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## 'I blanked out', says 'Hitler son' swindler

Melanie Petrinec, September 28, 2015 11:30pm



**O'Hara at the Court of Appeal. Source: News Corp Australia**

A FORMER Jewish extremist who once claimed to be Adolf Hitler's son is contesting his conviction for swindling more than \$2.2 million from Australian investors.

Michael John O'Hara, 64, says he had a seizure and "blanked out" on April 20, 2012, when he pleaded guilty to fraud in the Brisbane District Court and was sentenced to 10 years in jail.

He has already served his time behind bars but yesterday appealed the conviction a second time.

The former teacher from the Gold Coast rose to prominence in 2002, when he was hauled before a Victorian court for trying to sell for \$4.75 million, two handguns he claimed had been used in the suicide of Adolf Hitler and his niece Geli Raubal.

O'Hara created documents to support his claim, including stealing an original document written by SS chief Heinrich Himmler, from official archives in Germany, and replacing it with a fake letter listing the serial numbers of the guns he owned.

In his 2006 book *Personal Pistols of Adolf Hitler*, he included his own signed affidavit claiming he was the biological son of the Fuhrer.

O'Hara was also known as Zeev Gideon Korwan, the self-proclaimed Australian leader of the militant Jewish Defence League, which was once classified as a terrorist organisation by the FBI. It received some of the millions O'Hara conned out of more than 70 investors in fake companies *Sports International Investment Corporation*

and *Merchants International Investments Corporation* between June 2005 and September 2006.

Representing himself in the Queensland Court of Appeal, O'Hara asked for an extension. He told the court he had suffered from grandiose delusions and focal dyscognitive seizures that caused him to blank out when asked his plea.

He said he was on medication for his delusions and had taken it upon himself to double the dose.

The Crown argued that O'Hara had already lost one appeal and unless he was arguing on different grounds, the dismissal should stand.

The Court of Appeal reserved its decision.

<http://www.couriermail.com.au/news/queensland/i-blanked-out-says-hitler-son-swindler/story-fntwpug1-1227547903537>

**\*\*\*flashback\*\*\***

### **The odd case of Hitler's 'son'**

**November 14 2002**

**By Jamie Berry**

In his 22 years as a County Court judge and a previous 22 as a lawyer, His Honour Michael Kelly said it was not the most bizarre case he had witnessed, but it came close.

For almost three months, Judge Kelly heard the story of Michael O'Hara - a man who claimed to be Hitler's son and the owner of the Fuehrer's suicide gun.

The case centred on O'Hara's attempt to sell the pistol for more than \$US1 million to "perhaps an Arabic millionaire".

To authenticate the pistol and a second gun also said to belong to Hitler, O'Hara created numerous false documents. Last week, a jury found him guilty on 18 counts of statutory fraud.

The court heard that O'Hara's mission was two-fold. As a member of the Jewish Defence League, his attempts to sell the pistol were part of a plan to "flush out" anti-Jewish supporters.

In addition, O'Hara wanted to write an autobiography entitled *The German Connection*, which he hoped might become a film.

The book would follow O'Hara, "Hitler's son", being smuggled out of Germany during World War II before arriving in England to play professional soccer.

With his date of birth in question and his recent conviction, it is hard to know where Michael John O'Hara's true identity lies. It is certain that he was lured to Australia in 1966 by the Hakoah Soccer Club.

"He was, without doubt, the best goalkeeper we have had play for us," club official Robert Levine told the court. "He was very flamboyant in the way he played."

Mr Levine described O'Hara as "a clown prince" and said his prodigy was the youngest man to play professional soccer in England for then-first division club Luton Town, as a 16-year-old in 1960.

The club's website says that a Belfast-born "Mike O'Hara", aged 16 years and 32 days made his debut for "The Hatters" against Stoke City on October 1, 1960, meaning that O'Hara was born in 1944.

The court heard, however, that O'Hara's passport said he was born in England on September 14, 1951.

O'Hara supplemented his part-time income from the Jewish soccer club by teaching physical education. A character witness, former policeman Allan Perrins, spoke of taking his children to swimming lessons in Seaford run by O'Hara and his former wife, Louise, before both families moved to Queensland.

Mr Perrins said O'Hara was "a little bit eccentric", but more importantly, was a "life coach". He did not just teach children how to swim - he improved their self-esteem. According to Mr Perrins, there was no reason to question his integrity. O'Hara even ran for the local council.

But aside from being a loving family man who devoted his life to other children as well as his own, O'Hara was the Queensland head of the Jewish Defence League, an extremist organisation concerned with "the ensuring of Jewish well-being and safety".

Louise O'Hara told the court that her former husband, known as Zeev Gideon Korwan in the movement, knew "every single thing" about a man who killed millions of Jews, but she did not know about his association with the league.

Psychiatrist Lester Walton said the intelligent and articulate O'Hara suffered "true delusions" and that his cause was to hunt neo-Nazis.

Prosecutor Peter F. McDermott said O'Hara had created hundreds of false documents in a "phalanx of fantasy" so he could sell the pistol.

The court heard that O'Hara had stolen from German archives, hired German and Russian translators, and enlisted other experts to create intricate documents to verify the pistols' authenticity. The court heard he had bought them from two Melbourne gun dealers in the 1990s.

O'Hara claimed that after the war, the pistols had been bought for \$1 million from the KGB by an Austrian named Otto.

O'Hara's defence counsel, Richard Backwell, said his client maintained that the weapon was "the real McCoy". Dr Walton, however, said O'Hara had told him they were fake. Mr McDermott told Judge Kelly yesterday that the pistols "were never anywhere near Russia".

O'Hara also hired stamp makers, engravers, photographers and bought old Russian typewriters and 1930s ink as part of the plan.

"This is all about a film," Louise O'Hara said.

In wholly suspending a six-month jail term yesterday on the offences of dishonesty, Judge Kelly said O'Hara was excited by embellishing audacious stories about others and himself.

But perhaps Mr McDermott summed it up best during the case's opening day: "This was the stuff of Cold War fiction that would have made for riveting reading in the hands of authors like Le Carre and Ludlum."

<http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2002/11/13/1037080785663.html>

\*\*\*back to now\*\*\*

## **Convicted fraudster appeals guilty plea**

**By Roz Tarszisz , September 30, 2015**

The self proclaimed Australian leader of the Jewish Defence League is contesting his conviction for fraud in the Queensland Court of Appeal.

Michael John O'Hara, 64, also known as Zeev Gideon Korwan, was sentenced to 10 years in jail in April 2012 when he pleaded guilty to fraud in the Brisbane District Court according to a report in the *Brisbane Courier Mail*.

A former Gold Coast teacher, O'Hara was convicted in 2002 in Victoria for trying to sell two handguns he claimed had been used in the suicide of Adolf Hitler. He created documents to support his claim including documents he had stolen from official archives in Germany and received a suspended six month jail term for dishonesty.

Between June 2005 and September 2006 he swindled over \$2million from more than 70 investors in fake companies. He has served his jail sentence but has now appealed the conviction for a second time.

O'Hara now claims that at the time of his conviction he was on medication for delusions, for which he had self medicated by doubling the dose. This caused him to have had a seizure and "blanked out" when he pleaded guilty to fraud in 2012.

O'Hara represented himself in the Queensland Court of Appeal and asked for an extension. The Crown argued that O'Hara had lost one appeal and that the dismissal should stand unless he had different grounds. The Court of Appeal reserved its decision.

<http://www.jwire.com.au/convictedfraudster-appeals-guilty-plea/>

**THE DIESEL HOLOCAUST coming up.....**

# How Many Deaths

## Did Volkswagen's Deception Cause in the U.S.?

By [Margot Sanger-Katz and John Schwartz](#), SEPTEMBER 28, 2015

[Volkswagen's diesel deception](#) unleashed tons of extra pollutants in the United States, pollutants that can harm human health. So while many commentators have been quick to say that the cheating engines are not a highway safety concern, safety — as in health — is still an issue. Unlike the ignition defect in General Motors vehicles that caused [at least 124 people](#) to die in car crashes, Volkswagen pollution is harder to link to individual deaths. But it is clear to public health researchers that the air pollutants the cars illegally emitted damage health, and they have formulas for the number of lives lost from excess pollution in general. Indeed, the Environmental Protection Agency uses its own estimates of the health effects of air pollution to create its regulations of what's allowed. After consulting with several experts in modeling the health effects of air pollutants, we calculated a death toll in the United States that, at its upper range, isn't far off from that caused by the G.M. defect.



**A corporate logo of Volkswagen illuminated by the morning light at the plant of the German car manufacturer in Wolfsburg, Germany, last week. Credit Julian Stratenschulte/European Pressphoto Agency**

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The chemicals that spewed illegally from the Volkswagen diesel cars — known as nitrogen oxides or NOx — have been linked to a host of respiratory and cardiovascular illnesses, as well as premature deaths. [Nitrogen oxides](#) are a byproduct of burning fossil fuels at high temperature, whether in cars, power plants or other machines like industrial boilers. The chemicals can be harmful to humans, and in warm, sunny conditions, they can also turn into ground-level ozone, or smog, and unhealthy particle pollution.

Nitrogen dioxide and ozone irritate the lungs, increasing [airway inflammation, coughing and wheezing, and can lower resistance to respiratory illness like influenza](#), especially with long-term exposure. The chemicals can also worsen the suffering and risk of serious illness or premature death for those with conditions like [asthma](#) and [chronic obstructive pulmonary disease](#). Older people, who are more likely to have these ailments, are particularly vulnerable.

The impact of smog and soot pollution on global health is substantial: A [recent paper](#) by Jos Lelieveld, at the Max Planck Institute for Chemistry in Germany, and colleagues estimated that air pollution causes some three million premature deaths a year, and that the number of deaths could more than double by 2050.

The American Lung Association [estimates](#) that nearly 41 percent of Americans live in areas with unhealthy levels of ozone. And that's with reductions brought about by national air quality standards and regulation. Between 1980 and 2014, the E.P.A. estimates that [nitrogen dioxide levels in the air fell by more than half](#). The Obama administration has stepped up its regulation of emissions from power plants and tightened standards for vehicles. A still tougher ozone standard is expected next month.

The part of the country that has probably experienced the most harm from the Volkswagen fraud is California, which already has the worst air quality in the nation. About 7,200 premature deaths a year are caused by air pollution there, according to the California Air Resources Board, and [73 percent of the state's population, or 28 million people](#), live in counties with unhealthy levels of ozone or particle pollution.

California also has the largest number of diesel passenger cars — some 50,000 of them, said Dave Clegern, a spokesman for the state's air resources board, which regulates air quality in the state. Regulation has helped, Mr. Clegern said, but "we still have a significant problem." Regulations are developed with automakers at the table, he said, and "in order to do that, you have to have a level of trust." Regarding the Volkswagen deception, he said, "This kind of thing is, to say the least, absolutely no help."

The potential damage of technologies like the "defeat device" that allowed Volkswagen to evade pollution rules since late 2008 is substantial. Volkswagen diesel cars represent fewer than 1 percent of cars on the road in the United States. But if every car — gasoline, diesel and electric hybrid — exceeded the legal limits by a similar amount, the consequences for air pollution and human health would be significant.

"Beijing comes to mind," said Paul Billings, a senior vice president at the American Lung Association.

To estimate the harm in the United States, we used two different scientific models for the effects of nitrogen oxide pollution on human health.

One comes from a sort of natural experiment, when new regulations on power plant pollution caused some counties, but not others, to cut back on nitrogen oxide pollution. The counties subject to regulation reduced their nitrogen oxides emissions by 350 tons a year.

A team of three researchers — Olivier Deschenes, Joseph S. Shapiro and Michael Greenstone — looked at the mortality rates and medical spending before and after the change. In [a working paper](#), they found the reduced pollution was responsible for about five fewer deaths for every 100,000 people in the affected counties each year, as well as for a decrease in spending on prescription drugs. Most of the seemingly excess deaths in the higher pollution regions occurred among older Americans, though other health issues affected the young as well as the old.

The estimated Volkswagen pollution, about 46,000 tons since late 2008, is the equivalent of about 4 percent of

the power plant pollution reduction they measured, meaning it could be expected to cause an estimated 106 deaths if it had similar effects.

We ran this projection by Mr. Greenstone, a professor of economics and director of the Energy Policy Institute at the University of Chicago, and [a contributor to The Upshot](#). He said it seemed sensible as an estimate, but "the magnifying glass is really close."

Noelle Eckley Selin, an associate professor of earth, atmospheric and planetary sciences at M.I.T., ran the numbers a slightly different way. She looked at the mortality effects of the particulate pollution produced by nitrogen oxides, using the numbers [the Environmental Protection Agency uses](#) to make health estimates. Her method brought the effects to about 40 additional deaths over the period, in addition to some other nonfatal health consequences. That probably undercounts the impact, though, since it does not consider the effects of direct nitrogen oxide pollution or smog.

Now for all the caveats. Our estimates for the amount of nitrogen oxide pollution are back-of-the-envelope. We relied on data from Kelley Blue Book on the number of Volkswagen diesel cars registered each year, and we applied a standard number of miles driven by each car, based on a government average, to arrive at a total number of vehicle-miles traveled.

The E.P.A. has said that the vehicles emitted up to 40 times the legal limit of nitrogen oxides. But earlier research suggests that the pollution levels ranged widely among the vehicles and their driving conditions. We looked at 39 times the legal standard, but that may be a high assumption. (If you want to estimate the effects for emissions at, say, 29 times the legal limit, you can adjust our numbers down accordingly.)

Because smog is worse in the summer, Mr. Greenstone recommended that we look at pollution from five months each year. Ms. Selin's approach was based on year-round pollution levels.

Of course, modeling the health effects of tailpipe emissions is more complicated than the sort of straight multiplication we have employed in both methods. The harm from nitrogen oxide pollution depends on how close people are to roads, as well as on topography and weather patterns. People who live in large cities, or [near major roads](#), tend to experience disproportionate harm. Other news organizations, including Vox and The Guardian, have calculated slightly [different estimates](#) of the [amount of pollution](#) and the [resulting harm](#).

Don Anair, deputy director of the vehicles program at the Union of Concerned Scientists, said the precise effect of the Volkswagen fraud would require intense and complex computation.

Still, he cautioned against taking the view that the Volkswagens have reversed the progress with pollution from automobiles. Since the standards went into effect from 2004 to 2009, he said, emissions of nitrogen oxides have been 90 percent lower. "It's not like this is going to offset the majority of the benefits of these standards," he said. "But there will be some impact, and we need to get a better handle on it."

**Correction: September 28, 2015** - An earlier version of this article gave an incorrect number for the amount of Volkswagen pollution since 2009. It is 46,000 tons, not 46.

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**A version of this article appears in print on September 29, 2015, on page B1 of the New York edition with the headline: Assessing the Possible Health Effects From Volkswagen's Diesel Deception.**

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/29/upshot/how-many-deaths-did-volkswagens-deception-cause-in-us.html? r=1>

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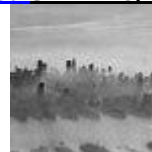
[As Volkswagen Pushed to Be No. 1, Ambitions Fueled a Scandal](#) SEPT. 26, 2015



[Study Links Polluted Air in China to 1.6 Million Deaths a Year](#) AUG. 13, 2015



[Complex Car Software Becomes the Weak Spot Under the Hood](#) SEPT. 26, 2015



[slideshow](#)

[A Look Back at the Smog](#) SEPT. 24, 2015

Unlike the ignition defect in General Motors vehicles that caused [at least 124 people](#) to die in car crashes, Volkswagen pollution is harder to link to individual deaths. But it is clear to public health researchers that the air pollutants the cars illegally emitted damage health, and they have formulas to calculate the lives lost from excess pollution. Indeed, the Environmental Protection Agency uses its own estimates of the health effects of air pollution to create its regulations of what's allowed. After consulting with several experts in modeling the health effects of air pollutants, we calculated a death toll in the United States that, at its upper range, isn't far off from that caused by the G.M. defect.

Volkswagen said last week that it had installed software in 11 million diesel cars that deceived emissions tests, allowing the vehicles to emit far more pollutants than regulations allowed. Our estimates examine only the impact on public health in the United States, but the effects were probably substantially higher in Europe, where the cars are much more common.

The chemicals that spewed illegally from the Volkswagen diesel cars — known as nitrogen oxides or NO<sub>x</sub> — have been linked to a host of respiratory and cardiovascular illnesses, as well as premature deaths. [Nitrogen oxides](#)

are a byproduct of burning fossil fuels at high temperature, whether in cars, power plants or other machines like industrial boilers. The chemicals can be harmful to humans, and in warm, sunny conditions, they can also be converted into ground-level ozone, or smog, and particle pollution, which also harm health.

Nitrogen dioxide and ozone irritate the lungs, increasing [airway inflammation, coughing and wheezing, and can lower resistance to respiratory illness like influenza](#), especially with long-term exposure. The chemicals worsen the suffering and risk for those with chronic conditions like [asthma](#) and [chronic obstructive pulmonary disease](#), and drive up [hospitalizations](#) and premature deaths, particularly among older people.

The impact of smog and soot pollution on global health is substantial: A [recent paper](#) by Jos Lelieveld, at the Max Planck Institute for Chemistry in Germany, and colleagues estimated that air pollution causes some three million premature deaths a year, and that the number of deaths could more than double by 2050.

The American Lung Association [estimates](#) that nearly 41 percent of Americans live in areas with unhealthy levels of ozone. And that's with reductions brought about by national air quality standards and regulation. Between 1980 and 2014, the E.P.A. estimates that [nitrogen dioxide levels in the air fell by more than half](#). The Obama administration has stepped up its regulation of emissions from power plants and tightened standards for vehicles. A still tougher ozone standard is expected next month.

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California also has the largest number of diesel passenger cars — some 50,000 of them, said Dave Clegern, a spokesman for the state's air resources board, which regulates air quality in the state. Regulation has helped, Mr. Clegern said, but "we still have a significant problem." Regulations are developed with automakers at the table, he said, and "in order to do that, you have to have a level of trust." Regarding the Volkswagen deception, he said, "This kind of thing is, to say the least, absolutely no help."

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### How Volkswagen Got Away With Diesel Deception

By GUILBERT GATES, JOSH KELLER, KARL RUSSELL and DEREK WATKINS UPDATED September 28, 2015

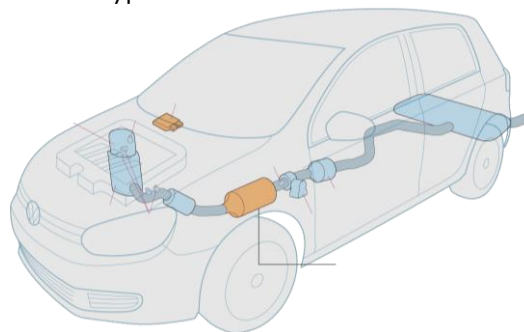
Volkswagen said on Monday that 11 million of its diesel cars worldwide were equipped with software that was used to cheat on emissions tests

#### How Did the System Work?

The software sensed when the car was being tested and then activated equipment that reduced emissions, United States officials said. But the software turned the equipment off during regular driving, increasing emissions far above legal limits, possibly to save fuel or to improve the car's torque and acceleration. It is not yet known which systems were modified. But experts are focusing on parts of the exhaust system that are designed to reduce emissions of nitrogen oxide, a pollutant that can cause [emphysema, bronchitis and other respiratory diseases](#). [Related Article »](#)

#### Exhaust system of a Volkswagen Golf

Volkswagen has used two basic types of technology to reduce emissions of nitrogen oxides from diesel engines, by either trapping the pollutants or treating them with urea. The first type is shown here.



#### Main computer

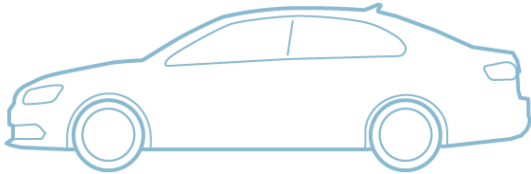
- Engine control module
- Diesel oxidation catalytic converter
- Muffler
- Oxygen sensor
- Oxygen sensor
- H2S catalytic converter
- Diesel particulate filter
- Exhaust valve
- Temperature sensors
- Nitrogen oxide trap

This system traps nitrogen oxides, reducing toxic emissions. But the engine must regularly use more fuel to allow the trap to work. The car's **computer** could save fuel by allowing more pollutants to pass through the exhaust system. Saving fuel is one potential reason that Volkswagen's software could have been altered to make 11 million cars pollute more, according to researchers at The International Council on Clean Transportation.

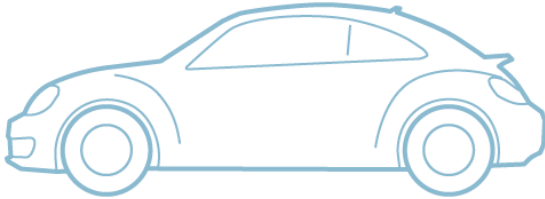
Illustration by Guilbert Gates|Source: Volkswagen, The International Council on Clean Transportation

### Which Cars Are Affected?

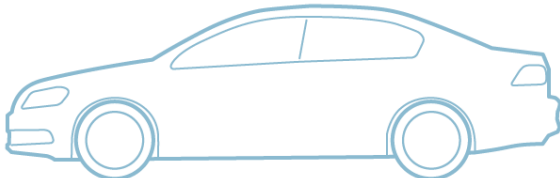
The Environmental Protection Agency has said it will order Volkswagen to recall seven of its American car models with the affected engine type, for a total of about 500,000 vehicles. Volkswagen has not released a list of international models that have the same engine.



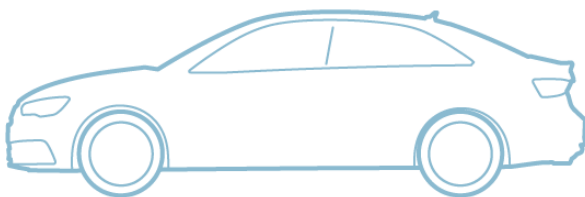
**Volkswagen Jetta 2009 to 2015**



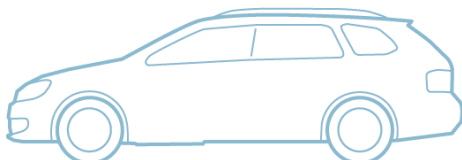
**Volkswagen Beetle and Beetle Convertible 2012 to 2015**



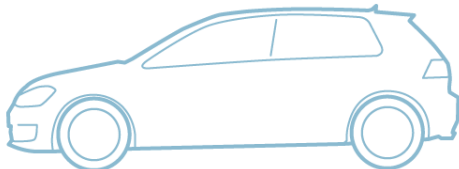
**Volkswagen Passat 2012 to 2015**



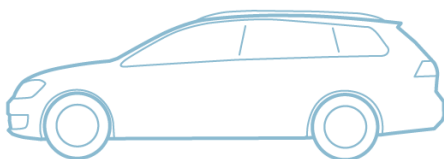
**Audi A3 2010 to 2015**



**Volkswagen Jetta SportWagen 2009 to 2014**



**Volkswagen Golf 2010 to 2015**



**Volkswagen Golf SportWagen 2015**  
Illustrations by Derek Watkins|Source: Environmental Protection Agency  
What Is at Stake for the Company?

Volkswagen now sells as many cars as Toyota. But its future is uncertain as it has halted sales of the affected cars in the United States and its value has plummeted. It is likely to lose some American customers, who bought more of the diesels in the Pacific Northwest and the Northeast. Their sales in the United States accounted for about 15 percent of the 3.1 million Volkswagens and Audis sold since 2009.

Sources: Euromonitor International/JATO Dynamics; Reuters; Kelley Blue Book

### The Emissions Tests That Led to Discovery of VW's Cheating

The on-road testing in May 2014 that led the California Air Resources Board to investigate Volkswagen was conducted by researchers at West Virginia University. They tested emissions from two VW models equipped with the 2-liter turbocharged 4-cylinder diesel engine. The researchers found that when tested on the road some cars emitted almost 40 times the permitted levels of nitrogen oxides. [Related Article »](#)

Source: Arvind Thiruvengadam, Center for Alternative Fuels, Engines and Emissions at West Virginia University

### Related Coverage



[Volkswagen Says 11 Million Cars Worldwide Are Affected in Diesel Deception, SEPT. 22, 2015](#)



[It Took E.P.A. Pressure to Get VW to Admit Fault SEPT. 21, 2015](#)



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[http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/29/upshot/how-many-deaths-did-volkswagens-deception-cause-in-us.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/29/upshot/how-many-deaths-did-volkswagens-deception-cause-in-us.html?_r=0)

# Rise of Austrian Right Lengthens Shadow of Nazi Era

Alison Smale, September 29, 2015



**Migrants at a train station in Vienna. Austria's far-right Freedom Party is threatening the Social Democrats' hold in what may portend a more general rise in populist, anti-immigrant sentiment across the Continent. Gordon Welters for The New York Times**

VIENNA — As befits the city of Sigmund Freud, Vienna has two faces — one sweet, one sinister.

Behind the schnitzel and strudel, Mozart and the opera, lurks the legacy of the Nazis who forced Jews to clean sidewalks with toothbrushes. In 1988, to much controversy, Vienna placed Alfred Hrdlicka's "[Memorial Against War and Fascism](#)," featuring a sculpture of a Jewish man [cleaning the street](#), right behind the State Opera, lest Austria again forget.

Now, to the astonishment of many and the alarm of some, the burning question in Vienna's elegant cafes is, Which face will prevail in the city's bellwether elections on Oct. 11?

Roughly one in four of Austria's 8.7 million residents lives in Vienna. For almost the last century — aside from the Nazi years, 1938-45 — the left has ruled "Red Vienna," long prized for its pioneering public housing and welfare, and its cultural ferment.

But against the backdrop of Europe's refugee drama, the far-right Freedom Party is threatening the Social Democrats' hold in what may portend a more general rise in populist, anti-immigrant sentiment across the Continent.

Riding a wave of anxiety over the tens of thousands of [migrants entering Austria](#) this month, the Freedom Party finished second, with just over 30 percent of the vote, in [regional elections](#) in northern Austria on Sunday.

The Freedom Party's strident anti-Islam message seems to have struck a chord in a city whose palaces speak of

the bygone glory of a multiethnic European empire, and whose public spaces now attest to increasing diversity and a Muslim population of some 12 percent.

"We don't want an Islamization of Europe," the party leader, Heinz-Christian Strache, told Austria's public broadcaster as he began his campaign to be Vienna's mayor. "We don't want our Christian-Western culture to perish."



**A woman campaigning for the Freedom Party, which is riding a wave of anxiety over migrants, ahead of Vienna's Oct. 11 elections. Gordon Welters for The New York Times**

In Germany, such sentiments exist on the fringe of politics. In Austria, which never underwent denazification programs after 1945, the Freedom Party has morphed from its roots in groups of former Nazis to a xenophobic message that it blends with concern for the little guy. It is a message that the party's charismatic leader, Jörg Haider, rode briefly into national government, and it has thrived beyond his death in a car crash in 2008.

In the last Vienna elections, in 2010, the Freedom Party vaulted to more than 25 percent of the vote, a gain of over 10 percentage points. By this summer, opinion polls suggested, the far-right party had pulled almost level with the Social Democrats, who got 44 percent in 2010. Both now hover just above 30 percent.

The causes are manifold, including unemployment that has risen to more than 10 percent and dissatisfaction with the longtime mayor, Michael Häupl. His working-class base is eroding; others fault him for failing to end cozy patronage systems that favor the powerful over the poor.

What everyone is wondering now is what effect the migrants will have.

Thousands of Viennese have greeted tens of thousands of refugees arriving from Hungary this month. The national government, which had long flailed on the issue, found a firm voice and strongly criticized Budapest for putting refugees on trains that led them not west to Austria, but to a camp in Hungary. This, said Chancellor Werner Faymann, a Social Democrat, "brings up memories of our Continent's darkest period."

Like Germany, Austria loudly advocates asylum for refugees. Its projected total of applicants, many from the Middle East, is 80,000 this year, meaning that, like Germany's, its population may grow by 1 percent.

But its image as a caretaker for waves of refugees over decades — Hungarians, Czechs, Slovaks, Poles, East Germans and former Yugoslavs escaping Communism or war — suffered this summer. Its main refugee center at Traiskirchen was found to be squalid, with inadequate medical care and more than 1,000 people sleeping in the open. When the authorities refused to admit a group from [Doctors Without Borders](#), leftists seethed.



**Election campaign posters in Vienna. Gordon Welters for The New York Times**

When a reporter visited the camp in late August, conditions had improved, although tents still provided shelter for 1,200 of the 3,000 people there. Austrians shocked by the conditions had brought so many clothes,

toys and other goods that containers overflowed with rejects.

Opponents of the far right hope events — the greeting of the migrants and the discovery of [71 corpses in a truck](#) abandoned by smugglers — have turned the tables on Mr. Strache.

"These are experiences which will not be forgotten so quickly," said Georg Hoffmann-Ostenhof, a columnist for the center-left weekly [Profil](#). Indeed, Austria's tabloids switched from headlines about the chaos brought by refugees to images of warm welcomes, although the arrival of tens of thousands may strain slender resources. Not everyone is optimistic. "The people are ready to help," said Hans Rauscher, a columnist for the Vienna newspaper [Der Standard](#). "But don't kid yourself. You only have to listen to the gossip in the bars" to know that anti-Muslim feeling runs high.

Far-right supporters are often reticent around foreigners, and Freedom Party leaders generally shun what they view as critical news outlets. But a Vienna activist took a reporter to a "Speakers' Corner" in a district where the Freedom Party vote has grown steadily.

To judge by this gathering of about 30 of the party faithful, the left has little to fear. The microphone and speakers' platform never showed up; the event was a washout.

It did, however, provide a rare opportunity to talk to just over a half-dozen people in their 20s about why they support the far right. They railed against corruption, poor city transportation and the fears of older adults who, they said, could not venture out at night. They kept a disciplined focus on local affairs. "That's national level," said Stephan Promont, 20, when asked about the refugees.

The only national figure present, Harald Stefan, a Freedom Party deputy in Parliament, made clear his sympathy for [Hungary's tough stance](#). "The Germans were to blame," he said of the refugee surge that followed a message on Twitter from a German official widely read as saying all Syrians could enter. "You can't blame Hungary for that."

The Freedom Party's campaign, titled "October Revolution," preserves the jingoism the party has made its own. "Vienna should not become Chicago" was a favorite slogan back in the 1990s. This year, one motto is "Respect for our culture instead of false tolerance" for anything un-Austrian.

Some immigrants are acceptable: For Mr. Strache, "the Serbian Christian Orthodox" — about 100,000 people here — "are his allies against the Turks," Mr. Rauscher said.

To counter Mr. Strache, the Social Democrats compiled a "Blue Book" of his deeds and speeches. In the introduction, Mayor Häupl writes: "History books tell us enough about where things can lead if demagogues get power. We want to make sure that no new chapters have to be written. That is why the coming elections in Vienna are decisive, and not just for our city."

[http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/30/world/europe/rise-of-austrian-right-lengthens-shadow-of-nazi-era.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/30/world/europe/rise-of-austrian-right-lengthens-shadow-of-nazi-era.html?_r=0)