

Up to today, it has been a commonplace observation that the social fabric of Italian society is quite loose--to be gauged not least by traditional aversions between the North and the South of Italy, and more recently manifested through the unprecedented, if episodic, electoral successes of the (then still secessionist) Northern League between 1991 and 1993, which at one point even seemed to put the possible breakup of the Italian state within close reach.

Nation-state vs. Supra-national Empire

Largely in keeping with the above two contrasts, Italy and Austria represented probably the most strikingly antagonistic powers in the era of European nation-state movements: Italy being (at least superficially) one of the most successful examples of the new nation-state; Austria being the most central supranational-imperial state in Europe (and indeed also the most "quintessential" one⁽²⁶⁾). Within this contrast, then, Italy represented the

historically new principle of sovereignty of the people (borne out by the French Revolution), whereas the Austrian state was the epitome of the older legitimacy based on dynastic claims.

As the historian Gaetano Salvemini has convincingly argued, it was precisely this contrast, which both sides by existential necessity had to insist upon, that eventually forced them into a life-and-death struggle, in spite of various diplomatic attempts to normalize.⁽²⁷⁾ All the more so, one might add, since both sides were internally weak and needed a strong outside contrast to maintain at least some measure of inner cohesion: Italy--especially because it failed to translate its political unification into a sufficient degree of inner social cohesion; Austria--because its legitimacy was increasingly vulnerable to the steadily rising pressure of national self-determination claims (the Italian national claim, along with the Hungarian, was the most forceful and threatening to the Habsburg state--setting also a dangerous precedent for the so-called "non-historic"--mostly Slavic--nationalities who were just about to wake up to self-awareness, and thereby break up the Empire).

The combination of the various historical and cultural issues culminating in this contrast may also be illustrated through a literary persona masterfully developed by Thomas Mann in his epic novel "The Magic Mountain." In the figure of one of its protagonists, Lodovico Settembrini, Mann portrayed the personality and political outlooks of the typically cultivated, somewhat enlightened Italian of the turn of the century. In numerous passages, Settembrini comes across as a man inspired by the ideals of progress, rationality and democracy, of self-determination for all peoples, and ultimately of world peace and human brotherhood: The principal enemy of these aspirations was "Vienna, this world obstacle," the capital of a decaying Austria--Vienna which must by all means be "hit on its head" to make way for world progress.⁽²⁸⁾

I interviewed one Italian who seems to be a spiritual descendant of Settembrini--he even declared that he would have preferred to live in the era around World War I: since fighting against Austria in his opinion represented the singular occasion in which Italy developed enough inner cohesion to become a "real nation," committed to at least some kind of common ideal (something, he contended, that had never been realized before, nor since).

I consider it particularly significant for the more recent advancement of reciprocal perceptions between Italy and Austria that this interviewee reports how--in the course of little more than the last decade--his profoundly hostile attitudes towards Austria have gradually diminished, reaching a point where today he even specifically appreciates (perhaps even idealizes) a certain sense of civic virtues and social responsibilities rooted in Austrian society; dispositions that he would like to see applied (and painfully misses) in Italian society.

The Background of Ethnic Conflict in Tyrol and Trentino

The intensity of the traditional ethnic, territorial and autonomy conflicts in the Tyrolean and Trentino border region clearly needs to be seen against the backdrop of the historical and cultural differences enumerated so far; because as such, this border region paradoxically used to belong to the few bi- or multilingual areas in Europe where ethnic conflict, from many points of view, should have been the most manageable: the geographical language borders were quite clear-cut; the overlapping of ethnic conflict with social-class conflict was relatively marginal; the region's economic importance was not vital; and, likewise, the military or power interests were hardly important (the old Austria before 1914 really would have had nothing to fear had it granted autonomy to the Italian-speaking Trentino region⁽²⁹⁾; nor did Italy after 1918 have any real strategic interest in acquiring the German-speaking South Tyrol up to the Brenner Pass⁽³⁰⁾).

Seen in this light, then, the ethnic conflicts around the region of South Tyrol/Alto Adige appear to be a theater of *displaced extension* of the more far-reaching traditional conflicts that had led Italy and Austria to World War I. The sociologist Rainer Münz therefore rightly commented in 1992 on the official declaration of resolution of conflict by the Austrian parliament and by the political representatives of the German-speaking South Tyroleans: It was really only then that World War I in the Alps was definitely concluded (since all the stipulations of the 1969 autonomy agreement for South Tyrol had finally been fulfilled).⁽³¹⁾

The Ethnic Conflict in South Tyrol/Alto Adige since 1918

The ethnic and political conflict, as it then actually developed in South Tyrol following its annexation by Italy after World War I, certainly also created its own new dynamics, thereby further aggravating the situation. The heavy-handed policy of the fascist regime, with its ambition of forcing all South Tyroleans to convert to ethnic Italians, pushed the South Tyroleans into extreme exasperation and decisively deepened the nationalistic contrast; and, in this context, the politically-motivated massive immigration of Italians from all (but mainly Southern) parts of the country created two hostilely coexisting ethnic cultures with very low reciprocal compatibility (given also the markedly traditionalist and geographically-isolated Tyrolean peasant communities: the forced confrontation with the radically different lifestyles of the Italian South must have involved a particularly severe culture shock).

The largely unabated continuation of this conflict after World War II escalated--especially in the late 1950s and early 1960s--to a point that came very close to an outright social explosion. In particular, the massive demonstration on November 17, 1957 (at the castle of Sigmundskron, near Bolzano), which urged autonomy for South Tyrol, may easily have degenerated into a violent clash of the kind of Northern Ireland's "Bloody Sunday" (1969); and the series of terrorist bombings in the so-called "Feuernacht" ("Night of Fires") on June 11, 1961--along with the heavily repressive response by the Italian state--resulted in a situation decidedly drifting towards an explosive confrontation.

The fact, however, that it eventually stopped short of going "over the edge" initiating a maelstrom of violence and counter-violence is, in my view, one of the most forceful indications of the long-term positive trend in overcoming historical Italian-Austrian hostilities. Given their heavy historical vulnerabilities--and given also the fact that such ethnic conflicts have virtually never been resolved anywhere in the world--the *relative degree* of conflict resolution that has been reached is, by any comparative standards, exemplary (all remaining complications notwithstanding⁽³²⁾).

One quite symptomatic observation appears to support the hypothesis that the improvement in Italian-Austrian relations is in part based on longer-term psychological tendencies of maturation: the observation that over time numerous individuals of very different backgrounds and persuasions have introduced various modest initiatives--or elements to prevent an escalation towards a "point of no return" in South Tyrol. Independently from what the overall judgment of any of these individuals (or of their political outlooks) may be, I believe they can be credited--in their different ways--with some measure of pragmatic wisdom, in combination with at least some element of humane concern. In addition, the fact that their individual contributions have had some effect (even though many were also received as highly controversial) implies that there was a certain measure of readiness in society-at-large. This is consistent with one of the basic assumptions about psychological maturation stated in the introductory remarks: namely, that by its nature it is (unfortunately) a rather slow, non-linear, precarious development that frequently meanders through disparate intentions or contradictory effects. What follows is a brief description of individuals who have made such contributions:

Renato Mazzoni, quester of the province of Bolzano from 1947 to 1957, was certainly one of the most enlightened representatives of the Italian state in South Tyrol; he foresaw the dangerous consequences that the intransigent policy adopted by his government towards the South Tyrolean minority eventually would have, and thus he urged favoring dialogue and viable coexistence in the framework of autonomy for South Tyrol.⁽³³⁾ He was instrumental in allowing ways for South Tyroleans to express their grievances, while at the same time he tried to prevent violent confrontations. A particularly important example is his authorizing the November 1957 demonstration only on condition--promised by its leader Silvius Magnago--that no subsequent march into the city of Bolzano would take place.⁽³⁴⁾

On the other side of the ethnic divide, Silvius Magnago (the charismatic leader of the *Südtiroler Volkspartei/ SVP* from 1957 to 1991) is to be credited with having pursued a parallel approach. He was one of the most resolute and astute politicians who urged that South Tyrolean claims for autonomy be taken seriously by the Italian state⁽³⁵⁾ (though at the same time he has impeded--by promoting a mainly ethnically-focussed agenda--the expression of other social concerns). He was also ready to settle for viable compromise, thus contributing to avert a head-on collision.⁽³⁶⁾

Josef Kerschbaumer, the leader responsible for the South Tyrolean bombing campaign of 1961 (the only one that could count on relatively broad popular support), was convinced

of the moral necessity to spare human lives. It was to a large extent due to his authority among the group that carried out the vast bombings of electricity transmission towers on June 11 that it was planned in a way that "only" such objects were hit where no persons would be endangered.⁽³⁷⁾ While this bombing campaign dramatically increased the general level of fear and tension, the fact that "at least" it aimed at avoiding danger to human lives was probably one of the decisive factors that prevented the political situation from drifting to a social explosion.

Sandro Canestrini was the son of a leading Trentino Irredentist, a prominent defense attorney and also a member of the regional parliament for the Communist Party--until he decided to represent the South Tyroleans arrested after the bomb attacks (in particular, in the trial in 1963 in Trento against ten carabinieri who were accused of torturing the arrested men).⁽³⁸⁾ By standing up against a rampant climate of rejection by Italy's public towards the South Tyrolean minority, he made a courageous and valuable contribution--in one of its most adverse moments--to the building of a bridge over the divide of nationalistic demonization.

On the level of diplomatic relations between Italy and Austria, the energetic initiatives taken by Bruno Kreisky, Austrian foreign minister from 1959 to 1966 (and later prime minister 1970-83), to bring the conflict on the agenda of the UN General Assembly (October 18-31, 1960) have been among the most instrumental in opening up ways of constructive negotiation. Over time, the international attention resulting from these UN debates helped increase the political leeway of those in Italian politics who were inclined to serious dialogue--represented in particular by Giuseppe Saragat (Italian foreign minister 1963-64, and president 1964-71) and Aldo Moro, who became prime minister for the first time in 1963. Without Moro, Hansjörg Kucera (the first German-speaking director of the Italian public broadcasting system in Bolzano) once said, "it would hardly have been possible to reach a new, satisfactory autonomy status for South Tyrol."⁽³⁹⁾ Magnago once stated that he had known no other Italian politician "who listened to the South Tyrolean concerns with so much patience, attention, and with such an open mind."⁽⁴⁰⁾

On the level of the province of Bolzano, among others, the highest representatives of the Catholic church--bishop Joseph Gargitter (1952-86) and his successor, the present bishop Wilhelm Egger--have acted as mediators between the ethnic groups (which becomes all the more important considering the strong influence of Catholicism in the region); this was a highly arduous job, especially in the early 1960s--as illustrated by the fact that Gargitter was then seen as a traitor by many South Tyroleans (some pejoratively nicknamed him "walscher Sepp"⁽⁴¹⁾).

On the left wing of the political spectrum, one of the most committed and judicious protagonists has been Lidia Menapace; at various occasions, her original approach to public debate--highlighted by her ironic, but psychologically sound motto, "Everybody should speak badly about one's own side"--has been instrumental in overcoming political stalemates of reciprocal blaming. Last but not least, Alexander Langer, leader of the South Tyrolean Greens, is to be credited, among other things, with his major role creating

the first political force that can count on sizable support from both sides of the ethnic divide.

Contemporary Developments

The overall relaxation and improvement of relations in recent decades become of course immediately palpable already when cursorily compared to the traditional constellations. First, then, there are a number of rather obvious external factors (or circumstances) to be taken into account for this reduction (and in part also inversion) of the old hostility--reasons that as such do not, or at least need not necessarily, imply any fundamental changes in attitudes towards each other:

- Austria, after the loss of its former status as a regional super power, would of course hardly be credible any more in the role of a threatening arch-enemy of Italy;
- the international diplomatic pressure that (among other factors) played an important role in causing the centralist Italian state to make considerable concessions of autonomy for South Tyrol/Alto Adige--which in turn allowed for a relative relaxation of ethnic relations (and consequently also of bilateral relations);
- the big streams of tourists between both countries that might (but need not necessarily) have facilitated better reciprocal understanding;
- the absence of a considerable labor immigration in either direction that would have provided potential conflict;
- the economic integration of Central and Western Europe, as well as displacements of political priorities, alliances or conflicts into more large-scale international contexts--especially in the decades of the Cold War--may have diminished the importance of a smaller-scale conflict like the one between Italy and Austria; from such a perspective, older enemy images might to some extent only have been replaced by others--which would indicate that they hadn't really been overcome, but rather marginalized (with the possibility of coming to the fore again at some later point).

Doubtlessly, such more or less external factors have had a favorable influence on the decline of the traditional enemy imagery; but it is equally obvious that alone they would by no means sufficiently explain the development in question, and that a central momentum for it has resulted from genuine tendencies of increasing openness and intercultural understanding.

As one illustrative symptom of such tendencies, it is worth citing the pioneering work of two bilateral history conventions (under the auspices of UNESCO) in Innsbruck (1971) and in Venice (1972)--themselves already in part a consequence of a relative relaxation of relations in the South Tyrolean question. Substantial corrections of up-to-then

prevailing, often heavily prejudicial accounts in history school books regarding Italian-Austrian relations were worked out on this occasion--a rather unique achievement, which also led to the publication of a bilateral history textbook in both countries (written by the prominent historians Furlani and Wandruszka).⁽⁴²⁾

Of more symptomatic importance is a marked widening in scope and popularization, in both countries, of the interest in the culture of the other country--as manifested, for instance, by the strong public appeal of authors like Ingeborg Bachmann (who in her words had found a new "home of affinity" in Italy) and in particular of Claudio Magris, one of the foremost Italian scholars of German and Austrian literature, whose books have played a pivotal role in the strongly growing interest in Italy for the cultural traditions of Austria. Significantly, this interest has also focused to a major extent on works aiming at attentive and differentiated psychological observation--be it in the literary field (especially authors like Joseph Roth, Arthur Schnitzler, or Robert Musil), or in the field of psychoanalysis. This surely also highlights the tendencies towards enhanced capacities of psychological insight and integration that underlie the decreasing propensities for paranoid enemy imagery.⁽⁴³⁾

Besides these increasing cultural interests that concern relative minorities (if certainly important minorities) in both countries, my interviews have revealed numerous other instances of positive discoveries regarding the lifestyles of the other country, or of personal encounters--made possible in particular through tourism--that even across the language barrier have often permitted a growing reciprocal familiarity and appreciation.⁽⁴⁴⁾

One of the most telling instances of this cultural appreciation is a conspicuous generational change in attitude towards the Italian lifestyle on the part of the German-speaking Tyroleans (north as well as south of the Austrian-Italian border). Whereas a very compact majority of the older generation used to reject almost unconditionally everything that represented Italian ways in one way or another,⁽⁴⁵⁾ today's younger generation--or at least a vast majority--clearly perceives the geographical influx of Italian culture as a welcome enrichment; and the question of the national borders between North and South Tyrol for most of them is no longer a matter of concern.

One younger North Tyrolean interviewee, for example, even expressed her special appreciation for the border being where it is today--that is, at the Brenner Pass, further north and closer to home than it might be otherwise--calling it a "magical border," beyond which the fascinating realm of the South, of the wide and colorful Latin world already begins.

I am even tempted to interpret a common phenomenon in the Alpine border regions as a subliminal (if perhaps half-denied) attraction that the two cultures exert upon each other: the one, namely, that many people--especially in the more remote rural areas--refuse to speak (or refuse to learn) the language of the other--except for swearwords. If, on the face of it, this comes across as a rejection of the other ethnic group or culture,⁽⁴⁶⁾ it may nonetheless also be the expression of a secret fascination: after all, swearwords often

enough are the most direct and adequate expression of our deeper and more authentic feelings.

One interviewee, an elderly farmer in a remote South Tyrolean valley, specified that he and his family never speak Italian, swearwords aside, and deplored that in recent times so many people in South Tyrol were becoming less and less opposed to Italy; in particular, he added: "Nowadays, some people are even proud of having assimilated this smart Italian flair... Oh well, but we, here, don't have any Italian flair." In the emotional tone in which this was expressed, I intuited not only rejection but also some sad feeling about not having had much opportunity to assimilate some elements of that other culture that might also have been fascinating or enriching.

On the Italian side, one of the momentous features of recent development has been a popular wave of nostalgia for the old Habsburg empire. This set in roughly fifteen years ago, triggered perhaps in 1980 by the 200th anniversary of the death of the Austrian empress Maria-Theresia; on this occasion, the most important Italian daily newspaper, the *Corriere della Sera*, featured a big headline saying, "She is the one who invented the government in which things work" ("Fu lei a inventare lo stato che funziona").⁽⁴⁷⁾ Also starting around that time, Vienna became one of the most attractive travel destinations for Italians--who at times appear as if on a pilgrimage, searching their own roots in *Mitteleuropa* (as they visit those old palaces that to many of their grandparents--or even parents--once represented the incarnation of evil). This forcefully emerging attraction has also been conditioned by influential currents in Italian historiography and literary criticism--the latter initiated by Claudio Magris, the former stimulated in particular by the Turin school of Franco Venturi, and by the historians Franco Valsecchi, Angelo Filipuzzi (a long-time director of the Italian Cultural Institute in Vienna), among others.

To the extent that this wave of nostalgia also involves a balanced re-evaluation of the old Austria--that is, of its relative achievements *as well as* of its oppressive aspects--it can surely be interpreted in the direction of a genuine overcoming of the old demonizing contrast; to the extent, however, that this nostalgia is based on an idealization or mystification of the Habsburg era and the old Austria, it represents a rather doubtful and ambiguous aspect of the improved perceptions of Austria by Italians.

Since real-life experience teaches us that ideal (perfect) qualities or conditions are not ever to be found in the world, any idealizing imaginations must function to deny and repress negative and fearful perceptions (felt to be too threatening to be openly confronted).

This oppressive aspect beneath some exaggeratedly positive views of Austria is occasionally manifested in some images or feelings expressed by several Italian interviewees. One interviewee, for instance,⁽⁴⁸⁾ looks at the impressive imperial architecture and monuments of Vienna in the light of his admiration for a higher degree of social organization. However, what in the flow of his associations then *also* comes to mind, are images of being very small, fearful and overwhelmed in front of some huge, powerfully commanding entity.

In comparable ways, a number of other interviewees--along with their admiration for a better-functioning order that they see realized in Austria (or Germany)--also associate this admiration with assumptions about its everyday life application that I for one would find at least mildly frightening. Thus, a typically recurrent idea about life in Austria that came up in several interviews is that whenever a person tosses a cigarette butt or a piece of paper onto the street (rather than into a trash can), he or she can be dead sure to get fined immediately by a policeman...

Regarding the perhaps still most significant stage of Italian-Austrian relations, the developments in South Tyrol/Alto Adige since the autonomy agreement of 1969, ethnic relations have in general--in spite of moments of considerable tension--continued to foster viable intercultural cohabitation.

An Italian interviewee from Bolzano illustrated this with her intuitive observation that the long-standing cohabitation of ethnic groups in this region has led to the partial adoption of favorable character traits: the Italians, she said, have developed a little more sense of responsibility and discipline; the German-speaking South Tyroleans a little more sense for spontaneity and sociability.⁽⁴⁹⁾

A South Tyrolean interviewee from Brunico/Bruneck--after reporting numerous bitter personal experiences of forced Italianization under the fascist regime--still emphatically recognizes the right of the immigrant Italians to live in South Tyrol; by now, he explains, they have no other home, and after all, everybody must have the right to a home of their own.

Such statements are of course not to be misunderstood euphemistically; the potentials of tension should be taken seriously. But compared to their frequently traumatic past, today's situation represents a remarkable atmospheric progress--in spite of both absurd rules of ethnic separation⁽⁵⁰⁾ and the strong influence of political currents (on both sides) that are liable to foster nationalistic confrontations. Significantly, attempts by those political forces in South Tyrol to take advantage of the more acutely nationalistic climate in Europe since 1989 have so far failed.

It should also be mentioned that the number of mixed marriages has been steadily rising in recent decades; it currently accounts for about 8% of the population. This important development points to a forceful tendency towards intercultural understanding (especially considering the administrative, as well as social, obstacles that tend to discourage them).⁽⁵¹⁾

Up to now, little research has been done on this development, not least because it doesn't fit into the institutional framework created by the autonomy agreement (which demands the formal adherence of every person residing in the province to one ethnic group--a rather ludicrous requirement for children of mixed marriages). Since predominant political forces have built much of their influence by setting one ethnic group against the other, this development is likely to diminish their standing; hence, they are reluctant to funding research that would give it more visibility.

Nonetheless, the Swiss socio-linguist Daniela Weber-Egli⁽⁵²⁾ has investigated questions of learning, proficiency, speaking habits, and subjective appreciation of the two languages (and of the regional dialect) in bilingual families. Yet her data also offers an occasion to address the larger issues of ethnic cohabitation and of bilingual families in South Tyrolean society. Whereas these families are in fact exposed to some degree of social and family friction due to their position at the dividing lines between ethnic groups, they indicated that on the whole, the advantages of their specific condition outweigh the disadvantages. In particular, there is a surprising reaction to one of the questions in Weber-Egli's questionnaire: when asked, "Where would you rather live, if you were obliged to leave the province of Bolzano?" many of the respondents were reluctant even hypothetically to consider living anywhere else, and almost 30% refused (or were unable) to indicate an alternative residence.⁽⁵³⁾ One may legitimately infer from this that most bilingual families are integrated fairly well into society--and by implication, that everyday life cohabitation between the ethnic groups is viably supported.

Psychological Afterthoughts

The interpretation of the interviews has permitted me to locate a series of elements that appear important in overcoming susceptibilities to demonize. In particular, what is manifested in various guises are approaches to grasp and discuss--if sometimes only in a rather vague manner--the contents of the traditionally hostile imagination in terms of one's own wishes, fears, or concerns.

Thus, for instance, some Austrian interviewees look at traditional Austrian aversions against the "undisciplined" Italian way of life also from the angle of their own (perhaps partially disowned) wishes (and fears) to indulge in more spontaneous, less duty-bound habits of life. According to one Austrian interviewee, "Certain people, in their remotest thoughts, perhaps feel envious towards these freer attitudes [of the Italians]. These people may say, 'Now, how can they really live like this? -- taking each day as it comes, enjoying life'... sleeping at noon, keeping stores open and staying out late into the evening..." And while--as she formulates such thoughts--she especially has the attitudes of her parents' generation in mind, the wider context of her elucidations also suggests that at least in part she is expressing her own feelings.

In comparable ways, some Italian interviewees perceive traditional Italian aversions to "excessively disciplined" Austrian (and German) habits also in terms of their own wishes for (and fears of) social life conditions based on more reliable organization through more binding common responsibilities.

Such--at least tentative--openness that tolerates and permits self-recognition of conflicting claims, needs or perceptions, rather than rigidly projecting one side of the inner ambivalence onto other persons or groups "out there," is surely a decisive psychological precondition for a culture of dialogue. It diminishes the emotional need for self-righteous or paranoid rejection of out-groups and fosters the capacity to empathize

with the points of view of others and to appreciate constructive elements in different ways of life.

Claudio Magris has a personal approach to public responsibility, which illustrates this inner openness. Giving an interview to the newspaper *la Repubblica* on the occasion of the 1994 Italian parliamentary elections, he addressed quite straightforwardly the conflictual coexistence of two parts of himself: one that is modeled on Joseph Roth's "Holy Drinker" and that represents his deep reluctance towards taking up the duty of public responsibility; and the other that is modeled on authors like Victor Hugo or Émile Zola and that represents his moral urge to contribute his energies and competence to public efforts and confrontations necessary to foster a democratic culture. "The two dimensions within myself are in perpetual conflict with each other.... And every time when I feel that I must give priority to the ethical-political pole--the price I have to pay for this, I feel, is very high..."⁽⁵⁴⁾

It is not least through acknowledging the degree of contrast between different inner claims that both can be given their due attention, and thus greater leeway be gained to handle inner and outer conflicts, to judge them in a balanced way, and to locate even under adverse circumstances, constructive potentials for confrontation.

In the sense of such increasing emotional openness, it is consistent if various interviewees oppose sweeping or undifferentiated accusations of "collective historical guilt" towards entire national communities and if most tend to ascribe decreasing importance to national borders that not so long ago were still hotly contested. Several interviewees, looking beyond the decline of the traditional contrasts between the two countries, have spontaneously addressed the larger issue of the common destiny of all nations, of our entire human civilization.

What, then, can encourage such psychological preconditions for a culture of dialogue? Assuming that the demonization of (national, ethnic, or other) out-groups serves a strong need to keep deep inner fears in check, it is essential to address those fears and their roots in adequate ways. From the rigidity with which prejudiced persons usually stick to their prejudices, one can infer traumatic origins--that is, overwhelmingly threatening situations in early life that have left lasting emotional wounds as well as deeply-rooted feelings of guilt and shame (which have to be denied and projected onto "outside objects" in order to be less distressing). Overcoming, or at least decreasing, such predispositions therefore requires more openness in at least two directions: On the one hand, towards *confronting traumatic conditions of childhood*--be it in a preventive sense, or else of a growing capacity to come to terms with their after-effects; and on the other hand, towards *respecting the deep fears* that underlie needs to demonize out-groups--not aggravating them through mere moralistic condemnation; that is, through a "demonization of the demonizers."

In the light of these closing considerations, it may also be inferred that the decline of the formerly hostile imagination between Italy and Austria is not least also due to partial improvements in both societies of the psychological conditions under which children are

growing up. This assumption implies that *on average* (allowing also for considerable deviations in society-at-large), there has been a longer-term tendency in care-giving towards more empathy with the emotional needs and reactions of children--and thus, towards reducing the impact of conflicts or distress in early development. To the extent that these conflicts are not overwhelming (traumatic), they do not have to be denied ("split off"); they can be integrated--accepted as a part of one's own inner reality. The more such psychological integration succeeds, the less the irrational need of having enemies "out there"--be it in nationalistic or other terms.

Josef Berghold, Ph.D., is a social psychologist; adjunct professor at Universities in Austria and Italy; most recent publication: "Populismus und neuerer Rechtsruck in Österreich im Vergleich mit Italien." (with Klaus Ottomeyer) In: Reinhard Sieder, Heinz Steinert, and Emmerich Tálos (eds.): *Österreich 1945 -- 1995. Gesellschaft -- Politik -- Kultur*. Vienna: Verlag für Gesellschaftskritik, 1995.

Revised and annotated version of a seminar presentation entitled "The Image of Austria in Italy and the Image of Italy in Austria," held on April 13, 1995, at the Center for Austrian Studies (University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, co-sponsored by the Center for European Studies), as part of a lecture tour in the United States. The presentation is based on an ongoing research project (commissioned by the Austrian Ministry for Science and Research).

Endnotes

1. With the noticeable exception of the ethnic conflicts in the border region of South Tyrol/Alto Adige.
2. Silvio Furlani: "L'immagine dell'Austria in Italia dal 1848 alla prima guerra mondiale." *Clio. Rivista trimestrale di studi storici*, Vol. 24/3 (1988), p. 433.
3. In German: "Fehlanzeige."
4. Elisabeth Garms-Cornides: "Das Bild Österreichs in Italien -- von der 'Erbfeindschaft' zur Nostalgiewelle." Presentation at the 41st Annual Historians' Convention of the *Institut für Österreichkunde ("Österreichische Selbstbilder -- Fremdbilder von Österreich: Klischees, Auto- und Heterostereotypen in der Geschichte")*, St. Pölten, March 27, 1994 (see Garms-Cornides also for the above quotations by Fellner and Wandruszka).
5. I believe that above all there are *three specific conditions* of intercultural contact that can explain why it is specifically persons or groups of other ("alien") cultural, national, or ethnic affiliation who are at a particularly aggravated risk of being pushed into a role of scapegoats (i.e., demonized or despised outsiders):

(1) the differing cultural rules of interpersonal contact--especially those that remain implicit or even unconscious--may easily become a source of multiple reciprocal hurt feelings (I am referring here in particular to the "culture shock" concept put forward by the Austrian intercultural researcher Dietmar Larcher; see Dietmar Larcher: *Kulturschock. Fallgeschichten aus dem sozialen Dschungel*. Merano: Alpha & Beta, 1992. *Das Kulturschockkonzept. Ein Rehabilitierungsversuch*. Klagenfurter Beiträge zur Technikdiskussion, Vol. 57/1992);

(2) the typically considerable linguistic barriers that obstruct possibilities of personal dialogue to counter paranoid leanings;

(3) the appeal of the "other's" lifestyle. That is, with their respective cultural otherness, "alien" people always demonstrate the feasibility of different lifestyles; at least in some elements, these "other" lifestyles then also appeal to some of one's own deeper wishes that are defended against, and this in turn, may aggravate inner conflicts--between these wishes and internalized prohibitions that threaten to mobilize guilt feelings.

To be sure, these three conditions do not constitute sufficient motivation to demonize (or be contemptuous of) any given person or group. However, under the assumption of a pre-existing leaning to locate such groups "somewhere out there," they represent particularly suitable triggers (or pretexts) for it.

6. This necessity is, I believe, the essential message of numerous appeals made in our age by people with a deep commitment towards humanity--be it Albert Einstein with his dramatic urging of a "new thinking" in the face of the existence of the nuclear bomb, or peace researcher Robert Holt, with his concept of *systems thinking* (with at its basis the consideration of overriding global interdependencies and of the far-reaching consequences of our social behavior and actions), or psychohistorian Robert Lifton, with his elucidation of a global '*species self*' awareness that transcends our various particularistic identities--to name just a few. See, among others, Robert R. Holt: "Can Psychology Meet Einstein's Challenge?" *Political Psychology*, Vol. 5/2 (1984), 199-225. Robert Jay Lifton and Eric Markusen: *The Genocidal Mentality*. New York: Basic Books, 1988.

7. George Santayana: *The Life of Reason*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1954, p. 82.

8. Mary Coleman: "Nuclear Politics in the 1980s." *The Journal of Psychohistory*, Vol. 12/1 (1984), p. 125.

9. Quoted in Claus Gatterer: *Erbfeindschaft. Italien -- Österreich*. Vienna: Europaverlag, 1972, p. 10 [*Italiani maledetti, maledetti austriaci. L'inimicizia ereditaria*. Bolzano: Edizioni Praxis 3, 1986.]

10. Karl Kraus: *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit*. (1926). Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1986, p. 99 [*The Last Days of Mankind*. Manchester 1984. *Gli ultimi giorni dell' umanità*. Milan 1980.]
11. Kraus, p. 517.
12. During a commemorative speech for the executed irredentist Cesare Battisti, held at Cremona on October 29, 1916; quoted in Angelo Ara: "L'immagine dell' Austria in Italia (1848-1918)." In: Ara, *Fra Austria e Italia. Dalle Cinque Giornate alla questione altoatesina*. Udine: Del Bianco, 1987, p. 213.
13. From a psychoanalytic perspective, such comparisons of traits may, in a rough approximation, be interpreted as projections of inner contrasts between Super-Ego and Id.
14. Today: Pontebba.
15. Quoted in Furlani, p. 415. The Italian term "tedescheria" is too idiosyncratic in its rich and ambiguous associative contents for a precise translation; basically it is a pejorative term and could therefore be translated as "the Kraut's orbit."
16. Quoted in Gatterer, p. 9.
17. And in the case of Austria and Italy, a number of additional elements come into play that can further corroborate this pattern of subjective perception; in particular, as will be discussed later, the stark contrast between the historically older dynastic and the "younger" national claims of sovereignty that opposed the two states.
18. See, e.g., "Fürst Metternich zum Bericht des Grafen Ficquelmont vom 3. December 1847." In: Ara, p. 43.
19. See, among many others, Enzo Biagi: *1943. Un anno terribile che segnò la storia d'Italia*. Milan: Rizzoli, 1994. Silvio Bertoldi: *I tedeschi in Italia. Album di una occupazione 1943-1945*. Milan: Rizzoli, 1994.
20. Michael Morass and Günther Pallaver: "Erbfeindschaft, Entfremdung, Beziehungskonjunktur -- oder schlicht: Gleichgültigkeit? Ein Resümee der italienisch-österreichischen Beziehungen." In: Morass, Pallaver (eds.): *Österreich -- Italien. Was Nachbarn voneinander wissen sollten*. Vienna: Deuticke, 1992, p. 258.
21. Metternich in Ara, p. 42.
22. Rapporto di Ficquelmont a Metternich, N. 141 (Milan, February 27, 1848). In: Ara, p. 49.
23. Lawrence Sondhaus: *In the Service of the Emperor: Italians in the Austrian Armed Forces 1814-1918*. Boulder, Co.: East European Monographs, 1990, pp. 43-44.

24. Which of course meant something different in Italy then from it means in the United States today...

25. René Albrecht-Carrié: "Unification Movements." In: John A. Garraty and Peter Gay (eds.): *The Columbia History of the World*. New York: Harper & Row, 1972, p. 907.

26. In the sense that only Austria of all the supranational empires in Europe hardly had a nationalist point of reference for its dominant national group, the German-speaking Austrians (their major nationalist point of reference being outside their borders, i.e., in the German state)--as opposed to the Tsarist or Ottoman multi-ethnic empires, which after all did also represent "nation-state cores" for their dominant national groups (i.e., for the Russians and the Turks).

27. Gaetano Salvemini: *La politica estera italiana dal 1871 al 1915*. Opere di G. Salvemini, Series III, Vol. 4. Milan: Laterza, 1970, p. 164. The extent to which the territorial and ethnic conflicts between Italy and Austria were overdetermined by this more fundamental issue can also be gauged from the fact that the calls by the Italian Irredentist movement for the liberation of the "unredeemed" ethnically Italian regions under foreign yoke only referred to those under Austrian rule ("Trento e Trieste")--*not* to those under French rule (e.g., Nizza/Nice). After all, France was perceived as the very champion and incarnation of the modern nation-state principle...

28. Thomas Mann: *Der Zauberberg*. Frankfurt: Fischer, 1959, pp. 528 and 530. See also Wendelin Schmidt-Dengler and Luigi Reitani: "Symmetrie der Entfremdung. Italien und Österreich im wechselseitigen Blick ihrer Literaturen." In: Morass, Pallaver, p. 156.

29. The vast majority of the Trentino region, being peasant and Catholic, was strongly opposed to the secular Italian state; the clerical and autonomist--but clearly anti-Irredentist--*Partito Popolare* under the leadership of Alcide De Gasperi (who from 1945 to 1953 served as Italy's prime minister) represented roughly three-quarters of the population. As late as October, 1914, De Gasperi expressed his conviction that a popular referendum would favor Austria by a 90% majority. See, for example, Claus Gatterer: "Alcide De Gasperi." In: Gatterer: *Aufsätze und Reden*. Bolzano: Edition Raetia, 1991, 187-205; Dennison I. Rusinow: *Italy's Austrian Heritage 1919-1946*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969, pp. 32-33.

30. The immediate political cause that appears to have been the most important in inducing the Italian government to claim South Tyrol (along with other ethnically non-Italian areas on the Adriatic coast) had virtually nothing to do with the region of South Tyrol as such. It was openly expressed by the Italian Prime Minister Vittorio Emanuele Orlando during the Paris peace negotiations of 1919: "If he returned home with a new border closely approximating the one the Austrians had been willing to grant in 1915 as the price of Italian neutrality [including almost all ethnically Italian regions still then under Austrian rule, J.B.], how could one thereafter explain to the Italian people why they had given half a million of their sons and billions of lire to this war?" (Rusinow, p. 48) In addition, the violent enforcement of Italian rule in South Tyrol proved a decisive stepping

stone for the fascist seizure of power in 1922--without the surprising success of its March on Bolzano on October 1, the fascist movement might not have had sufficient political momentum for the March on Rome on October 28 (see Rusinow, pp. 76-83); the Italian claim on this region therefore became a matter of prestige and legitimacy for the fascist regime.

If these two motives help explain the claims to South Tyrol during the instability following World War I, they seem nonetheless largely insufficient in accounting for the continuing obstinacy by successive Italian governments to make and keep the region Italian (continuously incurring heavy economic losses).

31. Rainer Münz: "Ende des Ersten Weltkriegs." *Profil*, Vol. 23/24, June 9, 1992; see also Münz: "Österreich -- Italien. Feindbilder von einst, Klischees von heute?" In: Morass, Pallaver, 27-35.

32. For a vivid account of grievances expressed by Italians in South Tyrol/Alto Adige, see Sebastiano Vassalli: *Sangue e suolo. Viaggio fra gli italiani trasparenti*. Turin: Einaudi, 1985.

33. Significantly, he was one of the few Italian officials of his time who learned German. His immediate superior, the minister of the interior Fernando Tambroni (who in 1960 headed a short-lived government coalition between Christian Democrats and Neo-Fascists) unfortunately did not appreciate Mazzoni's recommendations. In a punitive move in 1957, he transferred his quester to the province of Treviso, where the latter--apparently as a consequence of this humiliation--committed suicide in 1959. See Hans Mayr: "... bis zur äußersten Konsequenz." In: Elisabeth Baumgartner, Hans Mayr, and Gerhard Mumelter: *Feuernacht. Südtirols Bombenjahre*. Bolzano: Edition Raetia, 1992, pp. 108-110; Hansjörg Kucera: *Auf und ab um Südtirol*. Innsbruck: Haymon, 1991, pp. 88-92.

34. Such a march would have doubtlessly caused violent street fighting. See Elisabeth Baumgartner: "Bomben für Herrgott und Heimat." In: Baumgartner, Mayr, Mumelter, pp. 17-19.

35. See, e.g., Pinuccia Di Gesaro: Intervista a Silvius Magnago. *Lecture trentine e altoatesine*, Nr. 50/51 (1986), 1986, 28-32.

36. Without the weight of his authority, the autonomy agreement would not have found a majority of consent in the decisive SVP assembly on November 22, 1969.

37. See Baumgartner, p. 7; Mayr, p. 101. Terrorist actions in later years, of varied right-extremist background, were undertaken by people of a very different persuasion, who obviously had no such reservations about endangering lives.

38. See Sandro Canestrini: "Von Cesare Battisti zur Feuernacht." In: Baumgartner, Mayr, Mumelter, 147-151.

39. Kucera, p. 22.

40. Ibid., p. 23.

41. "Wop" ("Italian Joe," as it were, to the extent such name-calling is at all translatable in its stronger associative contents).

42. Silvio Furlani and Adam Wandruszka: *Österreich und Italien. Ein bilaterales Geschichtsbuch*. Vienna: Jugend & Volk, 1973. *Austria e Italia. Storia a due voci*. Bologna: Capelli, 1974. The direct influence of these works may have turned out to be relatively limited; nevertheless, their symbolic importance as a "sign of the times" should still be valued--in particular in the light of the fact that, whether or not directly determined by them, today's history textbooks in both countries clearly compare quite favorably to those in use even only three decades ago.

43. One well-informed Italian interviewee argued that in particular it was also the development of a much broader appreciation of *classical music* (gaining popular ground in Italy since the 1970s) that has contributed to a more positive perception of Austria.

44. This is of course not meant to deny certain alienating effects that tourism may also have and that were occasionally addressed by interviewees (albeit much less frequently than the instances of appreciation). What may also be significant in this context is that some interviewees, addressing alienating potentials in tourist encounters, indicate that in their experience these have been less striking in the case of Italians in Austria or Austrians in Italy than with other nationalities.

45. A South Tyrolean from Bolzano (interviewed on the Austrian radio in 1986) recalled that when he was a boy and he or his friends bought something from a local Italian department store, they would have to hide their shopping bag in order to prevent South Tyroleans in the streets from reacting aggressively against such an act of "ethnic betrayal." ("Bolzano/ Bozen -- Die Zwei-Städte-Stadt." Broadcast by the Austrian radio on December 13, 1986, as part of the program series *Diagonal*.)

46. See, for one example, Michele Sartori: "Ecco i tre 'eroi' di Mühlwald, il paese più tedesco d'Italia." *l'Unità*, February 4, 1994. In this article, the mayor of "the most German village of Italy" (which counts only three ethnically Italian residents out of over 1400) is quoted as saying, "We, here, speak German; we curse, however, only in Italian." An Italian interviewee, commenting on this article, declared that he was "a bit stunned" ("un po' sbalordito") by the mayor's remarks.

47. See Garms-Cornides, pp. 20-24. Earlier instances of such nostalgic reactions, however, can already be traced back to the period between the two World Wars--when disillusionments about the nation-states that had inherited the collapsing Habsburg empire (e.g., about their oppressive policies against their new national minorities) induced numerous people to view a little more favorably the practice of multi-ethnic cohabitation under the old regime. One competent person to bear witness to this change in outlook is

the former Irredentist Giani Stuparich, close friend of Slataper, who had once defined Austria "the antithesis of our soul" (and who was killed in World War I); in retrospect, Stuparich came to a surprisingly different conclusion, regarding some aspects of the old Austria--as he professed in 1948 in his book "Trieste nei miei ricordi": "I think that we have never been as close to a reciprocal understanding between European peoples, to the United States of Europe, than we were in those years preceding World War I." (Quoted in Claus Gatterer: *Über die Schwierigkeit, heute Südtiroler zu sein. Della difficoltà di essere sudtirolese oggi*. Selbstverlag Kontaktkomitee für's andere Tirol, 1981, p. 20 and p. 40.)

48. The one whom I have characterized as a spiritual descendant of Settembrini.

49. From a psychoanalytic understanding, one could interpret this in the direction of a more viable compromise between the inner claims of Super-Ego and Id, that is, of a relative strengthening of the Ego.

50. Which certainly constitute an aggravating aspect of the autonomy status and have also tentatively been described by some--in the vein of a polemic exaggeration--as a regime of "Apartheid in Central Europe." See Peter Bettelheim and Rudi Benedikter (eds.): *Apartheid in Mitteleuropa? Sprache und Sprachenpolitik in Südtirol/La lingua e la politica delle lingue nel Sudtirolo*. Vienna: Jugend & Volk, 1982.

51. In addition, considering that the area of demographically sizable ethnic cohabitation is inhabited by roughly only half of the population of the province of Bolzano, it appears justified, for a more realistic picture, to double this percentage figure; that is, to conclude that in those parts of the province where the realistic option of mixed marriage concerns more than individual exceptions, almost one-sixth of the population are members of ethnically-mixed families.

52. Daniela Weber-Egli: *Gemischtsprachige Familien in Südtirol/ Alto Adige. Zweisprachigkeit und soziale Kontakte*. Merano: Alpha & Beta, 1992. See also Kurt Egger: *Zweisprachige Familien in Südtirol: Sprachgebrauch und Spracherziehung*. Innsbrucker Beiträge zur Kulturwissenschaft, German. Reihe, Vol. 27, 1985. [*Famiglie bilingui in Alto Adige. Educazione linguistica ed uso delle due lingue*. Bolzano: Assessorato all'Istruzione e Cultura in Lingua Italiana, 1986.]

53. Weber-Egli, pp. 86-88.

54. See Anna Maria Mori: "Magris: 'Io, politico soltanto per dovere...". *la Repubblica*, March 8, 1994.