



## ORIGINAL PAPER

# Relativization of the History by the Austrian Socialists in Polish Comments

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### Abstract

Austrian socialists and their attitude to the past, or neglect that took place in the 1970s and 1980s, were gradually appearing in the Polish public sphere due to reprints from foreign press services. The aim of the study was to determine whether and to what extent the topic of Austrian denazification occurred in communist Poland, whether the Poles were interested in the problem of settlements and how they commented on them. Research questions focus on: the quality of comments on the group of Austrian socialists in the Polish public sphere; perpetuating the images of post-war Austria in the Polish public discourse; circumstances in which denazification affairs were described, as well as the historical and political background of this process. The research method adopted was content analysis in the qualitative dimension. The population (data corpus) is press, journals, serial and archival documents. The subject of the study were Polish comments on the denazification process in Austria, and in particular the socialist influence on its course. With reference to the times of the Second World War in Austria, for a few decades, one rhetoric vision prevailed, but from time to time an alternative vision was formulated. In the Polish public discourse, references to this alternative vision do not occur. The applied “metaphorical scenarios” referred to by Polish publicists speak about situations of “healing” the state by the first generation of politicians involved in the creation of the Second Republic. Austrians were defined as victims in the great community of victims, without the need to explain the Holocaust.

**Keywords:** *Modern Austria; Bruno Kreisky; Austrian Socialists; Polish public discourse.*

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### Introduction

Austrian socialists and their attitude towards the past, or neglect, which took place in the 70s and 80s of the twentieth century, appeared in the Polish public space gradually through reprints from foreign press services. The aim of the study was to determine whether and to what extent this topic occurred in communist Poland, whether Poles were interested in the problem of Austrian accounts and how they commented on them. Research questions focus on: the quality of commentary on the environment of Austrian socialists in the Polish public space until 1989; recording images of post-war Austria in Polish public discourse; the circumstances in which denazification scandals were described, as well as the historical and political background of this process.

The research method adopted was content analysis in the qualitative dimension. The population (data corpus) is press, journals, serial and archival documents. Research sample: multi-stage selection: 1st stage: layered, 2nd stage: systematic random. Unit of analysis: single archival material, single press material.

The subject of the study were Polish comments on the denazification process in Austria, and in particular the influence of socialists on its course. Following Karol Franczak, it was assumed that "commenting is differently attributing one or another sense to the communicative meaning in which one participates. The possibility of presenting a 'wording' means that the participant interprets the situation of which he or she is speaking or is part of it in such a way" (Franczak, 2013:15).

The most important questions were concerned with reflections on the participation of Austria in World War II by socialists. Others: did the Poles think that Austria played the role of "Hitler's first victim"? Did Austria pay compensation to victims of the regime? Why were they, for reasons that could not be justified in any way, reduced to a minimum, or in many cases did not exist at all? Did socialists participate of limiting trials against Nazi criminals? Did the socialists call for those who survived to return to their homeland? Did they comment regarding news that in the mid-1970s four former NSDAP members were in Kreisky's new government? Did Polish public discourse present information on arbitrarily suspended investigations against suspects of murder and assistance in the murder in 1970-1973. Did Polish journals present the trial against Vinzenz Gogel in 1972 who was responsible for the crimes in Mauthausen and Ebensee? How Poles have seen Kreisky-Wiesenthal affair in 1975 (October-November)? Did the case of Fred Sinowatz and the Walter Reder case (March 6, 1985) occur? How did Polish discourse present Kurt Waldheim's case and the presidential election (March-June 1986)?

The Ministries of Home Affairs and Justice have been socialists since 1961 (except 1966-1970). Christian Broda was reluctant to submit documents provided by the Center. According to Szymon Wiesenthal, Chancellor Kreisky influenced the return of the ex-Nazis to the Austrian political scene (Sporrer&Steiner, 1993: 285). He said before the 1970 election that former NSDAP members had access to all state offices if they had not committed any crime. When in 1970 Interior Minister Otto Rösch took over the ministry, he reduced the number of people in Department 18 dealing with Nazi crimes from 11 to 5 (Kulesza, 2013: 238). In 1970, Minister Leopold Gratz stated - at the Jewish Documentation Center in Vienna it was expanded to include a private police force who spy everywhere. In his opinion, due to this type of work, the visit of Austrian parliamentarians to the Netherlands ended in fiasco.

On November 9, 1969, Felix Slavik, the deputy mayor of Vienna, during his stay in Israel, gave an interview - in our ranks "there is not a single once active Nazi officer". In response to these words, Wiesenthal said that there were two such persons in the immediate chancellor's environment - Alfred Schachner - Blazizek - chairman of the SPÖ (Austrian Socialist Party) faction in the Styrian national parliament, as well as deputy head of national authorities and Hans Czettel - chairman of the SPÖ organization in Lower Austria. When April 21, 1970, Kreisky formed the first government, he handed over the agriculture department to Hans Öllinger, who belonged to the SS. After press articles in May 1970, although Öllinger stepped down, his successor Oskar Weihs, as well as Interior Minister Otto Rösch, Minister for Construction Josef Moser and Minister for Communication Josef Fröchbauer were likewise exposed. At that time, regular and open attacks on the Documentation Center began (Sporrer & Steiner, 1993: 272).

### **Conditions in which Polish comments regarding Austrian accounts were created**

At a time when the Polish state was looking for international allies on the road to recognizing Poland's western border, the Austrian socialist party with its program of openness to cooperation with all countries was an attractive political partner. Comments on the political activities of the socialists entering the coalition, the activities of the socialist presidents and the reforms proposed by this environment were presented in a positive context. They were often compared with the conservative actions of the Austrian People's Party or the Austrian Freedom Party. Information was repeatedly provided regarding the work of socialists on a socially beneficial budget, work for social reform, increase in expenditure on education, culture, housing goals, agricultural development, and political involvement resulting in the proper functioning of the party coalition. For example – "This project was approved by the socialists and in this way the crisis in the coalition was temporarily overcome" (Kozeński, 1970: 221).

In a similar vein, a press release from the presidential election was prepared: "The election of Franz Jonas, a widely acclaimed activist in the country and abroad, as the highest office in the state also proves that most Austrian society understands perfectly what political balance means. Since the head of government here is traditionally a member of the Austrian People's Party, the president of the state has always been a socialist since the country's liberation in 1945" (Austria, 1968: 8). In the Polish press in the second half of the 1960s, we read strong support for socialist political ambitions. Election results were commented on as "promising, reliable, satisfying". Rather, the group's progressive nature was pointed out, and in the event of the disappearance of the activities of the communist party, systematically losing faint support, it was written about the Socialist Party as its heir. Among the political conditions in which Polish ideas about Austria were shaped, they dominated until the 1970s. Fears of the country's integration with Western European structures, then the phrase "Cold Anschluss" and the subject of post-war Polish-Austrian material claims were used. The Austrian claim against Poland included mainly claims for the takeover of industrial enterprises and land property, rights to real estate, claims for movables left in Poland. At the same time, reference was made to art. 27 of the State Treaty. The Polish side verified the sum of Austrian claims coming in to 1964 for USD 120 million. It was considered that the amount was inflated because the Austrians filed claims for which Poland was not liable: war damage, loss of movable property lost during war operations, bank accounts and savings deposits in German credit institutions in Poland, claims of

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newly-Austrians - people who received Austrian citizenship after Austria regained independence after April 27, 1945, and before 1938 they did not have this citizenship (Archives [AMSZ], Dep. IV Austria, z. 17, w.1, t. 6). This category includes former Germans and Volksdeutsch resettled to Austria. The Polish side applied the practice of deducting 40% from the real economic destruction of the country against the real value of property. Therefore, it was considered that the value of Austrian claims should not exceed approx. USD 3.5 million (AMSZ, Dep. IV Austria, z. 17, w.1, t. 6). In the statement of Prime Minister Cyrankiewicz regarding the claims of April 1965, we read: "I did not stand as close to these matters as Kreisky, who stated that those interested in damages pressed him very much. Nobody pressed us to ask Austria about its global sum of claims. Although there was some pressure from the Austrian ambassador interested in regulating this problem - which is in the interest of full standardization. We will consider and try to find solutions possible for both parties. Austria has a good school of compromise, which can help here" (AMSZ, Gabinet Ministra, z. 17, w.3, t. 25).

In March 1970, during the parliamentary elections, the socialist party won the first time in Austrian history. However, the advantage was small: 82 seats for SPÖ, 79 for ÖVP (Austrian Peoples Party), five for FPÖ (Austrian Freedom Party). Kreisky tried without success to restore the coalition. He finally decided to establish a minority government, and appointed the non-party Rudolf Kirchschräger as the minister of foreign affairs (K. K., 1970: no. 13). Undoubtedly, the electoral success belonged to Bruno Kreisky, who had run the party since 1966. Polish comments highlighted the strong personality of the politician and the social support he possessed. Among the few criticisms of the election, Western press reports cited: "The truth of the socialist slogans was not even believed by the son of socialist leader Peter Kreisky, a radical youth activist" (K. K., 1970: no. 13). However, the subject of settlements with the past was not referred to at that time. In 1970, SPÖ repeated her success in the presidential election - for the second time her candidate Franz Jonas won by winning against the non-party Kurt Waldheim. As a result of disputes between the SPÖ and the FPÖ, whose nationalist demands have caused problems, two parties have renounced their seats and new elections have been announced. In 1971, the Socialists again won the majority. Much was written in Poland at the time about the victory of socialists, showing the achievements in bilateral relations to date, visits by politicians, parliamentarians, economic agreements, and stressing the pro-social political program (Lechański, 1997: 51).

### **Examples of commented events**

Fifty years after the German army entered Austria, this event was shown in the Polish press based on the diaries of socialist leader Bruno Kreisky. In the text about the assessment of Anschluss we read: "The image of those March days of 1938 is distorted by the fact that only people were cheering in the streets and squares, and millions of those who remained at home or closed the windows, or even prepared to appear resistance" (Kreisky, 1988: 9). It was further stated that in 1946 there were 536,662 national socialists registered in Austria and if their families were added, the support for this option numbered over one million Austrians. Referring to the statement of former Chancellor Bruno Kreisky, the course of Anschluss was approximated (Kreisky, 1988: 9). Attention was paid to the mechanisms that were to help the Nazis in the occupation of Austria. The chancellor not only defended his compatriots, but also showed political sentiment and the involvement of circles opposing Hitler's policy. "We appreciate the

Embassy's efforts in counteracting the hostile Austrian press outbreaks and in exposing the anti-Polish activities of nationalist and Zionist circles in Austria, e.g. the Wiesenthal Center" (AMSZ, Dep. IV Austria, z. 17, w.1, t. 6).

The document prepared by Department IV of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reads: "The thesis about the "cold Anschluss" is getting closer to reality every year. Officially, and it is hard to assume that unofficially, the Austrian side tolerates this and did not anticipate this trend". Data on the growth of German exports in Austria, expansion of German capital inflow in the media, real estate, tourism and hotel sectors were also given (AMSZ, Dep. IV Austria, z. 17, w.1, t. 6).

In the Polish public space, it was emphasized that relations with the Austrian People's Party were not as close as with the Austrian Socialist Party, but were correct and in any case closer than relations with the embassies of other Eastern countries (AMSZ, Dep. IV Austria, z. 17, w.1, t. 6). Good examples of cooperation with socialists included, for example, the visit of Vice-Chancellor Pitterman to Poland (he was then the chairman of the party), a visit to Austria of a delegation of Polish trade unions with Loga - Sowiński, as well as a trip to Auschwitz of a group of 500 Austrian socialists. This trip was in the opinion of Polish officials: "a mass anti-Nazi demonstration, acquiring special propagandistic significance. Pittermann officially said goodbye to those leaving by giving a speech" (AMSZ, Dep. IV Austria, z. 17, w.1, t. 6).

Bruno Kreisky choosing from the tradition of the Habsburg monarchy what strengthened the new national identity of the state did not completely cut off from the past. "Kreisky knows well what is to blame for the national tradition. He restored the Austrians' national identity. Today, a young man in Vienna or Graz, asked who he is, will not answer with an Austrian German, but simply an Austrian" (Podkowiński, 1981: 124).

As reported in a biographical note from 1973: "Many people in Austria do not like Kreisky, some for his Jewish origin and others for his factory origin, others for his kind of anti-Semitism". The director of the famous Jewish Documentation Center in Vienna Wiesenthal was to call "the Jewish fascist" (AMSZ, Dep. IV, Austria, z. 47/77, w. 7). Similar comments were given by PAP's (Polish Press Agency) Documentary Notebooks (Kancierz, 1973: 17). During the scandal, the Jewish community in Vienna organized a meeting to support Wiesenthal, only a few people came. According to Wiesenthal, there was concern about an escalation of anti-Semitic sentiment in Austria. In 1975, the case of the deputy to the National Council appeared, the chairman of the parliamentary faction of the FPÖ Friedrich Peter, former commander of the assault group on the Eastern Front. Friedrich Peter was considered a candidate for vice chancellor in 1975. In November 1975, the head of the Jewish Documentation Center in Vienna - Simon Wiesenthal filed accusations against Kreisky against about the Nazi past of the FPÖ leader Friedrich Peter. As a soldier of the 1st SS brigade, he pacified Russian villages at the rear of the Eastern Front during World War II. Kreisky was to receive materials regarding the past of the candidate for vice chancellor before the election. After consulting with President Kirchschräger, he decided to keep them secret in fear of the election result.

Although the Polish Press Agency wrote about the Friedrich Peter case, Polish newspapers commented on the course of the election campaign of autumn 1975 and avoided taking up the subject of settlements. The socialist electoral success has been extensively written, noting the leadership position, political programs, economic indicators and international response. Commenting on the political achievements of the

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socialists, it was written – “politicians of the international format, experienced chess players, creators of a positive campaign, experienced players” (Ramotowski, 1975: 5). The text from December 1975 was prepared in a similar tone. At that time, the Kreisky-Wiesenthal scandal gained momentum, meanwhile Janusz Moszczeński, after Interpres, wrote details about economic reforms about socialists: “the strongest party, they are fighting for non-partisan supporters, advocates of optical ideological ideology, proponents of respecting property rights and authors of clever moves” (Moszczeński, 1975: 5).

In an article on socialists, Marian Podkowiński referred to the history of interwar Austria and stated “many Austrians were drawn to the swastika. Precisely because in 1934 the workers said” no “and thousands of them paid for it with their lives or exile, camps and misery, as well as a result of exile activities such politicians as Kreisky - Austria was included in the countries annexed by Hitler, so belonging to the anti-fascist coalition” (Podkowiński, 1981: 125). “Someone once wondered in Vienna why ex-Nazis or anti-Semites, which are not lacking in Austria, are voting for Kreisky. Answer: they think that they are doing their own denazification. It is true that Kreisky has saved many Austrians from not having a pleasant time with their past (Podkowiński, 1981: 125)”. However, he adds: “At the same time, school textbooks on history were revised under his rule, while no such search was carried out in Germany, despite the fact that this recommendation was signed by eminent historians from Poland and Germany” (Podkowiński, 1981: 124).

In Polish scientific commentaries it was noted that Austria had benefited from the delay in concluding the State Treaty. The German assets that remained on the territory of this country visibly strengthened the economic potential, while the ban on economic integration with Germany opened new possibilities and prospects for cooperation with neutral or Eastern countries. All draft treaty proposals at international conferences had to address economic issues and compensation for war losses. At that time, the topic of Austria's participation in the course of World War II and the guilt it repeatedly returned. Socialists have consistently strengthened the image of Hitler's first victim, preventing any debate (Zbiór, 1949: 782). Selected countries, not only Austria most interested, took advantage of the free interpretation of the entries of both the Moscow conference in 1943 and the Potsdam Agreements in the post-war period, leaving the subject of settling the war past to future generations.

Four days after the parliamentary election in November 1975, the head of the Jewish Documentation Center in Vienna - Szymon Wiesenthal, filed charges against Kreisky for secrecy about the Nazi past of the FPÖ leader - Friedrich Peter. As a soldier of the 1st SS Brigade, he pacified Russian villages at the rear of the Eastern Front during World War II. Kreisky was to receive materials regarding the past of the candidate for vice chancellor before the election. After consulting with President Kirchschräger, he decided to keep them secret in fear of the election result. There was a sharp polemic. The chancellor, who received Wiesenthal's allegations as a personal attack, proposed to resolve the dispute in court, he was to renounce his mandate. At the same time, he threatened that he had Wiesenthal's incriminating material, and he summed up all of his campaign as slander propagated at home and abroad, undermining Austria's reputation. Wiesenthal withdrew his complaint and at the same time pointed out that conducting the current investigation of war criminals in a country with a selective attitude towards the past and a disastrously functioning judiciary was out of the question (Wiesenthal, 1993: 280-289). In Poland, it was written very modestly (Zeszyty, 1975:18). Only one text in

PAP materials referred to the alleged cooperation of the Austrian government with the Polish security ministry, which was to provide documents incriminating Wiesenthal. There is no mention in Polish research relating to his intelligence activities of cooperation with Austria and the transfer of exchanged documents in this regard. Szymon Wiesenthal, after many years, assessed in his memoirs the Chancellor's accusation as an attempt to manipulate German material belonging to the Gestapo (Wiesenthal, 1993: 280).

Commenting on the consequences of the Waldheim scandal, it was written: 1. The rise of anti-American sentiment is in the hands of socialists. 2. The government is in solidarity with the president. 3. The People's Party and Mock have failed. 4. In the long run, the situation is favorable to socialists. They warned against Waldheim's choice and will use it in the next election. Socialists will promote themselves as caring for the interests and prestige of the Austrian state. 5. Politicians will try to show solidarity with the president while alleviating the effects of political isolation (AMSZ, Dep. IV, z. 18/89, w. 6). Differentiation was seen in the reactions of political party representatives. From demands to take legal action against the USA (ÖVP), purge of charges against an international commission (FPÖ), to step down from the office of the KPA, SPÖ - youth.

The Polish authorities support Austrian efforts to change the American decision to place President Waldheim as "Wachlist". Minister Olechowski admitted: "We are aware of the complex situation in which the president befriended us, but also the Austrian government found themselves as a result of decisions taken by the US government. We remember President Waldheim mainly in Poland as a long-term, UN Secretary General, who enjoys great international authority. We value his work to strengthen the UN system and the contribution and commitment to maintaining world peace. We would like Austria to end this difficult matter for her" (AMSZ, Dep. IV, z. 18/89, w. 6).

Cases of refusing to participate in the ceremonies patronized by President Waldheim were described. At that time, already retired Chancellor Kreisky criticized the American decision and stated: "the interest of the state as a whole is more important than the office of president." When socialist youth protested in Mauthausen: "We want an anti-fascist president," and the police intervened unsuccessfully. Poland has written about devastated Jewish cemeteries in Austria. That was an example of anger came from Austrian citizens. Polish authorities said that kind of anger was reasonable. (AMSZ, Dep. IV, z. 18/89, w. 6).

In a note of the Embassy of the Republic of Poland of May 31, 1987, when writing about reactions to the Waldheim scandal, attention was drawn to the condition of the president: "he is mentally depressed and suffers morally", the situation "affects his physical condition", "in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs he is hated", in the US personalities Jewish people are against Reagan's decision for fear of anti-Jewish demonstrations. Anti-Semitism has intensified in Austria alone. Commenting on the discussions in Austria about the future of the Vranitzky-Mock coalition, the need to step down was "for the good of the republic". According to Poles, these statements came from intellectuals, people of culture and from the socialists. Haider as a leader of FPÖ criticized Waldheim for his lack of determination to refute the charge (AMSZ, Dep. IV, z. 18/89, w. 6).

Without comment, information was published that in March 1987 Belgium and Switzerland refused to participate President Waldheim in planned international events. Examples of countries that canceled planned meetings with Waldheim were mentioned,

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as well as situations in which the president was stigmatized. Pointing to reactions within Austria, attention was paid to the common front in defense of the president, or situations in which he was treated unfairly: “the publication by the Jerusalem Post of a forged letter by Mock to Margaret Thatcher regarding the possibility of W.'s resignation due to health” (AMSZ, Dep. IV, z. 18/89, w. 6).

Incorporation of Kurt Waldheim into the so-called Watchlist - a list of unwanted people in the US because he is accused of cooperating with national socialism. The issuing of this decision on April 27, 1987 caused a shock to Austrian public opinion. Although the Americans emphasized that this concerns Waldheim as a private individual, not the president of the state, he forced Austrian politicians to take a position. Jörg Haider argued that this was unacceptable, collective blaming the entire generation of soldiers in Austria. Most politicians say that this decision will bring economic losses and weaken Austria's position on the international stage. Attention was paid to invitations sent to the president from Arab countries: Jordan, Egypt, United Arab Emirates (AMSZ, Dep. IV, z. 18/89, w. 6).

According to the employees of the Polish embassy, “it should be anticipated that the World Jewish Congress will not abandon the actions envisaged against Waldheim and post-fascist elements in Austria, and neutralizing anti-Austrian moods and rebuilding prestige will be one of the basic but not easy directions of the future government” (Nowakowski, 1986: 9).

During the debate around the Waldheim affair, fragments of Kreisky's memories were published, which referred to both Anschluss and the subject of accounts as seen from the perspective of the former socialist leader. The negative political effects of German aggression in 1938 were emphasized in the text and the conditions in which the Austrians, occupied by Wehrmacht, lived at that time. Austrian comments were eagerly cited at the time – “you must finally mark the past with a thick line” (Nowakowski, 1986: 9).

If we read about Austrian denazification debates, it is only thanks to correspondence between influential dignitaries or employees of the Polish embassy in Austria. Commenting on the consequences of the Waldheim scandal, it was written: 1. The rise of anti-American sentiment is in the hands of socialists. 2. The government is in solidarity with the president. 3. The People's Party and Alois Mock have failed. 4. In the long run, the situation is favorable to socialists. They warned against Waldheim's choice and will use it in the next election. Socialists will promote themselves as caring for the interests and prestige of the Austrian state. 5. Politicians will try to show solidarity with the president while alleviating the effects of political isolation (AMSZ, Dep. IV, z. 18/89, w. 6). Differentiation was seen in the reactions of political party representatives. From demands to take legal action against the USA (ÖVP), purge of charges before an international commission (FPÖ), to step down from the office of the KPA, SPÖ - youth organization.

### **Conclusions and verification of hypotheses**

During the research the following hypotheses were positively verified: 1. Polish comments on Austrian accounts published until 1989 were in line with the dominant Austrian discourse; 2. The positive image of the Second Austrian Republic - Poland's political and economic partner, promoted in the Polish public sphere after 1970, negated the need to write about the problem of settlements; 3. The scandals related to the lack of settlements in Austria commented on in Poland did not have a defined political



background; 4. Negative comments on Austrian accounts were avoided, reducing the problem to several individual cases and emphasizing the responsibility of the German people for crimes committed during World War II; 5. The scandals related to the lack of settlements were not identified with the Austrian socialist community.

In relation to World War II, one rhetorical vision dominated in Austria for several decades, but from time to time an attempt was made to formulate an alternative vision. There are no references to this alternative vision in Polish public discourse. The "metaphorical scenarios" used by Polish journalists refer to situations of "healing" the state by the first generation of politicians involved in the creation of the Second Republic. The Austrians were defined as injured in the great community of victims without having to explain the Holocaust. According to Ruth Wodak and Rudolf de Cillia, the discourse of the perceived victims thus "colonized" public debate about the past. "Colonization" concerned not only the victim, but also that all atrocities committed during the war had the same meaning - without indicating reasons, motives or guilty parties (Wodak, de Cillia, 2007: 345).

The dominant vision of the past in Austria was strengthened by several governments of the so-called grand coalition. After the war, two parties, SPÖ ÖVP, worked out a compromise historical narrative. An occasion to strengthen it was anniversary celebrations, taking the form of "official commemoration". In Polish public space, the narrative of the "first victim" has been strengthened at the individual level as part of the official discourse. Family memory played an important role here, including "cumulative heroization" where "good stories" and individual memories (emigrants or citizens persecuted as a result of the Anschluss) gained importance above all (Wodak, Krzyżanowski, 2011: 54).

Austria struggled with a kind of amnesia before the first billing debates appeared. At the same time, in the post-war history of this country one can see the practice of blurring traces of the past, which was often accompanied by the practices of institutionalization of public forgetfulness. Its basic goal can be easily understood - the favoring of the electorate by political parties and forcing national reconciliation (AMSZ, D. IV Austria, z. 1/84, w. 3). Furthermore:

- associations with the "nation" were avoided and the focus was on republican values;
- it was argued that after years of unrest, Austria is trying to join the group of European democracies;
- there was widespread fear of disclosing any shameful facts about participation in Nazi crimes, as National Socialist conviction was not limited to members of the former NSDAP;
- denazification did not interfere with soliciting the votes of former fascists;
- mashing practices referred to the theory of collective "denial";
- continuous recurrence was identified with the guilt strategy.

In the course of the development of the debate on Kurt Waldheim's past, the dispute was becoming increasingly more ethical. Supporters of the future president began to identify him with all of Austria, while foreign critics were associated with conspiracy theory. Thus, the "campaign" against Waldheim began to mean a "campaign" against Austria. The strategy most often used by Polish defenders of Waldheim was denying responsibility and appealing to the "obeying orders" rhetoric. The technique of referring to higher reasons was also used. Accusations of the World Jewish Congress appeared in this rhetoric as "monstrous wickedness".

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The second group of “explanations” (accounts) were “excuses”, i.e. a kind of argument in which the accused party agreed with the negative qualification of the assessed act, but at the same time shirked responsibility for this act. Among the most commonly used “excuses” can be mentioned: the transfer of guilt, primarily to the Nazis, Germans and the structure of a totalitarian state. Another was the “accusation of someone else”, including the Allied and then occupying forces. “Personalization” as a rejection of collective responsibility. When we say that a concrete person is responsible, we give his or her name that could be the excuse for the whole community. Only few persons were responsible not we. Only selected individuals were guilty, not the entire nation, and collective responsibility was unacceptable. “Annulment of accusations” when the attackers present the accusations in an exaggerated and unacceptable way, the goal of these actions is immediate political gain (Wodak, 1991:70).

In the case of the scandal involving Friedrich Peter, a “role reversal” mechanism was used, i.e. condemning the condemners. Excerpts from Wiesenthal's discredit were cited, whose allegations against Peter were interpreted so that the prosecutor himself was suspected. Other macro-exclusion strategies were also used - accusations trivialized as to whether the “thick line” policy was used. In Polish public space, quotations were readily used to describe Austrian accounts. The use of certain statements consisted of invoking someone else's statement in extenso and made it possible to distance the responsibility of those who used the quote.

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#### Article Info

*Received:* March 11 2020

*Accepted:* April 10 2020

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