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CITY OF PARADOXES

*Ah, Vienna, City of Dreams!
There's no place like Vienna!*

Madman in Robert Musil's *The Man Without Qualities*, Vol. III, Ch. 33

In the popular imagination, the name “Vienna” is synonymous with Strauss waltzes, charming cafés, tantalizing pastries, and a certain carefree, all-embracing hedonism. To anyone who has scratched this surface even slightly, a very different picture emerges. For all those things that went to make up the myth of Vienna, the City of Dreams, were simultaneously facets of another, darker side of Viennese life.

The best-known of Strauss's waltzes, *The Blue Danube*, was written a few weeks after the military defeat of Austria-Hungary by Prussia at Sadowa, which ended Habsburg claims to hegemony in the German-speaking world.¹ The rapidity with which Francis Joseph's army was dispatched by that of Bismarck made it clear that the Dual Monarchy had become, at best, a second-rate power. Similarly, the most successful of Strauss's operettas, *Die Fledermaus*, had the effect of taking the minds of the Viennese burghers off the disastrous stock-market crash of May 9, 1873, a date subsequently referred to by the Austrians as Black Friday.²

The waltz has always been the symbol of Viennese *joie de vivre*; yet it, too, had its other face. One visitor from Germany

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described Strauss and his waltzes as providing an escape into the demonic:

African and hot-blooded, crazy with life . . . restless, unbeautiful, passionate ... he exorcises the wicked devils from our bodies and he does it with waltzes, which are the modern exorcism . . . capturing our senses in a sweet trance. Typically African is the way he conducts his dances, his own limbs no longer belong to him when the thunderstorm of his waltz is let loose; his fiddle-bow dances with his arms . . . the tempo animates his feet; the melody waves champagne-glasses in his face and the devil is abroad. ... A dangerous power has been given into the hands of this dark man; he may regard it as his good fortune that to music one may think all kinds of thoughts, that no censorship can have anything to do with waltzes, that music stimulates our emotions directly, and not through the channel of thought . . . Bacchantly the couples waltz . . . lust let loose. No God inhibits them.³

This is but one of many reports in which contemporary observers spoke of the Viennese passion for the dance as pathological and as reflecting their need to escape the harsh realities of daily life in the City of Dreams.

The delightful cafés lining the streets of Vienna, where one can sit the whole day with a single cup of coffee or glass of wine, reading newspapers and magazines from all over the world, formed an essential part of the Viennese way of life; and they have always struck tourists as the embodiment of a relaxed, carefree existence. But, as with Viennese music and dancing, there was another side to this institution. Throughout the nineteenth century and right up to the present, Vienna has had a grave housing shortage. Viennese working-class housing has always been inadequate, both in quality and in quantity. Its apartments were dreary and impossible to heat adequately, so there has always been a need to escape these dingy and cold living quarters, and it was satisfied by the warmth and cheer of the ubiquitous cafés. Once again, the charm of the cafés was the other face of the hard realities of life as most Viennese knew it; and similar ambiguities characterized many aspects of Viennese life.⁴

Few cities have been as unkind as Vienna, during their lifetimes, to those men whom it proclaimed cultural heroes after their deaths. In music alone, one can cite Franz Schubert, Hugo Wolf and Arnold Schönberg; but the case of Gustav Mahler is a particularly illuminating instance of this duplicity. For, at one and the same time, Mahler was lionized as the greatest of con-

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ductors, who had raised the Imperial Opera to a hitherto-unequaled pre-eminence, yet denounced as a degenerate (because Semitic) composer.⁶ In music as in painting the voice of mediocrity, personified in Hanslick and Makart, was able to dictate to Viennese society as a whole critical standards and judgments that were for the most part sterile and academic. And Hanslick too was himself a part of the Austrian paradox: in an enthusiastic review of *Tannhäuser* in 1846, this champion of Brahms had been among the very first to sing the praises of Richard Wagner, whose archenemy he later became.⁸ In a city that prided itself as a matrix of cultural creation, life was thus made as difficult as possible for real innovators.

At the turn of the century, likewise, Vienna was the medical center of the world. America owes its pre-eminence in the medical sciences of our own time, in no small part, to the thousands of medical students who traveled to Vienna at a time when the standards of American medicine were scandalously low, in order to study with such luminaries as Hebra, Skoda, Krafft-Ebing and Billroth.⁷ Yet, in their own home city the pioneering work of Freud in psychoanalysis and of Semmelweis on infection went unrecognized, because their contemporaries did not have sufficient breadth of vision to recognize the significance of their work. The case of Freud is too well known to warrant repeating here. Semmelweis, who discovered that the dirty fingernails of midwives and obstetricians can cause fatal infection to mother and child alike, found it impossible to propagate his discovery in Vienna because doctors with political influence who were opposed to his findings saw to it that he was excluded from positions where he might implement those findings, and professionally discredited him. Semmelweis died in a mental institution some fifteen years after his life-saving discovery, unable to cope with the ridicule that had been heaped upon him and his life's work.⁸

The implications of Freud's views about the role of sexuality in human life offended the sensibilities of middle-class Viennese, while the satires and polemics of Karl Kraus attacked their hypocrisy and sham in a brilliant, witty and masterful prose style. The Viennese, in return, so feared to discuss the issues that Freud and Kraus had raised that they would never publicly mention their names in writing—so tacitly conceding the truth of their assertions. The resulting conspiracy of silence (*Totschweigentaktik*) did not prevent the works of Freud from becom-

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ing known in translation; but, in the case of Kraus, his highly idiomatic, punning, colloquial, and consequently untranslatable German has prevented him from becoming widely known. That penetrating and impartial onlooker, Robert Musil — whose novel, *The Man Without Qualities*, has captured the atmosphere of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna better than any other historical or literary work — expressed the feelings of many Austrians when he remarked, “There are two things one can’t fight against, because they are too long, too fat, and have neither head nor foot—Karl Kraus and psychoanalysis.”⁹ Intellectual and cultural center she might be: all the same, Vienna was quite incapable of coping with her own critics.

Social and political movements as opposed as Nazism and German anti-Semitism on the one hand and Zionism on the other had their origins in Old Vienna, as did some of the central elements in modern Catholic social thought and the original adaptation of Marx known as “Austro-Marxism.” Not least among the ambiguities and paradoxes of Old Vienna was the fact that this city, which had been the Habsburg capital for hundreds of years, was the capital of a realm that had *no accepted name!* As always, Musil is the best commentator:

It was *kaiserlich-königlich* (imperial-royal) and it was *kaiserlich und königlich* (imperial and royal) to every thing and person; but esoteric lore was nevertheless required to be sure of distinguishing which institutions and persons were to be referred to as *k.k.*, and which as *k. u. k.* On paper, it called itself the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy; in speaking, however, one referred to it as “Austria”— that is to say, it was known by a name which it had, as a state, solemnly renounced by oath while preserving it in all matters of sentiment, as a sign that feelings are just as important as constitutional law, and that regulations are not the really serious thing in life. By its constitution it was liberal, but its system of government was clerical. The system of government was clerical, but the general attitude to life was liberal. Before the law all citizens were equal: not everyone, of course, was a citizen. There was a parliament which made such vigorous use of its liberty that it was usually kept shut; but there was also an Emergency Powers Act, by means of which it was possible to manage without Parliament. And, each time that everyone was just beginning to rejoice in absolutism, the Crown decreed that there must now again be a return to parliamentary government.¹⁰

The constitutional and social paradoxes embodied in the Habsburg monarchy and its capital could scarcely be put more suc-

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cinctly. The sensuous worldly splendor and glory apparent on its surface were, at a deeper level, the very same things that were its misery. The stability of its society, with its delight in pomp and circumstance, was one expression of a petrified formality which was barely capable of disguising the cultural chaos that lay beneath it. On closer scrutiny, all its surface glories turned to their opposite; this is the fundamental truth about all aspects of life in the Dual Monarchy. These same paradoxes were reflected equally in its politics and its mores, its music and its press, its Imperial aristocracy and its workers.

The central factor responsible for this state of affairs was, without serious doubt, the unshakable commitment of the ruling dynasty to the Habsburg concept of *Hausmacht* — the idea that the Habsburgs were the instruments of God on Earth. The destiny of Austria-Hungary in Europe, and even the very physical structure of its capital city, were to a great extent determined by the penultimate incarnation of that idea, the Emperor Francis Joseph. Through the persons of Francis Joseph himself, his grandfather Francis I, and Metternich, who was the obedient executor of the Emperor Francis' will during the thirteen-year reign of the imbecile Emperor Ferdinand from 1835 to 1848—the so-called *Vormärz*, or "Pre-March"—the Habsburg idea shaped the policy of the Empire for a total of one hundred and twenty-four years. The most infamous manifestation of this policy was the Emperor Francis' so-called "Metternich System," which was the means of excluding revolution and revolutionary ideas from the Habsburg domain. (Metternich not only did not devise the system, he was not even in agreement with all the policies it encompassed.)¹¹ Yet even this did not satisfy Francis, who was opposed to all change per se. He was so afraid of change, indeed, that he refused to replace civil servants appointed by his predecessor, the "revolutionary" Emperor, Joseph II, even though they were opposed to his policies, insisting that the status quo be preserved in the most literal sense.¹²

Francis' goal was *Ruhe und Ordnung*—the "law and order" of a police state. Censorship was strict and universal. The construction of a railroad system was forbidden, on the grounds that it might become a vehicle of revolution.¹³ Protestant seminaries were founded, so that ordinands need not leave the country for their education, and risk picking up new and presumably sub-

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versive ideas.” All change was a threat to the Habsburg idea — “My realm,” Francis remarked, “resembles a worm-eaten house. If one part is removed, one cannot tell how much will fall.”¹⁵ As Metternich summed it up on another occasion, “*J’ai gouverné l’Europe quelquefois, l’Autriche jamais.*”¹⁶ Even after Francis’ death, Metternich continued as the executor of his policy. The net result of fifty-six years of this system was the 1848 Revolution.

The 1848 upheaval brought the eighteen-year-old Francis Joseph to the Imperial throne; and the failure of that upheaval brought in its train, on the part of the new Emperor, a whole series of policies which, in the course of his sixty-eight-year reign, became the more and more revolutionary-seeming means toward consistently reactionary ends.¹⁷ The very length of Francis Joseph’s reign gave the monarchy an illusory stability. The most radical of his moves—on the face of it—was the introduction into the western part of the monarchy, in 1907, of universal manhood suffrage; but this seemingly liberal move was, in fact, designed to protect the Emperor’s control over the Army against those in Hungary who wanted to create a separate Hungarian army,¹⁸ Despite such palliative measures, the old system survived ; and the continuity from Metternich to Francis Joseph becomes thanks to hindsight—increasingly apparent, from the appointment of Taaffe as “Kaiserminister” above party to the resignation of Koerber at the end of 1904. By this time, it had become apparent that “Austria could still be governed, but only by non-parliamentary methods, which could, of course, only be applied as long as she possessed a sufficient number of disciplined servants willing and able to carry them through.”¹⁹ But this did not seem to the Emperor to matter, so long as his control of the military was unchallenged.

As this cumbrous structure entered the twentieth century, both the Emperor’s tenacity and the conflict of nationalities, which made the Empire so difficult to govern, were growing by leaps and bounds. Even to sketch the highlights in the development of this nationalism is far beyond the scope of the present volume, since it would involve tracing a hundred years in the histories of all the multinational state’s eleven constituent peoples, in all their labyrinthine interrelations. Still, two facets of the problem are worth mentioning. Paradoxically, it was the modernizing reforms of Joseph II that roused the national consciousness slum-

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bering in the Empire.²⁰ At first, this consciousness manifested itself merely in the revival of vernacular literature and philology: the first vernacular poetry in Hungarian was produced among the sons of the Hungarian nobility at the leading Habsburg *Gymnasium*, the *Theresianum*.²¹ By the middle of the nineteenth century, however, this national consciousness had become transformed into the brand of particularist politics which ultimately led to a war which was to destroy the Habsburg regime and with it everything the Habsburgs stood for in Central Europe.

Another revealing incident is the so-called “Cilli Affair,”²² which indicates the proportions to which the problem had developed even before the end of the nineteenth century. Already, in 1895, the question as to what language of instruction should be used in the schools of this Styrian town had become significant enough to bring down a government. This was truly “a question which in itself revealed all the maladies of Austria, and all the tangles of national controversy.”²⁸ The Slovenes, who lived chiefly in the Styrian countryside, desired a *Gymnasium* in which their language would be the language of instruction. The Germans, who were a majority in the town and in the Styrian Diet, consistently refused on the grounds that, as a result, German and Germans would disappear from Cilli. The Slovenes had thus to take their case to the Reichstag, where it was decided to establish such a school; and, when the Germans in the ruling coalition heard of this decision, they left the government, which consequently fell from power. Nationalism had taken its toll. The Cilli Affair helped to make the Southern Slavs and the Czechs aware of the rise of German nationalism, which was the basis of their common plight. Before long, fist fights and flying inkwells were replacing debate between the different national factions in the Reichstag. It is surely no accident that Hans Kohn, the leading historian of nationalism, should have been a native of this “realm without a name.”

After studying nineteenth-century Habsburg history, one can hardly deny the charm of Hegelian dialectic, as a mode of historical explanation; for in it one continually sees situations begetting their own opposites. The effort to introduce German in place of Latin, so as to streamline Imperial administration, begat Hungarian and Czech cultural nationalism by reaction, and this in due course developed into a political nationalism. Slav nationalism in the politics and economics in turn begat German economic

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and political nationalism; and this in its turn begat anti-Semitism, with Zionism as a natural Jewish reaction. All in all, it is enough to cause one's head to spin. The idea of the Habsburg *Hausmacht* centered around absolute Imperial control of the military and its financing²⁴ — "One spent tremendous sums on the army," writes Musil, "but only just enough to assure one of remaining the second-weakest among the Great Powers"²⁵ — and Habsburg intransigence over this issue begat further intransigence in the Hungarian nationalists, who insisted that the only Hungary they could conceive was a "greater Hungary." Was not Hungary identical with the lands of the Crown of St. Stephen?

At times, Francis Joseph could more or less admit this claim. Especially during the years when wheat was at a premium in Europe, the abundance of the Hungarian harvests served to replenish the overtaxed Imperial Treasury, whose poverty helped to account for the Empire's "second-weakest" status. Thus, he could accept the 1867 compromise as a cruel blow necessitated by the coincidence of a precarious economic position and a major military setback. But the *Hausmacht* could not withstand further competition from the Crown of St. Wenceslas, which was the goal of the aspiring Czech nationalists. So, while Francis Joseph faithfully and tenaciously respected his commitment to Hungary — which the Hungarians themselves regarded as no more than the first step toward a purely personal union of the Kingdoms of Austria and Hungary — he could not budge in the face of demands for the recognition of similar claims by the Czechs or the Southern Slavs.²⁶ For these communities had not so much to offer as Hungary, and their claims posed a threat to the sovereign's conception of the role ordained by *God* for him and for the dynasty.

In the end, the monarchy's affairs assumed a formalism behind which there existed nothing but vacuousness and chaos. At the best of times, Francis Joseph was mediocre and shallow, relying always on ceremonial for insulation, which more and more became a cover both for his own personal failings and for his ungovernable mélange of Germans, Ruthenes, Italians, Slovaks, Rumanians, Czechs, Poles, Magyars, Slovenes, Croats, Transylvanian Saxons and Serbs. The general attitude of the nationalities toward their emperor was not unlike that common among the intellectuals in the last years of the Habsburg superpower:

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The Emperor and King of Kakanian was a legendary old gentleman. Since that time a great many books have been written about him and one knows exactly what he did, prevented or left undone; but then, in the last decade of his and Kakanian's life, younger people who were familiar with the current state of the arts and sciences were sometimes overtaken by doubt whether he existed at all. The number of portraits one saw of him was almost as great as the number of inhabitants of his realms; on his birthday there was as much eating and drinking as on that of the Saviour; on the mountains the bonfires blazed, and the voices of millions of people were heard vowing that they loved him like a father. Finally, an anthem resounding in his honour was the only work of poetry and music of which every Kakanian knew at least one line. But this popularity and publicity was so overconvincing that it might easily have been the case that believing in his existence was rather like still seeing certain stars, although they ceased to exist thousands of years ago.²⁷

Yet for all this — for the middle classes, at least — the existence of the Emperor “simply -was surprisingly real,”²⁸ as was the City of Dreams.

In all of the Habsburg lands, Vienna was unique in one important respect. Here was at least partially achieved that supranational, cosmopolitan consciousness which was the dynasty's only hope for survival. The external splendors of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna were, after all, largely due to Francis Joseph in person. Between 1858 and 1888 he rebuilt the city, as though to efface 1848 and everything it represented.²⁹ Where the city walls had previously been, the city was encircled by a magnificent, sixty-foot-wide, tree-lined boulevard, the celebrated Ringstrasse. Where the Turks had camped during the siege of Vienna, a fine new city hall was erected. But this was only a beginning. He constructed also a new Imperial Palace, with two new museums opposite it, a new Reichstag building, and a controversial new Imperial Opera House and, as the final touch, a new Imperial Theater where the Viennese could satisfy their passion for drama. Twice during Francis Joseph's reign, the city limits were extended. It abounded with parks and fine statuary. But the extension of the city limits from the *Gürtel* to their present boundaries in 1890, on completion of this great urban renewal, coincided with the last of the concessions which the aging Emperor could make to the modern world. He eschewed the telephone, the automobile, and the typewriter, as well as the electric light. (To the end of his reign, the *H of burg* was lit by kerosene lamps.) As for the

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“primitive toilet facilities in the palace,” Arthur May reports that these “so irritated Stephanie, Francis Joseph’s daughter-in-law, that she had two bathrooms installed at her own expense.”³⁰ Yet, on the entire continent of Europe, Francis Joseph’s Vienna could be compared as a city only to Paris. This was the physical setting of a Vienna that rapidly became not just a city, but the symbol of a way of life.

As the Good Old Days drew to a close, Vienna was above all a city of the bourgeoisie. Most of her leading figures in all fields came from a bourgeois background. Though Vienna had been a commercial center from time immemorial and had been the center of large-scale public administration since the reign of Maria Theresa, the Viennese bourgeoisie acquired its individual character during the third quarter of the nineteenth century. This was the period of industrial expansion, when vast fortunes were made and lost by the investor, the industrial organizer, or the man with an innovative manufacturing technique — the *Gründerzeit*, which created the material fortunes on which the next generation depended for leisure in which to cultivate the arts. Financial success was the basis for a patriarchal society. Bourgeois marriages were arranged as if they were first and foremost business mergers rather than affairs of the heart.³¹ In Old Vienna, one could truly say, with Marx, that “the bourgeoisie has torn away from the family its sentimental veil, and has reduced the family relation to a mere money relation.”³²

For the would-be tycoon, a “good marriage” was essential. The values which this society cherished were reason, order and progress, perseverance, self-reliance and disciplined conformity to the standards of good taste and action. The irrational, the passionate and the chaotic were to be avoided at all costs. By following these rules, one would be rewarded with a good name and whatever measure of success was regarded as commensurate with individual talent. This success was made visible in the property that a man possessed. As Max Stirner was wont to put it, a man expressed himself in what he *owned*.

In such a society, with a profound commitment to the order and traditions of the past, it is not surprising that stability had a high place in the list of virtues. The concrete embodiment of these ideas was a man’s home, which in this period was truly (and often literally) his castle. In this microcosm of the mon-

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archy, the father of the household was the guarantor of order and security and, as such, possessed absolute authority. And the significance of the home did not end in its being the reflection of a man's success. It was also a refuge from the world outside, a place where the tedious details of the workaday world were not permitted entry. For one who was not of that era, it is difficult to imagine just what it was like to be born and grow into maturity in such an isolated environment, with all the cares of life so punctiliously circumvented. Stefan Zweig, who grew up in just such a house, remarked wistfully:

Whenever, in conversation with a younger friend, I relate some episode of the times before the first war, I notice from their astonished questions how much that is still obvious reality to me has already become historical and incomprehensible to them. And some secret instinct tells me that they are right. All the bridges between our today and our yesteryears have been burnt.³³

The significance of Zweig's *World of Yesterday*, to those who formed its last and crowning generation, can be measured only by their sense of loss. For the war destroyed that insulation from reality which the bourgeois home had been created to provide, and it left its inhabitants confronting aspects of reality with whose cruelties they were simply unprepared to deal.

The artificiality of this bourgeois view of life is manifest at every point. If the home was more than a mere *machine a vivre*, so too the objects that filled it had a symbolic value as much as a function. At the time, conservative critics saw the influence of the nineteenth century as a disaster permeating all aspects of life. Nowhere was the true nature of the era more apparent than in the lack of style which marked its design. Having no style of their own, the bourgeois could only imitate the past; so they filled their homes with imitations of the art of past eras. Every room was cluttered with garish *objets d'art* in differing styles. Again and again, the complex was preferred to the simple, the decorative to the useful, resulting in rooms that were vulgar to look at and barely habitable. If fashion dictated that one's home must be furnished in the styles of former ages and other cultures, its dictates were not to be disputed. Musil's ironic eye saw to the heart of the matter:

The *nouveau riche* class, on the other hand, in love with the imposing and grandiose eras of their predecessors, had involuntarily made a fastidious

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and refined selection. Wherever a castle had passed into bourgeois possession, it was not merely provided with modern conveniences, like an heirloom chandelier with electric wiring run through it; but, in the furnishing of it, too, what was less good had been cleared out and things of value had been added, either according to personal choice, or on the infallible advice of experts. Incidentally, this process of refinement was demonstrated most impressively not in the castles but in the town houses, which had been furnished in keeping with the times, with all the impersonal luxury of an ocean liner; but which—in this country of refined social ambition—still in an ineffable breadth, in a scarcely perceptible widening of the distance between pieces of furniture, or in the dominating position of a picture on a wall, preserved the delicately clear reflected glint of a great glory that had passed away.³⁴

So, in the very furnishings of the homes that were their castles, the rising-bourgeoisie expressed their own imperfect emulation of the Habsburg monarchy's ancient Catholic aristocracy.

Once inside his castle, the paterfamilias could devote himself to enjoying the fruit of his labors — to the art, the music and the literature which were at once the “natural” humanizing outlet for all of his passions and the source for him of metaphysical truth. In due time, as the desire to imitate the aristocracy became more widespread, patronage of the arts was transmuted into a symbol of wealth and status, and was pursued with ulterior motives. Once the castle and refuge had become a reflection of the man in the market place, the polish and grace acquired from the arts became desirable for something other than their intrinsic worth. A man proved that he was someone by devoting his free time to the arts as wholeheartedly as he did his working time to his business. Viennese of the generation that reached maturity at the turn of the century were raised, indeed, in an atmosphere so saturated with, and devoted to, “aesthetic” values that they were scarcely able to comprehend that any other values existed at all.

An eminent historian of Viennese culture in this era has contrasted Austrian aestheticism with its French and English counterparts :

In brief, the Austrian aesthetes were neither as alienated from their society as their French soulmates, nor as engaged in it as their English ones. They lacked the bitter anti-bourgeois spirit of the first, and the warm melioristic thrust of the second. Neither *dégagé* nor *engagé*, the Austrian aesthetes were alienated, not from their class, but with it from a society that defeated its expectations and rejected its values.³⁸

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Traditionally, the bourgeois had found in art an instrument of instruction in metaphysical and moral truth. During the *Gründerzeit*, this notion was so far extended that man's aesthetic taste was a barometer of his social and economic status. For the following generation, Art became a way of life. If the generation of the *Gründer* held that "Business is Business" and art is essentially the ornamentation of (business) life, their sons, for whom art was essentially something creative, retorted that "Art is Art" and business is a tedious distraction diverting one from (artistic) creation. The generation of the *Gründer* valued an art that was oriented toward the values of the past; they were collectors, or curators of those museums which they referred to as their homes. The art of the younger generation, by contrast, was forward-looking and innovative, and it formed the center of their lives.

This was the background to the circle of young poets, focused around Arthur Schnitzler and Hermann Bahr, who met at the Café Griensteidl and were known as *Jung Wien*: the most distinguished of them being Hugo von Hofmannsthal and Stefan Zweig. They had been raised in a society that thought it quite natural to center its life upon the theater, which formed the standards of speech, dress and mores;³⁶ and in a city in which the standards of journalism were exceptionally high. Indeed, the *Neue Freie Presse* was a contender for the title of the best paper in Europe. "In Vienna," Zweig wrote, from his aestheticist point of view,

there was really only one journal of high grade, the *Neue Freie Presse*, which, because of its dignified principles, its cultural endeavors and its political prestige, assumed in the Austro-Hungarian monarchy a role not unlike the *Times* in England or the *Temps* in France.³⁷

That which they (and indeed their fathers) considered to be the *ne plus ultra* in the paper was the literary or cultural essay, the "feuilleton" —

The feuilleton writer, an artist in vignettes, worked with those discrete details and episodes so appealing to the nineteenth century's taste for the concrete. But he sought to endow his material with color drawn from his imagination. The subjective response of the reporter or critic to an experience, his feeling-tone, acquired clear primacy over the matter of his discourse. To render a state of feeling became the mode of formulating a judgment. Accordingly, in the feuilleton writer's style, the adjectives en-

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gulfed the nouns, the personal tint virtually obliterated the contours of the object of discourse.³⁸

It is clear from Zweig's autobiography that to have an essay accepted by Theodor Herzl, the feuilleton editor of the *Neue Freie Presse*, was to have "arrived" on the Austrian literary scene.

The status that the fathers had purchased by their business labors meant little to the sons. For these devotees of *l'art pour l'art*, the only worthy task was to nurture the fledgling poet within. To the fathers, it seemed immoral that the sons should reject the values of the society in which they themselves had struggled to obtain an identity. Once having succeeded in establishing themselves in the old order, the fathers were its staunchest defenders, and they did their utmost to curb the innovating natures of the younger generation. So, at least, the young aesthetes saw the educational system, whose diet of learning unrelated to life filled them with a constant weariness and boredom. To escape the world where "business is business," they fled to the coffeehouses frequented by artists, where they found a vitality and spontaneity of self-expression completely lacking in their rote education. Given such a system of regimentation, in which the teacher's word was law and there were no such things as students' rights, it is hardly curious (Zweig commented) that it should have produced the man who discovered the significance of "inferiority feelings" in the explanation of human behavior — Alfred Adler.³⁹ So repressive was the system, in Zweig's view, that any thought or activity not in explicit conformity with traditional authority became, for many, a source of guilt.

Zweig did not explicitly identify the origins of Freudian psychoanalysis — with its emphasis on the frustration springing from repressed sexual desire as the key to an understanding of neuroses and of human behavior in general — with the fact that Freud too was a Viennese; yet he emphasized that this was a society completely preoccupied with the thought of sex. The very fact that sex was never to be discussed openly insured that it was always upon one's mind.⁴⁰ Sexual taboos, far from promoting "purity" of thought and deed, served to make people sex-conscious to the extreme. Whether the bourgeois Viennese of the time were more or were less preoccupied with sex than their opposite numbers in Paris, London or Berlin is an open question; but it is at least certain that there was no socially accepted chan-

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nel for expressing this preoccupation. The older generation viewed it as an anarchical force which must be completely regulated by society. There must not be the slightest public admission that such an urge actually exists, let alone that it is fundamental to human nature or that its frustration can have disastrous consequences. This conspiracy of silence about sex had two results: on the one hand, an overt inhibition and ignorance of sexual matters; on the other, a covert emphasis on sex.

In a society so thoroughly patriarchal, the women were bound to suffer most. Every part of the feminine anatomy had to be concealed by clothing so cumbersome that it was impossible to dress oneself without assistance.⁴¹ This cumbrous clothing necessitated in turn a totally artificial manner of movement on women's part. The code of conduct required of women was equally artificial—on top of which, society did not permit women to be educated beyond what was essential to “good breeding.” Finally, the very fact that middle-class marriage was first and foremost a business contract rather than a personal union⁴¹² helps to explain why so many of Freud's patients were middle-aged bourgeois women and also some of the limitations to the scope of Freudian analysis. In short, the whole design of the society was such as to frustrate women. Zweig remarks:

This is how the society of those days wished young girls to be: silly and untaught, well-educated and ignorant, curious and shy, uncertain and unprotected and predisposed by this education, without knowledge of the world from the beginning, to be led and formed by a man in marriage without any will of their own.⁴³

The man's problem was different, but none the less disturbing. Since a middle-class marriage presupposed the gentleman in question to be established both financially and socially—that is, thoroughly committed to the *status quo*—it was necessary for men to remain unmarried up to the age of twenty-five or twenty-six; social manhood was thus recognized only six to ten years after actual manhood. If a man was to find a sexual outlet, therefore, he had to turn to prostitutes, for sexual relations with a girl of “good breeding” were entirely out of the question. Hence (Zweig asserts), prostitution “constituted a dark underground vault over which rose the gorgeous structure of middle-class society with its faultless, radiant facade.”⁴⁴

While women were required to submit to the frustrations of

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celibacy, men could find an outlet — but at a high price, since they always risked venereal disease. The only alternative was to shun this world for the artist's life of the coffeehouses, and this was to label oneself a decadent, immoral aesthete.

If any single factor can be singled out to account for the special character of Vienna's bourgeois society—if, indeed, this is itself simple enough to be called a single factor—it is the failure of liberalism in the political sphere. It is, perhaps, hardly surprising that in the Habsburg monarchy liberalism should have been stillborn, for the liberals came to power only as a result of the debacle at Sadowa, at the hands of Bismarck. Carl Schorske tells the story in a single paragraph :

Austrian liberalism, like that of most other European nations, had its heroic age in the struggle against aristocracy and baroque absolutism. This ended in the stunning defeat of 1848. The chastened liberals came to power and established a constitutional regime in the 1860's almost by default. Not their own internal strength, but the defeats of the old order at the hands of foreign enemies brought the liberals to the helm of the state. From the first they had to share their power with the aristocracy and the imperial bureaucracy. Even during their two decades of rule, the liberals' social base remained weak, confined to the middle-class Germans and German Jews of the urban centers. Increasingly identified with capitalism, they maintained parliamentary power by the undemocratic device of the restricted franchise.⁴⁵

The middle classes in general were never ready to assume political power. Given so small a base — made even smaller by the scandals which followed the Crash of 1873 — liberalism was spent by the 1890s and was supplanted by the rise of the new mass parties which came to dominate Viennese politics. For a middle class which, try though it might, had never entirely succeeded in becoming a part of the Old Order, aestheticism became the only alternative to immersion in business affairs. So art, which had earlier been the decoration adorning middle-class success in business, became for the younger generation an avenue of escape. (This explains how Schorske can refer to the Austrian aesthetes as alienated “*with* their class” rather than *from* it.) At the turn of the century, accordingly, Viennese aestheticism and the mass political movements emerged alongside each other, but independently, as the twin orphans of liberalism.

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The goals which the liberals had aspired to realize once they came into power were, firstly, the transformation of the Habsburg Empire into a genuine constitutional monarchy in which they, the entrepreneurs, would replace the aristocracy as the ruling class; secondly, the establishment of a strong central administration through parliamentary channels; and thirdly, the replacement of superstitious feudal Catholicism with modern scientific rationalism (i.e., *laissez-faire*) as the official state philosophy.⁴⁸ All of this was to be brought about by the national group with the deepest cultural roots: the German *Volk*. In the minds of the German-speaking population, then, liberal nationalism had always been based upon cultural facts. What Slovak poets were there to compare with Goethe and Hölderlin? What composers of the rank of Mozart, Gluck and Beethoven, not to mention Wagner? The Italians alone could compare with the Germans, but they were never interested in anything but a complete separation from the Habsburg domains. Ruthene, Slovene and Slovak culture had become literate only recently. Czech and Hungarian literary and musical culture were barely a century old. Surely, thought the liberals, there could be little doubt in anyone's minds that no other nation could lay claim to cultural equality with the Germans, let alone hegemony over them. Yet these arguments had by then lost the wider force and appeal they had possessed in the days of Joseph II's attempts at reform. By 1848, indeed, the cultural nationalism evoked in response to Joseph's Germanization of the imperial bureaucracy had become a political nationalism. By the nineties, it had become mass-based and, by the dialectical pattern of Habsburg history, had elicited its regular counterreactions among the Germans in Vienna.

In 1848, the three major cities in the Empire — Prague, Vienna and Budapest—were all of them German cities; indeed, the overwhelming majority of towns possessed largely German populations.⁴⁷ (It is easy for outsiders to forget that Prague, for example, was a German cathedral city long before Vienna.)⁴⁸ This state of affairs was largely changed by the *Grundungsfeber* of the fifties and sixties, with Vienna as the most notable exception. She, of course, had the advantage of an immediate countryside populated by Germans; nevertheless, by the time World War One rolled around, her population of two million already included 200,000 Czechs.⁴⁹ Drawn away from the countryside by the agrarian depressions of the late-nineteenth century, which

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affected the entire Empire except for Hungary and Transylvania, the movement into the cities of these minority groups transformed their composition and their politics.

The failure of Habsburg liberalism to appeal to these new groups in no small part sealed its fate. Thus, by the turn of the century, the most thriving political groups in Vienna were working-class movements captained by defectors from liberalism. Viktor Adler, the organizing spirit behind Austrian Social Democracy; Karl Lueger, the Christian Social demagogue; Georg Ritter von Schönerer, the fanatical Pan-German; and even Theodor Herzl, the prophet of Zionism — each began his political career as a liberal. The defection of these men from liberalism resulted from the traditional liberals' incapacity to come to grips with the problems of urban growth and industrialization, with Adler and the Social Democrats seeking to continue the constructive work of the liberal tradition, while in Lueger and Schönerer — and, by reaction, Herzl — the politics of reason was transformed into a politics of fantasy, built upon the social blight of anti-Semitism.

Adler and Schönerer had been associated with the radical wing of the liberal party which drafted the Linz Program in 1882.⁶⁰ (By 1884, Lueger too had publicly endorsed one of its main points.) The Program combined social reforms that were contrary to *laissez-faire* with a nationalism that was openly, but not rabidly, anti-Semitic. Insofar as the liberals were unable and unwilling to carry through such reforms, they fertilized the soil for the mass movements which were to displace moderate middle-class liberalism so completely, both from the right and from the left.

The housing crisis, alluded to earlier, was but one of the grave problems facing the industrial proletariat in Vienna.⁶¹ Vienna had always had a housing shortage, and the rapid growth of its population (from 476,220 in 1857 to 2,031,420 in 1910) merely aggravated a long-standing problem. By 1910, the average Viennese dwelling housed 4.4 persons, with an average of 1.24 per room (including kitchens, bathrooms and front halls); “a considerable number of persons” were even reduced to “living in caves dug in railway embankments, in boats, in hiding places under the bridges, and in other emergency refuges.” The situation in Budapest (the fastest-growing capital city in nineteenth-century Europe) was even worse: in 1905, thirty-five persons

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were found to be nesting in the trees of its public parks.⁸² Yet the Viennese situation was critical. Many people were forced not only to let all their spare rooms, but also to rent bed space to *Bettgeber*, who enjoyed no privileges whatsoever in the apartment, not even the use of any closet space that might exist. Young girls sometimes turned to prostitution, simply in order to have a place to sleep. In 1910 there were but 5,734 single-family homes, housing a mere 1.2 percent of the total Viennese population. Only 7 percent of the buildings used exclusively as dwellings were equipped with bathrooms and toilets, while a scant 22 percent had indoor toilets. On the average, rent took one quarter of a worker's wages. Admittedly, the workers did not face the same slum problem as their counterparts in, say, Naples or Glasgow, but theirs was far from a pleasant lot.

As late as the eighties, Viennese workers faced a seven-day, seventy-hour week, tempered by a customary absenteeism on Mondays, to sleep off Sunday night's hangover.⁵³ Many factories employed women and children alongside men. The women received considerably smaller wages than the men, and they had no alternative second source of income except "the oldest profession." After 1883, employers were required to see that children were allowed Sunday — or at least one whole day per week — *off* work; children were also allowed to rest for an hour, after eleven hours' work, but their wages were, of course, not the wages of an adult. (Even so, not all of the industrial workers had moved to the factories because they had been displaced by machinery in the agricultural areas; despite the fact that the very best industrial wages were kept at a bare minimum, some were actually attracted by the pay!)

The average worker's diet too reflected the conditions under which he lived. He had a breakfast of coffee and a roll, a mid-morning snack of bread and butter, a main meal of soup, vegetable(s), bread, and perhaps coffee or beer; in the afternoon, he had a snack of bread, and an evening meal which was basically bread, with the occasional sausage. His table carried beef, horsemeat and fish only on festive occasions. In such circumstances, workers formed benevolent organizations, which developed into trade unions. By 1870 these had won the right to collective bargaining, and the industrial workers finally found effective political expression, with the reorganization of the Social Democratic party, in December of 1888.

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Before that date, the history of Austrian Social Democracy had been one of internecine strife over ideological theory and strategy. This theoretical struggle ensured that the party remained leaderless. The transformation which, within twenty-two years, brought the Social Democrats from insignificance to being the largest party in the Reichsrat, while holding together a political spectrum ranging from anarchists to monarchists, was the work of one man, Viktor Adler. The charisma of Adler, like that of Lueger, Schönerer and Herzl, virtually established and sustained his party. In each case, the story of the man is the story of the party, and to understand the man is to comprehend the social forces that he personified.

Like so many of the *dramatis personae* of his age, Adler was of Jewish ancestry, though he had accepted Christian baptism and had liberal, even nationalist, leanings.⁶⁴ His early nationalism *was* cultural, and he was for a time a vehement Wagnerite. But his experiences as a physician treating the poor made him aware of the conditions of the proletariat, in a city whose cost of living was the highest in Europe and comparable with that in the United States. He thereupon embraced the Marxian solution to the problem of modern society, with the same boundless enthusiasm he had previously displayed for the works of Wagner. This enthusiasm was matched only by his capacity to communicate it to those who surrounded him. Although he professed the “revolutionary and antiliberal” Marxism of the German Social Democrats, he did not formulate policy any more than his German counterparts. Instead, he stressed that the most important thing for Socialists was unity. His powerful and moving oratory, as well as his personal philanthropy, help to explain how he was able to provide the leadership required. While he insisted upon the primacy of the economic order and the inevitability of revolution, he oriented his life and practical policies around the values of reason, justice and nonviolent opposition to capitalism.

Adler's evolutionary approach was based upon the premise that the main concern of the party ought to be preparedness — that is, that the party must make its members ready to assume power when the time came. He therefore initiated adult-education programs, established libraries, discussion groups for workers of all ages, and Social Democratic organizations of every sort. Two first-rank publications were founded: the daily *Arbeiter Zeitung*, and the monthly *Die Zukunft*. His central aim was

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to better the whole life of the entire community. Thus, while his socialism transcended the limitations of liberalism by extending its goals, it displayed continuity with the ideals of reason and progress to which the liberals had subscribed. So, while liberalism failed as a political movement, it would be false to say that it died; right up to the very last days of the Empire, the majority of middle- and upper-middle-class Viennese professed to be “liberals.” Nor was Viennese liberalism sterile. Its theorists still rank high in the history of economics; for instance, Monger’s Marginal “Utility Theory — so characteristically Viennese in its emphasis upon the psychological and subjective factors which underlie value — is still a central tenet of many modern economists.⁸⁵ Last but not least, liberalism’s legacy to Adler’s socialism was just that continuity which distinguished Adler and the party he created from the rival movements inspired by Lueger, Schönerer and Herzl.

If Adler dedicated his charismatic energies to humanistic and rational goals, Karl Lueger, the leader of the Christian Social party, lent his to demagoguery and opportunism.⁶⁶ As mayor of Vienna, Lueger possessed these qualities more abundantly than any of his contemporaries. “Handsome Karl” had an eloquent command of the charming Viennese dialect, and a sense of occasion at baptisms, weddings, anniversaries and suchlike, which endeared him to the *petit bourgeois* artisans, clerks and municipal servants, who made him the most powerful elected official in the Dual Monarchy. Just as Adler harnessed and channeled the political aspirations of the proletariat, Lueger did likewise for these “little men” who felt that they were gradually being squeezed out of existence between big business and organized labor.

Lueger came to the Christian Social movement in 1888, the same year that Adler began his reorganization of the Social Democrats at Hainfeld. Catholic political thought in the Empire had previously been based on an antiliberal, feudal aristocracy. It contrasted the idealized personal character of the “relations of production” in the precapitalist era to the dehumanizing plight inflicted on the proletariat by capitalist industrialization. Its chief sponsors were the Princes Alois and Alfred Liechtenstein, while the ideologue of the movement was a Prussian convert who had emigrated to the Empire, Karl von Vogelsang. (Vogelsang can also be credited with the basic social ideas

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of Pope Leo XIII's encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, which makes him the father — or grandfather — of modern Catholic social thought.)⁶⁷ All of this Lueger used for his own purposes. The son of a concierge at the Vienna Technical Institute, he had risen by his own labors to become a lawyer and a member of the Municipal Council, and was a man whom the “little men” could easily respect. Lueger made his reputation in the Municipal Council, where he was known for his relentless exposure of the corruption of “Jewish capitalists.” He enhanced his popularity by his advocacy of franchise reform and, as mayor, by a vast program of public works.

Nowhere in liberal capitalism was the Jewish element more prominent than in the Habsburg Empire. Those who sought scapegoats during the twenty-three years of depression which followed the Bourse crash of 1873 found obvious candidates in the Jews and in the corruption of many liberal deputies, which had involved so many Jewish financiers and businessmen. One historian has written that “anti-Semitism rose as the stock market fell.”⁵⁸ As a young left-wing liberal, Lueger had already been exposing corruption, mismanagement and profiteering in municipal affairs in the mid-seventies, and he constantly railed against the corrupting influence of big business. But his anti-Semitism was more opportunistic and propagandist than fanatical or doctrinaire — social and economic, rather than racialist or religious. The shopkeeper could respond to this because his competition so often came from “the Jew down the street.”

Once securely established in power — having been elected mayor five times before the Emperor, who found his rabble-rousing techniques disgraceful and unbecoming in a public servant, finally agreed to confirm his appointment—Lueger's attacks on the “Judaeo-Magyars” grew fewer and fewer, and less and less vehement. Throughout his career, indeed, he rarely declined invitations to dine at the tables of the Jewish capitalists whom he excoriated in his speeches. This attitude is best summed up in his infamous remark, “*Wer ein Jude ist, bestimme ich.*” When the circumstances were appropriate, he could in fact bring himself to say something not unpleasant, at least about the Viennese Jews:

I dislike the Hungarian Jews even more than I do the Hungarians, but I am no enemy of our Viennese Jews; they are not so bad and we cannot do

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without them. My Viennese always want to have a good rest; the Jews are the only ones who always want to be active.⁵⁹

Lueger's redeeming characteristic was the fact that, despite being a demagogue, he did give his whole energy to the cause of the "little men," and he left the lot of the *petit bourgeois*, and the city in general, substantially improved. In the political sphere, he championed electoral reform, after the gross injustices of the system of "electoral geometry" devised by Schmerling. The vast public-works projects which he initiated included the formation of a native gas company to replace the British company that had hitherto supplied Vienna, improved public transportation, a new water system, improved bridges, the establishment of orphanages and hospitals, the construction of canals, enlarged park and playground space, more schools, free lunches for poor children, and many similar social services. So it is unjust to condemn Lueger out of hand, as some have tended to do, just because Hitler considered Lueger's policies models for his own public-works programs. It is fairer to recall, instead, that the fine statue adorning the Luegerplatz was put up after World War One by a Social Democratic administration. In his own way, Lueger is as difficult a character to appraise as the Emperor who so despised him. Both men had certain genuinely commendable traits, and our judgment is easily warped by the complexity both of the events in which they participated and of those subsequent developments which they affected.

No such complexity surrounds Lueger's counterpart in the German Nationalist movement in the Habsburg Empire, Georg Ritter von Schönerer.⁶⁰ His infamous legacy was the explicit rejection of the ideals of reason and progress, and their replacement by the politics of the will to power. Of the four figures who most reflect the atmosphere on the political scene in Vienna before World War One, Schönerer was the least charismatic and the only one who never achieved a mass following. His effect was, rather, to introduce the politics of violence into the city; the characteristic marks of his brand of political nihilism were violent rhetoric and street fighting. He was the son of a wealthy parvenu nobleman and was known as the Knight of the Rosenau, after his father's estate; and he became increasingly hot-tempered, romantically "Germanic," and fanatically anti-Semitic as

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he grew older. Schönerer began his political career by representing the interests of the neighboring farmers, who recognized him as an “improving landlord.” Like Lueger and Adler, he at first associated himself with the left democrats among the liberals in the Reichstag. As with so many among their number, he feared that Taaffe’s “Iron Ring” was destined to produce an encirclement of the culturally superior and enlightened Germans by the inferior and barbarous Slavs. This would be especially damaging to the Germans of Bohemia and would orient foreign policy toward the Tsar and away from Schönerer’s ideal of Germanic superiority, Bismarck. (Incidentally, German nationalism, like all ideologies, was abhorrent to the pragmatic Bismarck.)

Schönerer’s fear of Slav encirclement, combined with a feeling for social questions, led him to collaborate with Adler, Friedjung and others, in drafting the Linz Program in 1882. (Curiously, the *Statthalter* would not permit Schönerer’s group to convene at Linz, so the program could not be adopted there.⁶¹) In 1885 a twelfth point was added, pledging that the nationalist faction of the Liberal party would work for “the removal of Jewish influence from all sections of public life . . . indispensable for carrying out the reforms aimed at it.”⁶² From this point forward, Schönerer’s fanatical nationalism and doctrinaire anti-Semitism began to displace his concern for social justice. In 1884, Lueger joined him in denouncing a proposal to renew the Rothschild concession for the Northern Railroad linking Vienna with the industrial areas of northern Bohemia, as carrying further the corrupting influence of the Jews on public life. As early as 1878, Schönerer had shocked and astounded even his fellow German nationalists, when he shouted out in Parliament, “If only we already belonged to the German Empire I”⁶³ Some ten years later, on March 8, 1888, the Knight of Rosenau gave his concept of nationalism a thorough practical demonstration, when he and his companions wrought havoc in the offices of the *Neues Wiener Tageblatt*, breaking up the presses and beating up the staff.

Schönerer paid a high price for this exploit: a jail term, loss of political rights for five years, and cancellation of his patent of nobility. Up to this point, his following had consisted largely of university students, professors and other professionals, who felt threatened by competition from Jews; together with artisans, small businessmen and minor officials sharing similar fears. Yet he won these followers with a self-contradictory ideology,

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well described by Schorske as a *mélange* of “ aristocratic elitism and enlightened despotism, anti-Semitism and democracy, 1848 *grossdeutsch* democracy and Bismarckian nationalism, medieval chivalry and anti-Catholicism, guild restrictions and state ownership of public utilities.”⁶⁴ With these ideals, he could attract people to himself, but his fanaticism and intransigence prevented him from carrying his ideas through to fruition. Consequently, he lost the city’s artisans and clerks to Lueger; his inability to accomplish anything effective, reinforced by his anti-Catholic and anti-Habsburg rantings, finally made him repulsive to that class of men, while his personal authoritarianism led inevitably to a fragmentation of his following.

After the *Neues Wiener Tageblatt* fiasco, when Lueger had displaced him, Schönerer turned away from the capital to seek a following elsewhere, in the industrial areas of northern Bohemia. Andrew Whiteside has meticulously described the nationalism which developed among the German working class, as they met competition from Czechs who were willing to work in poorer conditions for less pay.⁶⁶ Both Czechs and Germans considered that the Social Democratic party, with its emphasis upon gradualism and reconciliation, was selling them out. As a result, each group formed its own working-class party in opposition to the internationalist and prodynastic policies of Adler. It did not take very long for the Germans to lay the blame for the failure, as they saw it, of the Social Democrats in Bohemia. Were not their ranks Jew-ridden? (As August Bebel was reported to have said; anti-Semitism was “the socialism of the dunce.”)⁶⁶ In Bohemia in the late 1890s, however, this was but one aspect of the all-pervasive nationalities question. The Badeni Ordinances of 1897 stipulated that both German and Czech were to be languages of the inner service in Bohemia, and provoked a violent reaction both there and in Vienna. To the Germans, this was tantamount to recreating the Iron Ring, since few Germans bothered to learn Czech. To the Czechs, it was their long-awaited due. To Badeni, it guaranteed Czech support in the decennial negotiation with Hungary over the economic treaty. To Schönerer, it was an opportunity, such as had not before offered itself, to practice the politics of the will.

In the capital, in Graz and in Salzburg, as well as in Bohemia, rioting broke out on a scale that could be compared only to the events of 1848. But there was this important difference: 1848 had

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witnessed the outcry of hungry mobs for parliamentary representation, while 1897 witnessed the radicalization of the otherwise highly respectable law-and-order bourgeois. Mass nationalism, initiation to that mysterious entity the *Volk* by street violence and a baptism of blood, had arrived in the Habsburg monarchy and was there to stay. Badeni himself suffered a slight wound in a duel with Schönerer's fellow nationalist Karl Wolff. The matter became serious enough to affect the Viennese restaurants, where Germans refused to serve Czech customers. Though Schönerer's greatest political success was to come only in 1901, when twenty-one members of his Pan-German Union were elected to the Reichstag, within twelve months of the 1901 elections the Pan-German Union had splintered, and his true legacy to the politics of the Empire was his role in the 1897 demonstrations. His conception of violence as a political means was to leave a deep impression on the minds of those to whom German nationalism came as a messianic message. These included the house painter and would-be architect from Linz, Adolf Hitler, whose admiration for Lueger was eclipsed only by his sympathy for the dedication and idealism which, as he saw it, the Knight of the Rosenau brought to his noble cause. As late as 1928, Oscar Jászi could write his *Dissolution, of the Habsburg Monarchy* without referring to Schönerer. The style of his nationalism, which rejected the values upon which European civilization had been raised, had not yet become the pattern of political praxis. But the time was soon to come when a frustrated man from Linz was to spell out in gross detail the practical implications of Schönerer's nihilism.

Perhaps the strangest paradox of Viennese life is the fact that the politics of both the Nazis' Final Solution and the Zionists' Jewish State not only sprang up there, but had strikingly similar origins.⁶⁷ True, Zionism already had a long history before Herzl discovered that he was not only a Jew but the leader of the new Exodus. But it was only when this extraordinary man became converted to the Zionist movement that it became a political force to be reckoned with. Herzl's path to Zionism is so curious that it is well worth following out here; his personal story is itself an essential element in the collapse of the City of Dreams.

Herzl was not a native Viennese. He was born in Budapest, but not long after his arrival in Vienna in 1878 he, like so many other

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immigrants, had become, so to say, more Viennese than the Danube. His family was Reform Jewish, politically liberal and culturally German. The exclusion of all but a very few Jews from the aristocracy led them to compensate by entering the cultural elite. For the purpose of the official census, which used language as the criterion of nationality, Yiddish was treated as a German dialect, so the Jews had for years been counted as Germans. So it need be no surprise that the Jews of Vienna should have turned to German culture to create an aesthetic aristocracy, and so escape (as Herzl saw it) from the lives of trade for which middle-class Jews were otherwise destined. Many a Jew found himself an enthusiastic Wagnerite, like Viktor Adler, while Herzl was not alone among his race in responding affirmatively to his first encounter with German nationalism.

A considerable number of Viennese Jews had long ceased to practice Judaism and had accepted baptism, usually as Methodists. Many of them had actually forgotten that their families were Jewish. Viktor Adler and Heinrich Friedjung, the liberal historian, both belonged to this class of converts; as a young man, Herzl himself was ready to accept baptism, apart from his fear of offending his parents. Although the prosperous apostate and semiapostate Jews were the most prominent of their race, there were Jews in every class save the high aristocracy, the military and the civil service. By 1910, indeed, they constituted five percent of the city's population and made up the largest segment of the legal, medical and journalistic professions. The Leopoldstadt in the second district, across the Danube Canal, meanwhile housed large numbers of immigrant Orthodox "Ostjuden" from Galicia, who were the very antithesis of their capitalist coreligionists in the fashionable upper-middle class. Taking the number of people of Jewish descent into account would drive the figures considerably higher, for even the ranks of the anti-Semites included many apostate Jews, who displayed a public anti-Semitism as a sign that they had renounced their ancestral past.

Herein lies the shocking element in Herzl's career. His Zionism was, in a real sense, the result of his own initial anti-Semitism and his failure to escape, as he sorely desired, from his own Judaism. Herzl was first, last and always a dandy; his insistence that frock coats be worn at the first Zionist International Conference in Basel is but one instance of that affectation which was one of his primary characteristics. His manner of dress and his

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aspirations to the aristocracy were functions of his dandyism, and his greatest fear was social rejection; he never got over his rejection by the Albia fraternity at the university, when his defense of Judaism caused his exclusion. Naturally enough, he was drawn to the medium of the feuilleton, which required of its practitioners a high degree of narcissism in order to “subjectify the objective” to the necessary degree. By 1891, Herzl’s facility in the form had procured him the prestigious position of Paris correspondent for the *Neue Freie Presse*, and his experiences there transformed the dandy into a Zionist. Early in life, Herzl had digested Dühring’s arguments for the revocation of Jewish emancipation — he had agreed that the businessman-Jew, who was lacking in culture and nobility, ought to be excluded from Europe. In Paris, he now came into contact with the writing’s of Drumont, and these confirmed in him the idea that the Jew did not “belong” in Europe, and had no roots there. During this period, Herzl covered two trials, each of which was to have an impact upon his Zionism. The first was that of the anarchist Ravachol, who deeply impressed him with his fanatical will to power. The other was the Dreyfus Affair, which confirmed all that he had read in Dühring and Drumont. When Dreyfus was condemned, France, the cradle of liberty, had rejected him too. Only socialism could save the Jew, but what was there in socialism of the aristocratic or aesthetic? Nothing. Failing any solution in rational politics, Herzl turned, like his contemporaries Barrès, D’Annunzio and George, to romantic solutions. The first was that Jewish honor must be established by dueling; Herzl himself would challenge a prominent Viennese anti-Semite, such as Lueger or Prince Alois Liechtenstein, and if he were killed he would become a martyr to his cause and excite world opinion in its favor. If, on the other hand, he killed his opponent, he would stage a spectacular, moving defense, exposing the evils of anti-Semitism; as a result, he would be freed, and the world would be set aright. His alternative plan was, if anything, even more of an adolescent fantasy: he would enlist the support of the Pope against the enemies of the Children of Israel; and in return he would see to it that the Jews of the monarchy would present their youth in St. Stephen’s Cathedral for mass conversion.

But it is to Herzl’s “experience” of Wagner’s *Tannhäuser* that we directly owe his advocacy of the Jewish state. During a performance of that opera, the truth of irrational *Völkisch* poli-

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tics became clear to him, in a flash of intuition. The only answer lay in a state where Jews would not be guests or intruders, but would truly have roots. For Herzl, this involved translating Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk* from the sphere of art into that of politics. How could such a Jewish state be realized? Herzl's answer was characteristically Viennese: "If you wish it, it is no fairy tale," and "If you don't wish it, it is a fairy tale."⁶⁸ Thus, the origin of modern Zionism was yet another Viennese response to the problems of alienation in modern mass society, which spread throughout the rest of Europe only after World War One. Like Schönerer, Herzl sought to lead his people in founding a new society, within which Truth would not be compromised by a degenerate aristocracy, a materialistic middle-class, or an ignoble proletariat: rather, it would be enshrined in a spiritual elite, whose collective will alone would bring it into existence.

Such were the dreams that were dreamed by those who knew Vienna best. This was the bitter pill that lay beneath the sugar-coating of hedonistic aestheticism and *Sachertorte*. Yet the middle-class, and above all the young middle-class, Viennese hardly recognized the seriousness of the situation that was developing before their very eyes. Zweig reports that, when he and his friends read the newspapers, they passed over the Boer War, the Russo-Japanese War, and the Balkan crises, in much the same way that they disregarded the sports page.⁶⁹ Before the final cataclysm of 1914, almost their only inkling that the Habsburg stability disguised an essential cleavage between appearance and reality came from the Redl Affair.

In May 1913, it was discovered that the deputy director of the Imperial-and-Royal Army Intelligence, Alfred Redl, was a traitor, and that he had become one in order to finance a life of homosexual debauchery.⁷⁰ Which was the more shocking and disgraceful crime in the bourgeois eyes of the City of Dreams, the treason or the homosexuality, is a moot question. What is certain is that the Redl Affair opened the closet door and displayed the skeletons that had hitherto been concealed within it. Redl, who was the son of a poor railway clerk in Lemberg (Lvov), had risen to prominence in the Empire's military machine, by an exceptional capacity to conceal his true opinions and attitudes, an uncanny knack for saying just what his superiors wanted him to say, and for doing just what was expected in any situation.

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with so many boys of his generation, his sexual awakening came during his days in Cadet School. (Musil's own partly autobiographical novel, *Young Törless*, centers on just such a situation and was received as nothing short of scandalous.) Redl cleverly hid the truth about his homosexuality as successfully as he had hidden everything about himself. He was a man with but one goal: the status which accompanied success in the military. He sacrificed everything and everyone to this end, proving that anything was possible in the Empire for a man who did not quibble over means, so long as he kept up appearances.

To Vienna, he was the ideal officer — temperate, clever, charming, even masculine. He had taken great care to cast just such an image, putting on the facade of a loyal, obedient officer, quick to size up a situation. His generosity endeared him to his colleagues and subordinates, while his elegant, extravagant tastes were those that the Viennese cherished most. When the news reached Stefan Zweig in Paris that the General Staff colonel whom he had known by sight was a double agent in the pay of the Tsar, he confessed himself terror-stricken. For the Redl case illustrated the deceptive aspect of everything in the monarchy.⁷¹ This officer, who had been commended by the Emperor, was a traitor. War, the last thing conceivable to the bourgeois mind, was by no means out of the question. Evidence of homosexuality high in the military—though, in fact, it was rare—struck at the very core of bourgeois morality. Yet the most important aspect of the Redl Affair was not immediately obvious. Here was the case of a man who had succeeded *precisely because* he could assume a mask that completely veiled his real personality. In Habsburg society as a whole, artificiality and pretense were by now the rule rather than the exception, and in every aspect of life the proper appearances and adornments were all that mattered.

No one knew this, or portrayed it in his work, better than Arthur Schnitzler. This physician's son, himself a physician turned playwright, brought his unique talents to bear in a masterful diagnosis of the "Last Days of Vienna."⁷² Like his eminent contemporaries, Sigmund Freud and Viktor Adler, Schnitzler was a bourgeois Jewish doctor, and had worked as an assistant in Meynert's clinic, where he specialized in the techniques of hypnosis.⁷⁸ When he turned from a typical middle-class career to writing, Schnitzler was thus intimately familiar with the course of bourgeois life. In so doing, however, he did not re-

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ject his past but rather turned his abiding interest in the psyche into new channels. Literature had been his first love and he had set it aside at his father's insistence, while pursuing a more conventional and respectable bourgeois occupation. Schnitzler's extraordinary capacity to diagnose the plight of his society, in literary form, was thus the result of the fact that, as physician and poet, he straddled two vastly different generations with vastly different sets of values. And this dual background provided Schnitzler with a theme that pervaded all of his work—namely, the problem of communication.

Schnitzler rightly saw that the problem of communication has two aspects: one personal, the other social. The meaninglessness of sex reflected the identity crisis of the individual, while anti-Semitism was its social embodiment. While the sexual elements in Schnitzler's world have long been in the public eye, his concern with anti-Semitism is anything but insignificant. He considered it to be one manifestation of the human condition, a symptom of a universal spiritual malaise, rather than some sort of social paranoia. In his novel *Der Weg ins Freie* he portrays the essential insolubility of the Jewish problem, and is critical of his friend Herzl's all-too-facile solution. His play *Professor Bernhardi* is an attempt to classify and analyze anti-Semitism in its various guises: by the end, *Bernhardi* is a morphology not only of anti-Semitism, but of all the destructive and dehumanizing forces at work in society. In his portrayal of his hero, Schnitzler remains true to his class, his profession, and his race. (In Schnitzler's pathological universe of decadence and egoism, the medical profession is one of the few bright spots.) Egoism lies at the root of all of men's problems. They cannot communicate, because they encapsulate themselves hopelessly within social roles which satisfy their immediate desires, and thereby rob themselves of all hope of more lasting fulfillment.

His *Reigen*—familiar in English translation, as *Hands Around, Ring Around the Rosey* and *La Ronde*—is a penetrating glance at the whole spectrum of social types, epitomizing the dynamics of human relationships reduced to a single common denominator, in the desire for immediate sexual gratification. *Reigen* depicts ten characters—rich and poor, mighty and humble, crass and sensitive—in the context of sexual relations of both kinds with others of the ten, and unfolds like a dance of death. It is a sequence of character studies by a master literary psychoanalyst,

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whom Freud could hail as a “colleague,” The characters include a soldier who cannot wait to be satisfied by one woman, so that he may rush on to the next — reflecting Schnitzler’s low view of the military, especially the officer class, whom he portrays as shallow, intolerant, self-indulgent and forceful devotees of an anachronistic code of honor. His Count, like the rest of the declining aristocracy, is treated with a sympathetic irony; at the opposite end of the social ladder is the streetwalker, society’s victim, who is none the less capable of a spark of kindness toward the embarrassed, unsure Count.

Eroticism thus becomes a principle of social dynamics, and sexuality is the only kind of personal contact of which Schnitzler’s characters are capable. This is the very point of the “dance” motif: sex without love is a meaningless, mechanical ritual. As in Strauss and Lehar, society gleams and glitters on the outside, but within there is only hedonistic egoism. One half of society is incapable of opening itself to another, one half refuses to make the effort. In Musil’s words, “the notion that people who live like that could ever get together for the rationally planned navigation of their intellectual and spiritual destiny was simply unrealistic; it was preposterous.”⁷⁴ A coating of waltzes and whipped cream was the surface covering to a despair-ridden society in which anti-Semites denounced Felix Salten for the “Jewish babble” of the rabbits in *Bambi*,⁷⁶ and police extorted protection money from women forced into prostitution by meager wages.⁷⁶ In the process, all proportion between appearances and realities had disappeared.

Near the beginning of his classic study of suicide, published in 1897, Émile Durkheim remarks how timely such a study is:

At any given moment the moral constitution of society established the contingent of voluntary deaths. There is, therefore, for each people a collective force of a definite amount of energy, impelling man to self-destruction. The victim’s acts, which at first seem to express only his personal temperament, are really the supplement and prolongation of a social condition which they express externally.⁷⁷

Subsequent thought has done much to reinforce Durkheim’s views. If the Habsburg Empire’s national, racial, social, diplomatic and sexual problems were as grave as we have suggested, the Empire’s suicide rate should have been correspondingly high. The list of prominent Austrians who were to die by their

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own hands is, in fact, both long and distinguished. It includes Ludwig Boltzmann, the father of statistical thermodynamics; Otto Mahler, the brother of the composer, who was not lacking in musical talent himself; Georg Trakl, a lyric poet whose talents have been rarely surpassed in the German language; Otto Weininger, whose book *Sex and Character* had made him a *cause célèbre*, only a few months before his suicide in the house where Beethoven died; Eduard van der Null, who was unable to bear the criticism that was leveled upon the Imperial Opera House he designed; Alfred Redl, whose story has already been told; and no less than three of Ludwig Wittgenstein's own elder brothers. Perhaps the most bizarre case is that of General Baron Franz von Uchatius, the designer of the 8-cm. and 9-cm. cannon. His crowning achievement was to have been the gigantic 28-cm. field piece; but, when the weapon was tested, the barrel split, and a few days later Uchatius was found dead in his arsenal, having cut his own throat. Even the Imperial-and-Royal House had not been spared. In 1889, at his lodge in Mayerling, Crown Prince Rudolf took his life and that of the woman he loved, Baroness Maria Vetsera, in circumstances that were more lurid than romantic. These were a few of the men for whom Vienna, the City of Dreams, had become a city of nightmares past further bearing.

The problems of identity and communication plagued Viennese society at every level—political and social, individual and even international. The international problems followed fast upon the exclusion of the Habsburg realm from the young strong German Reich that had been fashioned by Bismarck. The political problems are too vast to be discussed adequately in a single volume, let alone a chapter or paragraph; they can at best be hinted at by considering the case of the Czechs, who were probably the best-placed of the Empire's subject peoples—that is, of the nationalities other than the Germans, Magyars, Italians and Poles. By 1907, when universal manhood suffrage was introduced into the western half of the monarchy, the Czechs could no longer communicate with the Germans, because the Germans failed to recognize the Czech language. As with all the minorities, this was their means of identifying themselves within the Empire; language was the basis of social as well as political identity in the bitter struggles for civil rights which marked the final years of Habsburg rule before the cataclysm of 1914.

In a different but by no means unrelated manner, the genera-

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tion of aesthetes — typified by *Jung Wien* — sought in their poetry a more “authentic” language, one that would allow them to escape from the strait-jacket of bourgeois society. And the remainder of our story has to do with the ways in which such geniuses as Kraus and Schönberg, Loos and Wittgenstein, recognized that the escapism of the aesthetes was no more than a narcissistic pseudo-solution to the problem. Whereas Musil considered that “everyday language, in which words are not defined, is a medium in which nobody can express himself unequivocally,” and that unambiguous expression would be possible only in some private, nonfunctional, as yet unknown — and perhaps impossible — “holiday language,”⁷⁸ based directly on Machian “sense-impressions,” Kraus, Schönberg, Loos and Wittgenstein found the key to a solution of all these problems in a fundamental, but essentially positive critique of the accepted means of expression.

Since all these men took a cue from the life and work of Karl Kraus, it is to him that we must now turn.