

Outsiders

Ian Buruma

1.

The Lutheran church—rebuilt after the war—is one of the few attractive buildings in Hoyerswerda, a small town north of Dresden. It lies in what is known as the “old town”—a bleak little place with a market square, a modest hotel, and a narrow street of preserved artisans’ houses, decorated with stucco carvings of glass-blowers and the like. The sky is more or less permanently stained yellow by the brown-coal mines which are the town’s main business. The large mining enterprise is called the *Schwarze Pumpe*, the Black Pump. The Black Pump workers live across the Black Elster River, which divides the old town from the new town. The new town was built after the war. It consists of rows and rows of concrete housing blocks, of the kind you see in the slums of east London, Peking, or Katowice. Hoyerswerda was one of the most prosperous towns in the former German Democratic Republic.

At the Lutheran church I attended a Sunday morning sermon, delivered by Pastor Friedhard Vogel, a pleasant, roly-poly man with a tolerant smile. He told the story of the three kings. They were heathens, he said, not of the people of Israel, foreigners. This meant that “people with different histories, of different colors, from different countries can find their way to Jesus.” The sermon ended with short prayer: “God, we pray for our town, Hoyerswerda. We pray that we can find the strength to accept foreigners in our midst and offer them our hospitality.”

There are hardly any foreigners left in Hoyerswerda. Until a few years ago there were several thousand, employed at the Black Pump, from such countries as Mozambique, Algeria, Cambodia, and Vietnam. They lived in virtual isolation. Their wages were low. The Algerians were known as “camel drivers,” the southeast Asians, for some odd reason, as “Fijis.” There had been trouble between the Germans and the foreigners, especially between Germans and Africans, often to do with women. When foreigners showed too much interest in German women (or vice versa) knife fights broke out. But such troubles were never reported in the press. Peace, solidarity, and eternal friendship between the workers of the world were the official reality of the GDR. Every German worker was forced to pay “solidarity money,” or “soli,” toward this end. The money was meant for foreign aid, but usually was spent on youth festivals instead, during which friendship and peace were proclaimed, loudly, in unison, en masse.

Many of the foreign friends left before the end of the GDR, but some Fijis and camel drivers remained, and a few hundred asylum seekers from twenty-three countries arrived after the unification of Germany. Almost all the foreigners were forced to leave last year, however, after an incident which attracted the attention of the world press and made Hoyerswerda a rally-

ing cry—a kind of Alamo—for assorted xenophobes in Germany and even beyond. The word “Hoyerswerda” was daubed on the wall of a housing project in southeast London, signed by the British National Party.

Much has been written about this event. Many clichés were aired in the press: old attitudes, suppressed by

year). A less charitable view is that they felt more affinity with the Skins than with the Fijis.

A few days later the Skins shifted their attention to an apartment block where 280 asylum seekers from all over the world had found a temporary shelter. By this time Skins’ had come all the way from Berlin and other parts

tion,” a punishment expedition—a term, by the way, commonly used by SA gangs in the early 1930s, when they went to beat up reds. The skinheads had disappeared, and the antifascists decided to punish Hoyerswerda by smashing up some public property.

The pastor explained that the skinheads, or neo-Nazis, were not all deprived or unemployed youths. “The problem of anti-Semitism and Nazism was never really dealt with here,” he said. “You would often see Nazi slogans on walls, or swastikas in Jewish cemeteries. I would say this was invariably the work of children from good Communist homes.” Shouting Nazi slogans or wearing Nazi gear was the most shocking thing a rebellious adolescent in a Communist state could do. One was sure to get attention. The same is true of young people growing up in a liberal democracy, haunted by the Nazi past.

Germany is particularly rich in youth gangs, all with their own distinctive uniforms and politics. And uniforms continue to hold a deep attraction. Which gang one joins may be partly a matter of temperament: some prefer bomber jackets and symbols of brutal discipline, others feel more at home with black-clad dreamers of anarchic utopias; the former tend to be beefy, the latter rather thin. But most come from the same class, lower-middle to lower—at least in the capitalist west, where the gangs originated. Their politics, though not entirely without significance, are confused and may be incidental. The main thing is a sense of togetherness, conformity—even among the anarchists—and a kind of order. Songs, beer, and beating up foreigners foster this feeling among Skins, and beating up Skins fosters it among the antifascists. Skins disfigure Berlin subway trains with such slogans as “FOREIGNERS OUT!,” the antifascists with “KILL THE NAZIS!” Not all antifascists are peacefully inclined; nor are all Skins attracted to Nazi symbols. I once saw a confrontation between “right-wing” Skins, who yelled incoherent slogans about a Germany cleansed of foreigners, and “left-wing” Skins, who preached revolution and accused their brothers in uniform of giving Skins a bad name.

As with gangs everywhere, turf is important. The Skins of Hoyerswerda were apparently resentful that “leftists” had places where they could meet, whereas there was no club for “rightists.” This has been remedied. The pastor explained that the church had been working with Skins to build a nice, new clubhouse. “Some people here feel sympathy for the Skins,” the pastor said, “because they like what these young people are saying about order, patriotism, and feeling good about our Heimat.”

To judge from newspaper reports there are more cases of anti-foreign violence in the western half of the country. Just the other day skinheads in west Berlin attacked a Pole in a subway car and cut half his tongue out with scissors; the house of an Asian who had sought asylum in Munster



Neo-Nazis march in Dresden, June 1991

Communist rule, were again coming to the fore; Nazi culture had been frozen into the ice of the Communist state, and the ice was melting; the destruction of traditional values under communism had led to neo-Nazism. The Lutheran pastor, who had been there, had a more complicated story to tell.

It all started one market day last autumn. Eight local skinheads—aggressive youths with shaven skulls, dressed in bomber jackets and big boots—attacked a few German citizens for kicks. Then two Vietnamese passed by and, to the relief of the Germans, the “Skins” decided to have some sport with them instead. The Vietnamese managed to escape to their apartment on Albert Schweitzer Street. But later that day more Skins arrived to throw Molotov cocktails and stones and shout insults. The neighbors, leaning out of their windows, elbows comfortably resting on cushions, joined in the fun by encouraging the youths. The police did virtually nothing. The charitable view is that they were helpless (hindered, perhaps, by the desire not to resort to the authoritarian methods of yester-

of East and West Germany. “It was a festival atmosphere,” said the pastor. “Volksfest” was the word he used. “People found it much more exciting than television.” TV crews arrived from German and foreign networks. Youths obligingly shouted, “Sieg Heil!” in front of the cameras. Windows were smashed and the neighbors laughed. But nobody was injured until the authorities packed the besieged foreigners into special buses, which sped out of town after dark. A Vietnamese man managed a terrified smile and waved at the frenzied crowd through the window of his bus. A stone smashed the glass. “Bull’s Eye!” shouted the crowd, and a splinter lodged in his eye. Hours later a clinic in Dresden refused to treat his perforated eye because he lacked the required documents for admission.¹

That was not the end of the affair. Some days later bands of “antifascist” youths, dressed in black jeans, arrived from west Berlin on a “Strafexpedi-

¹This detail is not from the pastor’s account, but from a report by Mathhias Matussek in *Der Spiegel*, September 30, 1991.

was set on fire by anti-foreign gangs, and so were houses of refugees in Hamburg, and in Hessen. Indeed, there were 338 such cases of arson against foreigners in 1991, 247 of them in the old federal republic, 91 in what used to be the GDR.

To the extent that neo-Nazism is an organized movement, the leaders are in the West, or in Austria. One of the most active organizers of neo-Nazi activities is a Viennese called Gottfried Küssel, a pudgy dreamer of a greater German Reich. Few people in Germany or Austria had heard of this rather absurd figure, until he was interviewed on ABC television. The Austrian ambassador in Washington became nervous and sent a tape to his ministry in Vienna. The Austrians, keen to dispel the impression in America that a Fourth Reich was at hand, arrested Küssel.

It is possible that organized neo-Nazi groups have links with skinhead gangs. It is also possible, according to the pastor, that resentful former secret police agents are involved in stirring up trouble. Then, too, the pastor mentioned the possibility that some right-wing politicians might not be averse to anti-foreign violence, since such alleged expressions of the people's will could help tighten up laws against people seeking asylum. On the other hand, youth violence, such as occurred in Hoyerswerda, may have nothing to do at all with organized political activities. Not yet, at any rate.

So some skepticism is in order when people—especially West Germans—make general statements about old attitudes emerging from the melting ice of the post-Communist East. Nor is brutality against foreigners only a German problem. Similar violence is happening all over Europe, east, north, south, and west. The politics of xenophobia is a pan-European phenomenon: Le Penism in France, the Vlaams Blok in Belgium, the National Front in Britain, the Movimento Sociale and the Lombardy League in Italy. Polish nationalists declared themselves against Jews and... Germans. The Archbishop of Ravenna warned his flock against the "Islamization of Europe." A week before Christmas I went to see a soccer match between teams from Rotterdam and Amsterdam, once a city with many Jews. I had the misfortune to sit with the Rotterdam supporters, about 20,000 of them, who bellowed "Jewish dogs" every time an Amsterdam player had the ball. When the Amsterdam player happened to be black, he was a "Jewish nigger." This in nice, tolerant Holland.

Still, as the German writer Horst Krüger once observed, the Germans "are sentenced to be haunted by Hitler for life." He meant his own generation, which experienced the war. In fact, Hitler's ghost still hovers round parliamentary debates, antiwar demos, editorial columns, classroom exercises, university faculties, memorial day speeches, military cemeteries, immigration offices, and television talk shows. Hitler cannot be shaken off.

The German problem is partly a matter of language, of style. There is, after all, something especially unpleasant about the sight of blond German youths screaming "Sieg Heil!" The

sight of complacent burghers jeering as foreigners are driven from their homes is, if anything, even more unpleasant. German racism has a tone that reveals itself clearly through a particular use of words. After the incident in Hoyerswerda, liberal newspapers referred to "the spirit of the Kristallnacht." The word "pogrom" was also often used. A foreign student with a Muslim name wrote a letter to the *Frankfurter Rundschau*, saying: "We must arm ourselves to resist the pogroms. We will not be slaughtered like cattle the way the Jews were in the past." Volker Rühle, the general secretary of the Christian Democrats, was called a "Schreibstücker," a "desk murderer"—(the term used for zealous Nazi bureaucrats like Eichmann—by a Social Democrat MP. This was for suggesting that the German asylum law, at present the most generous in Europe, should be revised.

This kind of language is not used innocently. If violence against foreigners is of possible benefit to right-wing populists who would like to stem immigration, it is also true that the Nazi specter is often conjured up by progressives of various kinds, whose air of moral unassailability is boasted with their loudly proclaimed antifascism. German unification, to take an emotive example, was bad, according to Günter Grass, because a united German Reich was responsible for Auschwitz. So it follows that proponents of a unified Germany, especially if they are conservatives, are by definition crypto-fascists. This is why the former GDR writer Stefan Heym summed up the present situation in Germany as "one Reich, one Volk, one Führer." (Even though Helmut Kohl is a rather unlikely symbol of the *Führerprinzip*.) And, in a different context, it is why Volker Rühle is compared to Adolf Eichmann. If he were to suggest, let us say, that Germany should adopt a quota system for immigrants, the word "Selektion" would be sure to pop up.

Conjuring with the past in this way not only destroys rational argument, it also obscures a genuine German problem, one which, oddly enough, few progressives dare to take on, the old problem, that is, of who is German and who is not. By law German citizenship is based on blood, in legal terms the *ius sanguinis*, instead of residency or birth, the *ius soli*. A child born in Germany of foreign parents does not count as German. This is not so unusual in Europe. France has the *ius soli*, while Holland, for instance, does not. But Germany, like Israel, Taiwan, and Russia, also has a law of return. According to Article 116 of the German constitution any former citizen, or descendant of a citizen of the Reich, as it existed in 1937, is entitled to German citizenship. A Pole from Upper Silesia, who speaks nothing but Polish, but who can show that his grandfather served in a regular unit of Hitler's Wehrmacht, counts as a German.

It goes further than that. The descendants of Germans outside the borders of 1937—the "Volga Germans" in Russia, say—are considered to be "status Germans." These are the people who might feel German, and speak an archaic German dialect, often badly—and some not at all. Their ancestors might have moved east centuries ago, but they would have been

on the Nazi *Volksliste* 3, the category of people known as "eindeutschfähig," or "suitable for Germanization," people who, to use another phrase of the time, were "biologically eligible" to be German. They, too, are accepted as Germans and can apply for immediate German citizenship, should they choose to come to the Federal Republic. Many of them do. In 1990, 397,073 arrived, about twice the number of non-Germans who seek asylum. The status of the latter can be surmised by glancing at one of the forms they have to fill in. Apart from the usual information, they have to describe the shapes of their noses.

As Klaus J. Bade, editor of an exhaustive new history of German immigration and emigration, quite rightly observes:

There are immigrants not only with foreign passports, but also with German ones. This has introduced the possibility of playing off one group of immigrants against the other.²

The ethnic Germans tend to be conservatives, potential voters for the CDU or the right-wing Catholic party. So the conservative parties, although not necessarily delighted by the prospect of millions of new immigrants in Germany, are in no hurry to change the law or limit German immigration. The Social Democrats cannot change the constitution without mustering two thirds of the parliamentary vote, which they can't, so they remain silent on the matter. Instead they stand up as spokesmen for the other groups of immigrants, the asylum seekers. "If you hit my asylum people, I'll hit your immigrants," is how a Turkish writer in Berlin summed up the politics of immigration.

The many newspapers published for German refugees from the old Reich illustrate the point. *Das Ostpreussenblatt*, for instance. Among the many articles about the suffering, past and present, of German refugees, one's eye is drawn to the headline: "FOREIGN CRIMINALITY RISES TO EXPLOSIVE HEIGHTS!" The article explains that hundreds of thousands of foreigners are waiting to flood Germany, most of them "fake asylum seekers," out merely to pluck the riches of the West. They are criminals, drug smugglers, and a threat to "our free democratic basic order." And we must realize that "international crime does particularly well in the bolt holes of our 'multicultural' society...." Rootless people, it goes on to say, are all prone to become criminals. German immigrants, needless to say, are by definition firmly rooted, once they are transplanted to German soil.

This was written by and for people who not long ago had been immigrants themselves, immigrants who like to refer to the Germans abroad as a "diaspora"—as though the Germans and the Jews shared the same fate—a conceit that is not uncommon among Germans on the right. At the Deutschlandhaus in Berlin I met the secretary of the local union of ethnic German refugees. There was a piece of folkish

²Klaus J. Bade, editor, *Deutsche in Ausland—Fremde in Deutschland: Migration in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1992).

embroidery hanging on his wall, with the following words neatly outlined in gothic script:

*Even if it rains gold in foreign parts,
or hail in the land of our fathers,
Heimat will always be Heimat.*

There was also a map of the old German Reich. "Don't you see," he said, his fist pounding into the palm of his hand, "that what happened to us in 1945, when we were driven from our Heimat, was the greatest crime in the history of man!"

So any discussion on how to deal with immigration in Germany is complicated by bloodlines, by guilt, and by unfortunate, though often deliberately invoked, allusions to the past. The tolerant pastor of Hoyerswerda embodied the almost schizophrenic quality of the German problem. He prayed that foreigners would be welcomed. All men can find their way to Jesus. Germany, he said, has a special responsibility toward refugees from all countries.

This is the conventionally correct moral attitude, the one that is preached by almost all political parties, and by many, many German pastors in their Sunday sermons. It reflects the generous asylum law of the German constitution, Article 16, which allows all victims of political persecution to apply for asylum in Germany, and, uniquely in Europe, to appeal if the application is rejected. While the application is pending, asylum seekers are housed and taken care of by the regional governments. That is how those luckless refugees ended up in a housing block in Hoyerswerda, and others, to the dismay of many Bavarian beer drinkers, on the site of the annual Oktoberfest in Munich.

But only 5 percent of the foreign asylum seekers are officially allowed to stay—and even then virtually none is granted citizenship. The others are seen as economic refugees—the lowest level in the alien hierarchy: greed knocking on the doors of a community of culture and blood. But again because of the guilty German past, few of them are actually forced to leave. As a result, more and more people pile up in large holding centers on the outskirts of inhospitable German towns. I drive past one of these every day, in west Berlin: white wooden barracks with children of every hue peering through a fence, guarded by police patrols against neo-Nazis and Skins. Unemployed, cut off, and without rights, it is no wonder some of them turn to crime.

Volker Rühle, the Social Democrat "desk murderer," at least has a concrete—though hardly liberal—suggestion. He wants to amend the law to be able to curtail the right of appeal, to send people back to where they came from, and to reject political refugees who have already been rejected in other EEC Countries. "We are not an immigrant country," said Chancellor Kohl. Yet 260,000 people were seeking asylum in 1991. There are already five million Turks, Greeks, Croats, and Italians here, many waiting to become German citizens. And up to a million "status Germans," mostly Volga Germans from the former Soviet Union, are waiting to get in. One can see why Klaus Bade describes the German dilemma as "immigration in a

nonimmigrant country."

"We cannot escape having more asylum seekers in Hoyerswerda," said the pastor. "We have tried to make people here accept them. But, frankly speaking, we hope to get immigrants instead of asylum seekers...."

"You mean ethnic German immigrants, of course?"

"Yes, yes. Then our skinheads can see that there is a difference between those who come home into the Reich, so to speak, and those who just come here to bum around."

2.

Zafer Senocak, a thirty-year-old German poet, did not come to bum around. Born in Turkey, he arrived as the child of a journalist who had been in some trouble with religious Muslims



Skinheads in Leipzig, February 1990

back home. This background is unusual. Most Turks came in the 1960s as *Gastarbeiter*, guest workers, a newly coined word thought to be less standoffish than the old phrase, "*Fremdarbeiter*," or alien workers. He attended a Gymnasium in Munich, a progressive school, where "everybody was a leftist." Zafer loved German literature. He identifies with Kafka. He only writes in German. Yet he is classified, even in well-meaning leftist newspapers, as a Turkish writer: "TURKISH LITERATURE IN GERMAN CLASSROOMS," said the headline above a piece about Zafer in the Berlin *Tageszeitung*. He is a frequent guest on television talk shows as a kind of all-purpose representative of Turks, foreigners, the third world, or whatever the case may be. He is tired of this role, but feels obliged to play it, since, he says, he is one of about ten Turks in Germany capable of doing so. Zafer, though a German poet, is still a Turkish citizen. He can apply for German citizenship, but it takes time and money, and he would have to give up his Turkish passport. Without a permanent job and a spotless criminal record, he would not be eligible at all.

Zafer is a member of a community which was never meant to be. Between 1960 and 1989 the percentage of foreigners living in Germany rose from 1.2 percent of the population to 7.9 percent. Most were guest workers, imported to do the work which the newly rich Germans no longer wished to do: road building, assembly-line produc-

tion, cleaning trains and offices. These jobs no longer satisfy the workers' children. They grow up in Germany, speaking German, and, often to the dismay of their fathers, adopting German customs. Many of them have moved up into the shopkeeping class. Some have resaturants. Some have become very wealthy in import-export business. But as Klaus Bade puts it: "The message was in the name; a 'guest' is one who doesn't stay forever." This is not to say that all the foreign guests are badly treated. Just that they don't belong. In the German version of *Sesame Street*, one looks in vain for the black, brown, or yellow face; all the kids are blond. When the governments of some north German regions wanted to give foreign workers the right to communal voting, the federal constitutional court in Karlsruhe

speakers were never contained within the nation's shifting borders, that nineteenth-century nationalists made such a cult of blood and roots and *Kultur*. When this cult is tied to politics, strange fears emerge. The fear, for instance, of being swamped by godless, rootless foreigners; the fear that Polish farm workers in Prussia in the beginning of this century posed a threat to the "Germanentum" of the German polity ("*Volkskörper*"); and the fear of Jews and gypsies: in 1721, Emperor Charles VI ordered the destruction of all gypsies on German soil; money was awarded for every dead gypsy.³

At no time were so many foreigners working in Germany as during the Third Reich—almost eight million in 1944—many of them *Untermenschen* from the east, who were treated as slaves but were thought to represent a great danger to the purity of the German race. A secret police report allegedly reflected the concern of ordinary Germans about what to do with these "animals": "Many members of our *Volk* believe they should be eradicated."⁴ This was indeed the fate of many Soviets in Germany, who died of hunger and ill treatment. Out of 5.7 million only 2 million survived.

Fear of alien contamination also runs through the theories of the constitutional jurist Carl Schmitt, whose early membership in the Nazi party and defense of Hitler's violence might have damaged his postwar career but never diminished his influence. He wrote in 1928 that "democratic equality is essentially a matter of homogeneity, the homogeneity of the *Volk*. The central concept of democracy is *Volk*, not humanity."⁵ Immigration, for him, is a danger to democracy. Here we arrive at an idea that was perhaps most congenial to Germany of the 1930s, but not unique to it. Echoes of this illiberal thesis can be heard more and more in Europe, and even in America (let alone in Japan where such ideas were never doubted).

No doubt prompted by the success of Jean-Marie Le Pen, Giscard d'Estaing has been talking about an immigrant invasion. He proposed to introduce the *ius sanguinis* in France—France, where for centuries citizenship came with birth and residence, France whose Muslim population is largely French, i.e., born in France. (Giscard himself, by the way, was born in Koblenz, Germany.) In England, too, such views are heard. The Tory politician Enoch Powell warned years ago that blood would flow if immigration were not stopped. His younger colleague, Norman Tebbit, believes that British democracy is threatened by aliens, since their loyalties are bound to be suspect. He defines "Englishness" as a matter of blood and kinship. An even younger man, the journalist Charles Moore, recently wrote a much-quoted column in *The Spectator* advocating white immigration at the expense of Muslims and blacks. Hearing his Muslim neighbors pray, he wrote, made him feel uneasy: "Such

swiftly squashed the idea. As two reporters observed in *Die Zeit*: "It is unimaginable both in Karlsruhe and Bonn that one can have German citizens of Turkish origin and Muslim religion." Many good Germans are kind and want to help. But as another German-speaking, German-educated, Germany-residing Turk remarked to one of those good Germans on television: "We don't want to be helped; we want to be treated as equals."

I asked Zafer about a recent German film I had seen, entitled *Happy Birthday Turk*, about a German-Turkish detective in Frankfurt. The man was completely German, spoke not a word of Turkish, yet was treated as an exotic foreigner by every German he met. He was either insulted or complimented on his ability to speak German. Zafer knew the story—written by a non-Turkish German—and said it was quite accurate: "The difference between Germany and other European countries is this: in France or Britain immigration is a domestic problem; here it is literally a foreign problem, a problem with foreigners."

³Bade, *Deutsche in Ausland—Fremde in Deutschland*, p. 273.

⁴Quoted by Ulrich Herbert in *Deutsche in Ausland—Fremde in Deutschland*, p. 359.

⁵Carl Schmitt, *Verfassungslehre* (Berlin: Duncker and Humblot, 1928).

feelings are not only natural, surely they are right."

The word natural makes me feel uneasy. Nationhood is neither naturally, nor biologically construed. But this is what is being argued. The German author of *Nation und Europa*, Hartmut Hesse, believes that nature is the key to our sense of political community: "Exchange is limited to strict necessity in nature and mixture is abhorrent." Since these advocates of the natural regard themselves as democrats, it follows that all would agree with Carl Schmitt that too much mixing is a danger to democracy. It is interesting that Schmitt is apparently popular these days among philosophers of the left.⁶ But it is not surprising, Schmitt professed to see through the shame of bourgeois liberalism. And nostalgia for *Gemeinschaft* was never far from certain left-wing concerns; one need only look at much third world romanticism (authenticity, solidarity, individual sacrifice for the whole, and so on) in first world common rooms.

None of this means that Moore, Giscard, or even Tebbit are neo-Nazis. They are often reacting to the easy multicultural moralism of progressives, which is indeed inadequate when faced with the practical difficulties of extensive immigration. The politics of Muslim émigrés are complicated and, as Salman Rushdie's plight shows, sometimes violent. Cut off from the country of their parents, and treated as foreigners in the country of their birth, young people sometimes seek an identity in religion. This can be a matter of young girls in France refusing to take off their head-shawls in schools. More serious are the efforts of older Muslim leaders in Britain who demand a separate parliament, or Muslim Brotherhood activists in France, who would like to live in a Muslim state. These are critical problems, especially in a country like France, where the condition of integration has traditionally been to become French in language, in habits, in style. Arab political agitation in France, stirred up by the Algerian government as an antidote to an imagined Jewish lobby, does not help the cause of integration. Neither do Muslim demands for religious privileges in public

⁶The political scientist Stephen Holmes drew my attention to the fact that the leftist quarterly *Telos* dedicated an entire issue to Schmitt's work. The editors commented that "in the present political stalemate, the left can only benefit by learning from Carl Schmitt." The stalemate referred to must include the collapse of Marxist thought. Schmitt's work, therefore, has become a convenient refuge for the antiliberal mind.

life. Unfortunately such aspirations are congenial to certain Christians and Jews, whose commitment to the separation of church and state is not always as strong as it should be. Not just in France. In Britain, the burning of Rushdie's book found favor among Christian and Jewish enthusiasts for stronger blasphemy laws.

High unemployment, recession, and inefficient welfare-state bureaucracies add to the difficulties of immigrants in Europe. The crude distinction between economic and political refugees (as though it were always a matter of either/or, witness the German Jews in the 1930s, or the Chinese and Vietnamese today) can only be replaced by a policy of immigrant quotas, a step the government in Bonn, for one, is unwilling to take. And there is a populist case to be answered that anti-foreign violence and Le Penism are less a matter of racism than of feeling politically abandoned by political elites who take decisions—such as bringing in large numbers of immigrants—over the heads of the people.⁷

But to answer these questions by dreaming of organic communities, as though human beings were plants, can only help to give a spurious air of respectability to the chauvinist *vox populi* in the soccer stadiums. There is of course a very different idea of community, a better one. I think, to deal with the problems of immigration:

In Liberal society, men did not stand by one another in an existential community: they were so many individuals, equal, of equal rights, and self-subsistent, who—rather like stones in a heap, not like the members of a body—formed unions by free decisions and contract.

This admirable definition of the open society was composed in the 1930s, with evident distaste, by M. Schmaus, an author, a German, a Roman Catholic, and an ardent Nazi. I don't get the impression that the *Volkisch* views of Herr Schmaus are shared by most of his countrymen today. But there is still something of the spirit of former times enshrined in the constitution itself. As long as ethnicity is at the core of being German, this otherwise admirably liberal nation will continue to emit a faint smell of blood.

⁷A good example of this line of thinking is Marcel Gauchet's article in *Le Debat*, Summer 1991. Le Pen, in his view, is a symptom of the political malaise in France, where the political class has lost touch with the masses. The question of immigration is, he thinks, simply a symbol of this much deeper problem.

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