VIENNESE VIGNETTES

PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS



Edmund Schechter

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by

Edmund Schechter

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From Generation to Generation . . .
In memory of my parents, David and Hania . . .
For my son, Peter David

FIRST EDITION

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Introduction

A few years ago on a trip to Europe, I had the opportunity to introduce my wife and son to some of the places in Austria where, more than four decades ago, the Nazi onslaught which so drastically changed the course of my life as well as the lives of my friends and contemporaries, began.

My purpose in writing this modest volume is an attempt to record a number of personal experiences as examples of the tragic events, perilous flights, and occasional miraculous rescues that people of my generation had to encounter as a consequence of Hitler's war of annihilation against the Jews. At the same time, I wanted to describe in a general way some of the customs and characteristics of Vienna and the Viennese, dating back to the days of Kaiser Franz Joseph, which were part of the special lifestyle of that city.

It seemed important to me to sketch some of the Jewish aspects of the city where Theodor Herzl prophetically foresaw the creation of a Jewish state, which, if untold, might be forgotten entirely. Among these is the story of the Jewish national dueling fraternities and the ascent of the Jewish sports club Hakoah to the zenith of the European soccer elite.

Some of these events and happenings might be, in history's overall view, nothing more than footnotes, but such footnotes had often their role to play at times of cataclysmic developments.

I have also endeavored to give a description of the strong and militant Jabotinsky Zionist Revisionist movement in Austria as well as of the charismatic personality of Jabotinsky himself

as an ideological forerunner of Menachem Begin's government in Israel.

Finally, it is my hope that this book might help my son and the sons and daughters of my friends and those of similar background to somewhat better understand the world and times their parents came from.

VIENNESE VIGNETTES

Part I

Vienna—*Die "Kaiserstadt"* —the Emperor's City

The death of old Kaiser Franz Joseph in 1916 and the dismemberment of his Austro-Hungarian empire in November, 1918, ended Vienna's century-old role as the proud and glittering capital of a multinational empire of a dozen nationalities and 45 million inhabitants. The dismantlement of Austria-Hungary was the dramatic and tragic outcome of the First World War.

Vienna, the capital of the mightiest power in Central Europe, was reduced to a capital of a nation of 6 million people, out of which 2 million lived within its city limits.

Budapest, Prague, Bruenn, Crakow, Lemberg, Trieste, Zagreb, Laibach, Czernowitz, and many other regional cities, which used to be Vienna's traditional feeder points, had become parts of other countries. Throughout the centuries, Hungarians, Czechs, Poles, Slovaks, Italians, Croats, Slovenes, Rhutenians, Romanians and Jews—all the different nation groups of the Monarchy—had been attracted to Vienna as if by a magnet.

The age-old monarchy during Kaiser Franz Joseph's long reign was a strange configuration. His white-bearded father figure was the unifying symbol of the empire. His rule was autocratic and progressive, centralized and federal at the same time. The different nationalities enjoyed a wide degree of cultural autonomy. Schools and universities taught in Polish, Czech, Hungarian, Italian, and all the other languages spoken in the empire. Members of parliament or the cabinet, highly placed functionaries, and aristocrats carried the foreign-sounding names

of all the different nationalities that the monarchy comprised and spoke with all possible degrees of accent. The cultural discrimination that existed was often committed by nationalities against other minorities, such as Hungarians against Slovaks and Croats, and Poles against Rhutenians, rather than by the Viennese central government.

With the liberal revolution of 1848, the clamor for national self-determination grew stronger and stronger. The formation of the German Reich under Bismarck in 1871 caused many German-speaking Austrians to relinquish the idea of the multinational empire and to aim for reunification with *"Gross-Deutschland,"* Greater Germany. It is interesting, however, that the German nationalist groups wishing the destruction of the monarchy never became real mass parties. They attracted mainly the upper-strata, students and intellectuals. The *"Anschluss ans Reich"* began gaining in popularity rapidly only after the dissolution of the monarchy in 1918, when the economic future of truncated Austria seemed hopeless.

The Viennese liberals, on the contrary, were strong supporters of the monarchy, but at the same time desired the continuation of the preponderance of German culture and language. This, however, was an impossibility in the political climate of the second half of the nineteenth century, which witnessed the emergence of nationalist sentiments all over Europe. In addition, great inventions in communications contributed to rapid progress of all the numerous nationalities of the Danube monarchy. Therefore, the only way for the Hapsburg empire to have remained stable would have been a far-reaching restructuring on a truly multilingual and multinational basis.

The monarchy did make considerable progress in this direction. Compared to the situation in Soviet-captive Eastern Europe of today, the Hapsburg empire was undoubtedly an island of freedom. However, what was achieved seemed insufficient for the high-flying hopes of that period in history.

The Jews in the monarchy were among its most loyal citizens. Their full equality dated from 1867; they had risen steadily

in commerce and the professions and had started to play an important role in literature, music, and the arts. Thus, their belief in the Hapsburg empire was deep-seated, and it distinguished them from other nationalities that harbored—rightly or wrongly—bitter grievances against the dynasty.

Liberalism and absolute confidence in continuous progress assumed almost the status of a modern religion among the Jewish middle classes during the reign of Franz Joseph.

When liberalism started to decline in the eighties, Jews remained its staunch and almost sole supporters. Schoenerer and particularly Lueger had little trouble exploiting this phenomenon when they started their antiliberal and anti-Semitic campaigns. As Hapsburg loyalists who in great majority belonged to the German *"Kulturkreis,"* the Jews became at the same time the target of all the non-German nationalities that saw in the Hapsburgs the impediment to their national self-fulfillment.

The decades of weakening bonds among the different parts of the Danube monarchy, however, did not change the absolutely predominant role of Vienna. It remained the *Kaiserstadt* to which everybody looked up and in which all the pride and care of the monarchy were invested. During the reign of the *"Alte Kaiser,"* as Franz Joseph was called when he grew older, Vienna became the beautiful city we know today. The Ringstrasse was built with its monumental palaces like the Parliament, the Rathaus, and the Burgtheater. The Opera House was erected with all its splendor, and the opening was a festive occasion for the whole empire. It is typical of the Viennese sense of tradition that, after the destruction of Hitler's war, one of the first tasks of the country was the rebuilding and reopening of the opera. It was restored exactly to its original state. Its ceremonial rededication marked, for many Viennese, the real proof that peace and normality had returned.

Vienna's greatness was precisely the result of its being the *Kaiserstadt.* It was the hub of the empire and, as such, of all of Central Europe. It had a great medical school, because every

talented doctor in every provincial town dreamed of practicing in Vienna. It had the best lawyers, since the superior courts were located in Vienna, and all the laws were enacted there. Architects and engineers converged on Vienna, because its majestic buildings were the showplaces of the empire.

There was no better opera anywhere. The Konzerthaus and Musikverein witnessed the best music-making in Europe and—since this was long before the emergence of America as a major cultural center—in the whole world. The Burgtheater was the greatest theater in the German language. Writers, scientists—all gravitated to Vienna, whatever their mother language was and whether or not, deep in their hearts, they really hoped for the dissolution of the monarchy. Careers were made and people became famous in Vienna, not in the provinces.

Even before the advent of airplanes and electronic transmission, the far-flung empire had a truly national newspaper, the *Neue Freie Presse,* published, of course, in Vienna. It was delivered by the reliable Austrian railway network the next day to the most remote corners of the monarchy. This was the paper for which Theodor Herzl worked as Paris correspondent when he covered the Dreyfuss trial in 1895 and conceived the idea of *Der Judenstaat (The Jewish State)* and of Zionism.

The high nobility gave Imperial Vienna its peculiar sparkle. The old families had a style of living, cultivated over centuries, that combined doing nothing in a busy way, with a casual elegance that was particularly appealing to Viennese. It was this high aristocracy that maintained beautiful old residences in Vienna and large estates in the provinces. Even today a leisurely and rewarding walk through the city will reveal the magnificent *Palais* (palaces) of the Palffys, who were Hungarians; the Pallavicinis, who were Italians; the Lobkowitzes, who were Czechs. The exquisite riding academy was called the *Spanische Reitschule.* The Belvedere castle and park were built by Prince Eugen, a Frenchman. All these palaces and many others, such as the Ballhaus and the national library, are true gems of architecture that convey this special supranational aura that was the essence of the Hapsburg empire.

Some of the glory of the imperial court reflected upon every member of the high aristocracy. Viennese gossip was alway busy—but in a friendly and benevolent way—with some rumored or true "scandal" story of a liaison between a son of an illustrious family with a *Waeschermaedl* (literally laundry girl—but meaning any girl of a poorer family).

Visits to the *Separées* at the Cafe Sacher, where members of the high nobility liked to have their supper "celebrations" in splendid isolation, or *Fiaker* (horse-and-buggy) outings to the Hauptallee in the Prater were titillating news and eagerly commented upon.

Some aristocrats, though, were leading actors in the political life of the monarchy. The Hungarian high aristocracy played a particularly important role, and families like the Apponyis, Karolys, and Tiszas were household names on the Austrian political scene.

Kaiser Franz Joseph himself was essentially a lonely figure, even more so after the assassination of his wife Elisabeth. In no other capital, in a period where Victorian prejudices were still prevalent, could his liaison with Katharina Schratt, an actress, have found such understanding as among his Viennese subjects.

The high aristocracy, though separated from the rest of the population, never aroused the same popular resentment and envy that the new upwardly mobile industrial and commercial bourgeoisie caused. The aristocrats had always been rich; they always had their titles; they never had to work for a living. The newcomers, however, had moved from humble origins; they had been nobodies like the rest of the population and had succeeded by hard work, superior intelligence, or chance. And in doing so, they awoke all the *Missgoennerei* (petty envy) that the Viennese are particularly adept in expressing. In addition, by modernizing the industrial and commercial structures, they had, in many instances, directly interfered with the well-being and traditional mode of livelihood of the small artisans and shopkeepers, both of which were important groups of the Viennese population. Many of these upcoming members of the bourgeosie were Jews, and thus this economic envy and malaise took on specific anti-Semitic overtones.

The values of the new bourgeois industrial and commercial class and particularly of its large Jewish component—work ethos, innovative spirit and competitive drive—were not especially highly regarded in Vienna. The city had traditionally respected the aristocratic lifestyle of comfortable and elegant leisure and had at the same time always admired cultural achievements. It is, therefore, significant that many sons of the upper-class Viennese Jewish bourgeoisie did not follow their fathers in their business pursuits. Neither did they attempt to imitate the lifestyle of the aristocracy, choosing instead to play a prominent part in the *fin-de-siécle* culture of Vienna. Even Arthur Schnitzler, though himself a medical doctor, eventually preferred a literary career as his lifetime avocation. Some, like Gustav Mahler, broke with their Jewish origins, either because they had lost all feeling for their Jewish past, or because it was otherwise impossible to achieve the high cultural positions they aspired to.

Stephan Zweig, in his incomparable autobiography, *The World of Yesterday,* described masterfully the cultural ambiance of Vienna and the role of the Jewish bourgeoisie as creators, patrons and customers of the fine arts.

Among those who were typical representatives of what is known in the world as the peculiarly Viennese cultural achievements of that epoch were Arthur Schnitzler, Stephan Zweig, Franz Werfel, Richard Beer-Hofman, Hugo von Hofmanstal, Felix Salten, Peter Altenberg, Gustav Mahler, and Arnold Schoenberg. Many others, of equal or lesser fame, were also Jews or former Jews. All were able to experiment and to create, because they found in the Vienna of their times a congenial and receptive atmosphere for their work, whether it was in literature, the theater, music, or painting.

It was the Vienna of the great opera, the operetta of the Strausses, the famous Burgtheater performances, the earthy humor of the popular playwrights Nestroy and Raimund, the new trends in music by Mahler and Schoenberg, the "neo" schools of Klimt and Kokoschka, the beginnings of psychoanalysis by Siegmund Freud.

Similar remarkable flourishings could be found also in other big Austrian cities such as in Prague, in the writings of Max Brod and Franz Kafka.

There are some students of history who, when asked in what period of modern times and where they would have best liked to live, would answer that Vienna in the last few decades of Kaiser Franz Joseph's reign would not have been a bad place.

The regime was fairly benevolent, the economic progress steady, the cultural environment cosmopolitan and brilliant, and the city beautiful. Technological advances followed one another and contributed to an easier and more comfortable life. Medicine also made terrific strides, and new inventions in all fields seemed just around the corner. Peace appeared secure, and prosperity was spreading to ever-wider groups of the population.

Sure enough, these favorable evaluations of "life under the Kaiser" are superficial, since they apply mostly to the upper and middle classes and, of course, to the aristocracy, but there was already a noticeable upward mobility to the rapidly expanding middle classes.

Industrialists, specialized workers, and merchants from all over the monarchy were attracted to Vienna, the city where deals were made, opportunities found, and better wages paid. People came and went, but many stayed and after a short time felt like "Viennese." Foreign names like "Pospischil" or "Nagy" could be found all over the city. A district such as Simmering was predominantly Czech, and the Leopoldstadt was largely Jewish. Thus, it was this mixture of populations, this constant influx of new blood, and the best and most adventurous minds of the whole region that accounted for Vienna's cultural blossoming and remarkable creativity.

This blend of cultures, traditions, and customs showed itself not only in the "higher" aspects of life but everywhere from language to cuisine.

The Viennese "Language" and Multinational Cuisine

The typical Viennese dialect was spiced with Latin, Slavic, Hungarian, and Jewish expressions. Aristocrats and street ur-

chins alike said *"Servus"* as a greeting, and it was forgotten that this most informal and casual Viennese word of recognition was Latin for "I am your slave" (*servus*) and originally was meant as the formal way to address a person of much higher status. Disorder and confusion were characterized by the slavic *Palawatsch* and a thief was the Yiddish and Hebrew *ganev* (gonif). The lowliest in the hierarchy of waiters in a restaurant was a *piccolo* (Italian for small or little), and I got once a police summons for *palestern* in a public park. This word meaning playing ball games, also has an Italian background.

Few people remember today that, till 1866, the monarchy included Milan and Venice, and the South Tyrol (today Italy's Alto Adige), with Bozen, Meran, and Trento, remained Austrian till 1918.

The German spoken in Vienna differs from the *Reichsdeutsch* (German spoken in the German Reich—today the Federal Republic of Germany), not only by its softer intonation and inflection, but, more important, by the use of words completely unknown in German-speaking areas outside Austria.

Generally, the Viennese grammatical approach to activity has always been more passive. A German would proclaim, *ich habe gesessen,* rather than the Austrian *ich bin gesessen* (I was sitting). The Germans, if they go for a walk, state that they *laufen* (run), even if they hardly move. An Austrian modestly *geht spazieren* (goes for a stroll).

And these differences refer only to the regularly spoken German and not to the dialect often used by the people for their daily conversations. If spoken fast and authentically, it becomes completely foreign-sounding to a German from the central and northern parts of his country. Expressions like *Hieb* (district) or *Watschen* (a slap in the face) or *einweimperln* (to ingratiate oneself) or *zerspragеln* (to spread oneself thin) or *Katzerl* (a nice-looking girl—a "chick") could just as well be Greek. Other words like *Trottel* (idiot) or *fesch* (good looking) have found their way into the higher spheres of the spoken language.

The famous Viennese cuisine was and is to this very day the typical product of the mixture of races and recipes. The *gulyas*

(goulash) is Hungarian, and the *Knoedel* (dumplings) and *Powidltaschkerln* (pastry filled with plum marmalade) Czech. *Risi Bisi* (peas and rice) is a Venetian dish, and so is *Polenta* (corn, or maize). *Brimsen* (a type of spiced cottage cheese) is Rumanian, and *Holusken* (stuffed cabbage) is Polish-Rhutenian. *Kilbassen* is a Polish wurst, and *Ringlotten* (a fruit) is a Viennization of the French *reine claude. Palatschinken* (crepes with sweet fillings) are claimed by both Hungarians and Czechs, and I have seen tempers flare on the part of normally restrained people of both nationalities if their respective claims were contested. *Wiener Schnitzel,* however, should be safely assumed as originally Viennese, unless one wants to give credence to the Italian thesis that this most Viennese of all Viennese dishes is in reality a *Milanesa,* annexed into the Viennesse menu during the occupation of Milan.

The differences between the "German" and "Viennese" languages were particularly marked in the eating sector. In Vienna, *Nachtmahl* signifies dinner and not *Abendbrot. Jause* means Viennese high tea—served with coffee, of course—and not *Nachmittagskafe* or *Brotzeit. Karfiol* is used for cauliflower and not *Blumenkohl. Zwetschken,* not *Pflaumen,* is the word for plums, and a *Scherzl* is the end piece of a loaf of bread. The German *lecker* for a fine-tasting dish would sound like an abomination in Vienna. *Paradeiser* (compare "love apple" in English), not *Tomaten* is "tomatoes," and *Semmeln* is used rather than *Broetchen* (breakfast rolls). *Kukurutz* is ordered in a restaurant and not *Maiskolben* (corn on the cob), and above all *Mehlspeisen* and not *Nachtisch* for dessert.

I remember that I had luncheon, at the famous Sacher restaurant shortly after the war and studied the menu for a worthy conclusion after having eaten the specialty of the house, a *Tafelspitz* (boiled beef). All of a sudden, I discovered that the dessert section I was looking at, was headed by the word *Nachtisch!* I called the waiter indignantly and asked him whether the management was not as yet aware that Hitler was dead and with him the *Nachtisch.* The *Herr Ober* (headwaiter) almost fainted. He felt—rightly so—that he had been accused of a serious crime.

All the menus circulating in the dining room were immediately collected, provisionally corrected by pen, and reprinted the next day. Vienna's honor was saved and *Mehlspeisen* restored to their rightful place.

When I began to teach my son some German, I maliciously selected pure Viennese slang expressions in order to "surprise" my wife, who is originally from Hamburg, and could not even begin to guess to what Peter alluded.

Viennese loved the easy sentimentality of their *Heurigen* (new wine) songs and particularly tributes to the *Schoene Blaue Donau* (beautiful blue Danube). It was, therefore, ironic that all that could be seen of this great river in Vienna, was not blue but gray and often dirty, and above all it was not the Danube itself but a canal—the *Donaukanal.* To get a glimpse of the real Danube one had to travel quite a distance from the center of town.

Vienna in its exterior appearance revealed sharp contrasts. The inner city, the Ringstrasse, and its adjacent districts were beautiful, elegant, cared for, and undoubtedly showplaces of the world. However, once one was outside this privileged territory, Favoriten, Hernals, Orrakring, like other more outlying Viennese *Bezirke* (districts) could assume a rather depressing character. Beyond these areas, however, Vienna returned to its glory. The *Wienerwald* (Vienna woods) took over with their vine-covered hills and green meadows, old, village-type suburbs and *Heurigen* (drinking establishments where new wine was consumed).

The large, anonymous, and nondescript area between the inner city and the surroundings, however, contained the great majority of the Viennese population. Their less-than-satisfactory living conditions might have greatly contributed to some of Vienna's more unpleasant traits, which, according to the stories of the older generation, must have already existed during the Kaiser's reign. The proverbial *"Goldenes Wiener Herz"* (golden Viennese heart), or the relaxed atmosphere in a coffee house,

could not hide a streak of meanness that showed itself in *Schadenfreude,* a glowing about somebody else's mishap or the open envy regarding the neighbor's better apartment or station in life.

What today would be called "ethnic slurs" were commonplace in Vienna. A disorganized household or office was called a *Polnische Wirtschaft* (Polish mismanagement). A not-too-bright man was characterized as a *Boehmischer Trottel* (Bohemian idiot). An Italian who did anything that seemed undesirable was castigated as *Katzlmacher,* a highly derogatory epithet, the origin and meaning of which, however, is clouded in mystery. And a Jew? He was, of course, a *Saujud,* a pig of a Jew.

This mixture of attractive *Gemuetlichkeit* and quite ugly intolerance existed for decades, side by side, till the latter escalated into abominable cruelty after the Anschluss in 1938.

The Fall of the Monarchy

As the tension in the Balkans, a "footstep" away from Vienna, increased, and Greeks, Bulgarians, and Serbs fought to liberate themselves from Turkish rule, the nationalities conflict in the monarchy grew more acute. Many of the Hapsburg loyalists in the younger generation of the nobility and bourgeoisie had concentrated their hopes on the *Thronfolger* (successor to the throne), Erzherzog (Archduke) Rudolf, the Kaiser's son. Rudolph was reputed to be more liberal than his father. The expectations were that Rudolph, once on the throne, would be willing and able to initiate far-reaching structural reforms in the monarchy that would lead to a truly multinational state with full equality for all, thus preserving the unity of the Hapsburg Empire.

The death in Mayerling of the Archduke, in January 1889, along with his mistress, Marie Vetzera, was an event that was never completely clarified. Its romantic overtones have always excited the fantasy of the people and thus produced a vast literature in all languages and quite a few films. The death of

Rudolph effectively ended all justified or unjustified political hopes and aspirations.

The new successor to the throne, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, a nephew of the Kaiser, did not enjoy Rudolph's popularity and did not maintain the vast personal contacts with other national groups, particularly the Hungarians, as Rudolph had. The centrifugal forces of the different nationalities, who felt oppressed by the Vienna-based, German-speaking power elite of the monarchy, continued to increase. Czarist Russia did everything in her power to incite the various Slav nations within the monarchy to an irreversible policy of separatism.

In this overcharged atmosphere, Archduke Ferdinand was shot by Serbian nationalists in August 1914 on an official visit to Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia-Herzegovina, one of the most outlying provinces of the far-flung empire. These shots started the first World War, set in motion the whole chain of events that transformed the map of Europe and subsequently of the entire world; triggered in its aftermath the Russian Revolution; the Hitler barbarism; and eventually World War II.

The central powers, Germany, Austria, Hungary, and Turkey lost the war. The monarchy finally collapsed and was dissolved. This collapse had been fervently hoped for by many of the leaders of the empire's different nationalities. The unforseen was that the monarchy did not fall apart like a house of cards, as could have been expected from an army that was composed of soldiers and officers from a dozen nationalities, who, according to the irredentist propaganda, were badly oppressed. On the contrary, the Austrian army fought well and continued in the war even after the symbol of the empire's unity, Kaiser Franz Joseph, died, in November 1916, after a reign spanning almost three generations. His successor, Kaiser Karl, another nephew of Franz Joseph, could, of course, not claim the almost legendary attachment and loyalty that the "old" Kaiser had commanded during his unprecedented long reign.

The war ended in 1918 with the victory of the "Entente," decisively helped by the entry of America on the side of France and England, and the proclamation of President Wilson's famous fourteen points.

The military defeat of the Central powers and the Wilson doctrine regarding the right of self-determination of all nations, sealed the fate of the Danube monarchy. Whether, seen in historical perspective, it was wise to dismantle a structure that despite all its shortcomings, had enjoyed a tolerably liberal regime and unified for centuries a vast economically complementary territory, must be left to the unending arguments of historians.

Karl, the last Kaiser of the millenary Hapsburgs, was sent to exile in Madeira, and the treaty of Versailles brought the successor states into existence. Poland, formerly divided between Russia, Prussia, and Austria; Hungary and Czechoslovakia emerged as new states. Serbia incorporated the former Austrian provinces of Croatia and Slovenia, and became the kingdom of Yugoslavia. Romania took the Bukovina, and Italy was enriched by the South Tyrol and Trieste, the former monarchy's only port.

The western German-speaking parts of the Hapsburg Empire, keeping the old label "Oesterreich," declared themselves a republic with a federal and parliamentary system. The Constitution promulgated in 1920 was drafted by Professor Hans Kelsen, one of Austria's most prominent jurists, who, as a Jew, had to flee the country in 1938 and later taught in Berkeley, California, for many years.

Vienna—the Republican City

I grew up in republican Vienna, between the two world wars, in a transitional period of tremendous intensity and tension.

From one day to the next, Vienna found itself the capital of a small country. The trauma of a cruel four-year war culminated in the loss of Vienna's paramount position in Central Europe.

With the end of the Danube monarchy, the Viennese hinterland consisted only of the German-speaking western provinces which contained mountains, forests, and alpine lakes of unsurpassed beauty. However, neither these wonders of nature nor the remaining Austrian cities, like fabled Salzburg, the old bishopry, or Innsbruck and Graz, with their universities, and certainly not Linz, Klagenfurt, Bregenz, or Eisenstadt, could replace in cultural depth and diversity, the elite of the multifaceted and multiethnic elements that had once flowed into Vienna from the four corners of a vast empire.

The aftermath of the war brought outright hunger, ravaging inflation, and the seeming impossibility of economic and social adjustment.

The entire two decades between 1918 and 1938, the time of the *Anschluss*, were economically, psychologically, and politically extremely difficult, though the city regained, relatively quickly, its traditional prominent role in all facets of cultural activities.

It is paradoxical that, in 1945, after another trauma following

the Second World War, and seven years as a province of the "thousand-year" Hitler Reich, Austria recuperated remarkably fast and emerged with a strong economy, full employment, a hard currency, and one of the lowest inflation rates in the world. At the same time, however, Vienna's cultural standing was vastly reduced and, with it, its rating as one of the great cities of the world.

From the very beginning of the republic in 1918, the new country was politically deeply divided. Vienna was "red," governed by the Social-Democratic party that had been instrumental in establishing the republic. One of its leaders, Dr. Karl Renner, became its first President. Most of the provinces or *Laender*, on the other hand, were "black," voting in majority for the conservative, Catholic "Christlich-Soziale" (Christian-Social) party. The two camps opposed each other bitterly along political, economic, and ideological lines. In addition, there was also a permanent clash between the sophisticated *Wasserkopf* (Viennese expression for a big head on a small body) that Vienna represented, and the smaller *Laender*, lacking Vienna's imperial and cosmopolitan traditions.

Dr. Ignaz Seipel, who was installed as *Bundeskanzler* (Prime Minister) in 1922 with the main task of solving the desperate economic situation, was a Catholic priest of great brilliance. However, he did not possess the spirit of reconciliation that would have been necessary to bridge the gap between the hostile blocs. On the contrary, in one of his tough speeches, he proclaimed *Keine Milde* (no compassion) for his adversaries and thus set the implacable imprint that governed the whole lifespan of the first republic.

The Austrian Social Democratic Party of those days was undoubtedly quite radical, truly Marxist, and, as such, much more to the left than its successor party in today's Austria or the present German and Scandinavian Social Democratic parties.

The "red" city administration in Vienna had unquestionably remarkable achievements to its credit. It built probably the first large-scale public housing projects in Europe. It constructed parks, pools, and stadiums. Thus, it became also a powerful

purveyor of patronage and of scarce and much-demanded facilities, such as apartments. The Socialists exercised their patronage very adroitly and, therefore, attracted many people who otherwise might have had strong reservations regarding the ideological and political line of the party. The Socialists were also extremely agile in setting up "front organizations" for practically every group of the population ranging from *Rote Falken* (Socialist boy scouts) to unions, sports and cultural groups, and even "red" chess clubs.

The remarkable chains of public housing built by the Viennese city administration during the years of the first republic, however, did not change the traditional division in the appearance of Vienna. Till this very day, most visitors and tourists see only the beautiful center and the gorgeous outskirts, such as Schoenbrunn with the castle and the imperial gardens, Grinzing, Sievering, or Neuwaldegg with their quaint little streets, the wine gardens, restaurants, and the lovely countryside. They hardly ever come into contact with the wide drab and gray areas in between.

A third political movement that had already been in evidence during the monarchy proclaimed that Austria, in its new, diminutive form, was not *lebensfaehig* (viable) and must therefore, seek the *Anschluss* with Germany. This group included not only the old German nationalists, who, just like other nationalities of the monarchy, had hoped for the dissolution of the Hapsburg Empire, but also many others who honestly believed that Austria in its reduced form could not survive economically. When Hitler started to score his first electoral successes in Germany, the Nazi groups in Austria were thus able to manipulate in their favor these old Pan-Germanic trends and the new economic currents on the Austrian scene.

Cut off from its traditional hinterland, reduced in its industrial base, deprived of its centuries-old trading patterns, lacking any access to the sea—adjustment for Vienna seemed almost impossible. The post-war inflation ruined old fortunes and over-

night created new millionaires who, in their eventual financial collapse, buried with them many small investors. The *Mittelstand* (middle class) that has traditionally been the backbone of the Viennese population, saw all its life savings wiped out by inflation and was faced with the darkest of futures, unmitigated at that time by welfare or Social Security.

Unemployment was rampant in all fields. It applied, however, with particular harshness to professionals and intellectuals. Imperial Vienna had been able to digest an infinitely larger number of lawyers, doctors, scientists, writers and functionaries than the capital of the new *Alpenrepublik* (republic of the Alps). There was simply not enough to do for the hordes of educated and established professionals and certainly not for the new candidates studying or applying for admission to the highly valued academic institutions in Vienna.

Nevertheless, every year, thousands of young people who had passed their *Matura* (final gymnasium exams) continued on to the universities. And every year, at registration time, one could read in newspapers and on university bulletin boards, the solemn warnings issued to new students by the different faculties *"Medizin ueberfuellt"* (medicine overcrowded); *"Keine Aussichten in juristischen Berufen"* (no chances in the legal professions); *"Chemiker werden nicht gebraucht"* (chemists cannot be employed).

Young doctors worked as interns for practically nothing, and graduates of the law school could not find jobs as *Konzipienten* (law apprentices) with established lawyers. I remember that a fraternity brother of mine—Dr. Walter Hohenstein, known as "Ei" by all his friends—who later became a well-known and successful chemist in the States, had to take, after his graduation, a semimanual job at a ridiculous salary in a small town outside Vienna. Law graduates worked a couple of years longer than necessary at court, with a salary more symbolic than real, since at least the work provided some experience and counted for later admission to the bar.

Envy, ill humor, mutual animosities, and, of course, anti-Semitism grew, as always in complex and difficult times. Manners roughened; robberies and petty crime increased—all this

in insignificant proportions if compared to what we are used to today, but nevertheless sufficient to make life uncomfortable for people unaccustomed to such phenomena. There was a deep malaise permeating the whole fabric of society in Vienna. This malaise—the dreary economic conditions and scant hope for the future—contributed decisively to the radicalization of the political climate.

Political Polarization

In the thirties, the gap between the polticial parties grew to a point where disaster was unavoidable. The parties had started earlier to form their own armed groups. The Social-Democrats called their organization the *Schutzbund* (protective federation), and the Christian Social Party founded the *Heimwehr* (home guard). At the same time, an increasing number of people joined the illegal Nazi Party and their uniformed, but still underground, storm troopers.

The *Schutzbund* had its center in "red" Vienna and stored its arms in fortresslike bunkers at the massive public housing projects built by the Socialist city administration in a strategic circle surrounding Vienna. These housing projects were—due to effective patronage—mostly inhabited by stalwart adherents of the Socialist party.

The Heimwehr was under the command of Count Ruediger von Starhemberg, a member of an illustrious Austrian noble family. It had its main force in the Austrian provinces, though some support also in Vienna itself. The Heimwehr fought on two fronts, against the so-called Austro-Marxists, for a conservative and traditional structure of society and against the rising Nazi tide for the survival of an independent Austria.

There were also the official armed forces, a small and weak *Bundeswehr* (Austrian army) and the fully equipped and well-trained police forces, which were under central government control.

The deterioration of the political climate and the uncom-

promising hostility between the "red" capital and the "black" federal government, coupled with openly armed camps, had to lead to an explosion. In February 1934, the armed conflict erupted in Vienna when the *Justizpalast* (Palace of Justice, main court building) was set on fire in circumstances never completely cleared up. A general strike was proclaimed by the unions, and the Schutzbund was mobilized. Bloody street battles ensued all over Vienna. The Heimwehr and the police forces attacked the centers of the Schutzbund in the public housing projects, which, in the meantime, had been heavily fortified. The siege of the Karl Marxhof, one of the largest such complexes, took several days. There were many dead and wounded on both sides, and, when it all ended, the Schutzbund and the Social-Democratic party were crushed. A number of its leaders were arrested, and many other fled to neighboring Czechoslovakia.

The so-called Austro-Fascism under Dr. Engelbert Dollfuss, who had become chancellor in 1932, and his successor, Kurt von Schuschnigg, was certainly a mild version of Fascism if compared to its neighboring manifestations in Germany or even Italy. But the 1934 short, but violent civil war, with the subsequent repression of the powerful Social-Democratic Party, divided the country to such an extent that it fell without resistance to the Nazis, when they increased their pressure a few years later.

Dollfuss was murdered by the Nazis in 1936, and, by that time, the days of an independent Austria were numbered. This seems absolutely clear in historic perspective, but the Jews in Vienna at that time did not perceive it. And they were in good company, since the Western powers did not believe in the inevitability of war and catastrophe when Hitler marched into the Rhineland in 1936, and not even before or after the Anschluss or after Danzig and the Sudetenland.

Many Social-Democrats and members of the Schutzbund had made their peace with the Nazis because of their hatred for the ruling Christian Socialists and the Heimwehr, who had destroyed their party. Historians might speculate forever whether a united Austria could have avoided the Anschluss; whether the

fatal rift could have been prevented by better judgment and more moderation on the part of the leaders of the two main political camps; whether Dollfuss or Schuschnigg could not have initiated, in view of the common danger, a policy of national reconciliation. All of these considerations, however, are highly speculative. The Nazi steamroller was already too far advanced to be stopped. There was too much spontaneity in the enthusiasm that greeted the German *Befreier* (liberators); there was too much voluntary participation in the immediate cruel manifestations of Nazism, to believe that another outcome was possible at that juncture of history. Still, the fact remains that the cleavage in the Austrian body politic and the extremism of the dominant political parties contributed to and accelerated the falling apart of the country.

Anti-Semitism

Anti-Semitism in Austria was endemic. It had existed, as in the rest of Europe, from the time of the crusades and the Middle Ages. Anti-Semitism varied in harshness during the centuries of Hapsburg rule. There is no question that the long reign of Kaiser Franz Joseph was, on the whole, benevolent for the large and old Jewish communities of the empire, such as in Vienna, Prague, Budapest, and the small towns of Galicia.

The first open and virulent expressions of anti-Semitism during the Franz Joseph era were associated with the names of Dr. Georg von Schoenerer and Dr. Karl Lueger, later the famous mayor of Vienna. Both were in a sense forerunners of modern-day leaders of mass movements; Schoenerer as a German nationalist and Lueger as a Catholic populist. Their appeal was not restricted to political groups or to parliament, but was directed to dissatisfied segments of the population unhappy with modernization and industrialization that had brought dislocations and unaccustomed complexities into the lives of artisans and small shopkeepers. Both Schoenerer and Lueger skillfully exploited the latent anti-Semitic tendencies of these groups and the ever-present desire to find suitable scapegoats for their discontent. The scapegoats were, of course, as always, the Jews.

Schoenerer and Lueger violently attacked "liberalism" as harmful to their supporters—and liberalism was easily identified with "Jews." It is interesting that Schoenerer and Lueger started out in the liberal camp and both were, in their early political careers, aligned with Jewish liberal representatives. In time, they moved into opposite, but entirely different, directions.

Schoenerer was an enemy of the Hapsburgs. As leader of the *Deutschnationale Partei* (German National Party), he aimed at the incorporation of the German-speaking parts of the monarchy into the German Reich forged by Bismarck. He and his pan-Germanic movement based their anti-semitism on racial theories that would become a few decades later the *leitmotif* of the Nazi movement. Though, for the next fifty years, his rival, Dr. Karl Lueger, seemed much more successful, Schoenerer laid the Austrian groundwork for Hitler's rise to power.

Lueger founded a populist movement in the late 1880s based on many "anti" slogans: anti-liberalism, anti-capitalism, anti-socialism, and, above all, anti-Semitism.

Lueger was much more a man of the people than Schoenerer. He had easy contacts with the population, spoke the Viennese dialect, and undoubtedly loved the city. He wanted the monarchy to continue and Vienna to be its perpetual center. The people liked him and called him *"Der schoene Karl"* because of his commanding presence and cool and easy manners.

Lueger won his first mayoral election in 1895, but the Kaiser vetoed it. He was reelected two years later, and finally the emperor grudgingly withdrew the veto.

It is a strange coincidence that Lueger and his populist anti-Semitism came to power in Vienna in the same year that Gustav Mahler, a Jew—after converting to Christianity—was appointed director of the Vienna Opera, the most prestigious and most highly visible position in the contemporary music world.

Dr. Lueger, who was certainly a good mayor, also founded the Christian Social Party, which, with many metamorphoses, became the ruling party of the first republic and remains till this very day a major political force in Austria.

Lueger's anti-Semitism had something essentially Viennese in its manifestations. It was ugly and xenophobic and caused anti-Jewish demonstrations in the streets of Vienna. At the same time, it was *schlampert* (not exactly translatable, meaning disorganized and not entirely logical). The popular mayor would come out of a mass meeting, where he had viciously attacked and ridiculed Jews, and then retire to his favorite coffeehouse

for a game of *Tarock* (a Viennese card game) with a couple of Jewish partners. When publicly queried about this implausible contradiction between oratory and personal behavior, he gave the classic reply: *"Wer a Jud is, bestimm ich . . ."* (I determine who is a Jew.)

World War I in the years 1914–1918 brought thousands of Jewish refugees from the Eastern territories of the monarchy—mainly from Galicia—to Vienna. This fact well characterizes the liberal undertone of the monarchy's treatment of the Jews. En masse they fled the approaching armies of the Russian Czar, rightly afraid of persecution and pogroms, and looked for protection and safety in Kaiser Franz Joseph's capital.

There had always been an influx of Jews from the provinces into Vienna. But they had come for the same reason as non-Jewish Austrian citizens: they wanted to further their individual economic futures. The refugees, however, were victims of the war and fled for political reasons. They had lost almost all of their possessions and crowded into Vienna in mass waves. Thus, there was no time and no opportunity for them to adjust individually and organically to a new lifestyle, as previous immigrants had successfully done.

The great sudden increase in the Jewish population of Vienna coincided with the dissolution of the monarchy. The ensuing grave economic and social problems that enveloped the new Austrian republic, and particularly Vienna, caused a considerable sharpening of anti-Semitism, as crisis situations have always done throughout history.

This anti-Semitism was directed in a particularly unpleasant way against the new refugees, who were different in dress, customs, and habits. Many did not speak German—certainly not its Viennese variation—but Yiddish or, at best, German with a strong Yiddish accent. These refugees, citizens of the multinational and multilingual Danube monarchy, had fled from a losing war conducted by their country to seek refuge from the enemy. Such mass flights had occurred throughout history in-

numerable times. But these were Jews, and, as competitors for apartments, jobs and scarce food, they were the traditional and convenient points of attack.

The Jewish community extended its help, as Jews have always done, but certain of its elements were at the same time quite ambivalent in their feelings and attitudes toward these new arrivals. Some manifested a vague embarrassment in regard to their "foreign" looking and behaving brethren. A part of the Jews with long residence in Vienna felt somehow threatened in their own security, social standing, and professional positions, shortsightedly assuming that anti-Semitism was a phenomenon caused only by the sudden appearance on the scene of the *Ostjuden* (Eastern Jews).

This attitude closely paralleled the mood of the already-settled German and Sephardic Jews in the United States at the turn of the century, when wave after wave of Russian and Polish Jews landed in Ellis Island. It showed a historic pattern of self-delusion, which repeated itself tragically even at the beginning of the Nazi persecutions. Some of the old-time Jewish families clung till the last to the belief that the Nazi killers would make their selection of whom to send to the camps or the gas chambers according to accent or length of residence. The final Holocaust lesson for Jews everywhere was the absolute and unconditional responsibility they must feel for each other. The ultimate fate—good or bad—will always be identical for all Jews.

Retrospectively, whatever the difficulties and problems, the flight of the Eastern Jews to Vienna was an extraordinarily lucky development, since, otherwise, those Jews and their children would have become victims of the castastrophe that befell Eastern European Jewry a generation later. With all the terrible things that happened to the Jews in Austria, some percentage was able to save itself. Polish Jewry was completely annihilated in the Nazi Holocaust.

Another component that triggered the latent strain in Vienna's anti-Semitism during the republican period was the con-

tinuous important role played by Vienna's Jews in the life of the city.

Franz Werfel and Stephan Zweig still ranked among the most respected authors in the German-speaking world. It was Franz Werfel who, in his *Forty Days of Musa Dagh,* drew the world's attention to the atrocities perpetrated against the Armenians. Arnold Zweig, Alfred Polgar, Egon Friedell, and Joseph Roth were literary successes. Ferenc Molnar, a Jewish playwright from Budapest, had his comedies performed before packed houses.

New literary trends attracting intellectual audiences were initiated by Jews like Karl Kraus and his magazine *Die Fackel* (the torch), though Kraus considered himself as outside the Jewish community.

Many editors of newspapers and magazines were Jews, and so were outstanding and well-known journalists and reporters like Arthur Koestler and Egon Erwin Kisch.

The majority of the troubadours and performers of the famous Viennese cabaret scene were Jews, such as Fritz Gruenbaum, Karl Farkas, and Armin Berg. The medical and legal professions were full of first-rate Jewish practitioners.

This prominent role of Jews in virtually every field of intellectual endeavor, though acknowledged as raising the prestige of the city all over the world, caused, on another level, envy and grumblings about too much Jewish influence and presence.

In the late twenties, a famous and almost prophetic book appeared, written by Hugo Bettauer, a Jewish journalist, called *Die Stadt ohne Juden* (The City without Jews). It pictured a Vienna of the future with all the Jews gone and showed how intellectually barren such a Vienna would be. It was an instant best-seller. It was considered as a sort of flattery by some Jews and as a flickering of hope by many Jew-baiters. But there was not a soul in Vienna—Jewish or not—who thought the book to be more than a *Nervenkitzel,* a tickling of a sensitive nerve. Ten years later, it became a tragic reality.

Viennese anti-Semitism during the republic had several facets. There was the *Radauantisemitismus* (violent anti-Semitism), which manifested itself in clashes at the university, in scuffles at sports events when Jewish competitors were involved, in *Raufereien* (fistfights) in beer and wine establishments, and in curses and slurs like *Saujud* or *Zugereister* (recent arrival—but with a distinct negative racial connotation).

These violent expressions of anti-Jewish sentiments—admittedly restricted to incidents rather than broadly conceived actions—were the forerunners of Vienna's terrible behavior right after the *Anschluss*, long before the centrally ordered and organized arrests, deportations, and killings started. They explain in retrospect the hatred against the Jewish neighbor that led the so-called *gutmuetige* and *gemuetliche* (good-natured) Viennese into contemptible acts against Jews that had lived peacefully in their midst. Without any encouragement by their new Nazi masters, Viennese citizens forced elderly Jewish men and women to kneel and clean streets with their bare hands. All over the city, signs appeared overnight proclaiming, "No entry for Jews and dogs." Jewish children were cruelly humiliated, and all this was done on free initiative and not as a command performance.

Side by side with the *Radau* anti-Semitism of the pre-Hitler period, there existed also a more subtle anti-Semitism. Few Jews were accepted into government service. There were virtually no Jewish judges or public prosecutors and relatively few tenured professors at the universities, which were, as in most of Europe, state-owned and -controlled. This silent anti-Semitism showed itself also in the restricted nature of many clubs and associations, be they social, professional, or sports, and, above all, in the increased "separatism" of personal relations and friendships.

The ruling Christian-Social Party contained marked anti-Semitic tendencies of a populist and religious character. The demonstrative use of the label "Christian" in the name virtually excluded Jews from its ranks.

There had been some, but very few, Jews in the Heimwehr, since its whole atmosphere was also tinged with traditional anti-

Semitism and thus, despite the Heimwehr's opposition to the Nazis, not conducive to Jewish participation.

The Social-Democratic Party, on the other hand, counted many Jews not only among its rank and file but also among its most prominent leaders. The founder of the party in 1888 had been Dr. Victor Adler, a contemporary of Schoenerer and Lueger and member of an upper-middle-class Jewish family. His son, Friedrich Adler, killed in 1917 the then Austro-Hungarian Prime Minister, Count Stuergkh, in the dining room of an elegant Viennese hotel, as a protest against the war.

Dr. Otto Bauer, a Jew, was, during the republic, the chief ideologist of the party. The editor of the daily party newspaper, the *Arbeiterzeitung* (workers' journal) Dr. Ellenbogen, and the head of the Socialist militia, the Schutzbund, Dr. Julius Deutsch, were also Jewish. There were many active Jewish members in the Schutzbund. The reasons for the adherence of numerous Jews to the Socialist movement were manifold. First and above all, it was the only major party that was wide open to Jews. Second, it officially decried and opposed anti-Semitism. Third, the Social-Democratic Party, though throughout all the years of the first republic a minority party in the Austrian parliament, was the ruling party in Vienna itself. The overwhelming majority of Jews in Austria lived in Vienna and belonged to the *kleine Mittelstand* (lower middle class). The Socialists skillfully managed their powers of patronage and presented themselves as defenders of the general interests of this group.

This strong concentration of Jews in one political party, at the time of increasing political polarization strengthened, however, the anti-Jewish feelings within the non-Socialist elements of the population. Thus, cause and effect added to each other in a vicious circle.

The only strong antidote to the Socialist dominance of the Jewish political landscape was Zionism. Zionists fought the Jewish Social Democrats in bitter struggles ranging from Marxist ideology to "red assimilation."

The story of Vienna's anti-Semitism during the times of the first republic, cannot be complete without an attempt to present also some contradictory aspects. It is a fact that many professors in the intermediary schools and the university were in varying degrees and shades anti-Semites. Some of them might already have belonged to illegal Nazi organizations, but, frankly, I know of very few cases among the students of my generation who would have had serious complaints about a bias in exams or other evaluations of their academic progress. All those who were properly prepared for the rather rigorous tests, at that time still obligatory in universities, passed and eventually received their degrees. Some professors had the bad and offending habit of ironizing or imitating a noticeable Jewish accent in some of their students, but at the end—reluctantly or not—they would grade them fairly, or nearly so.

I remember the geography and history professor in my last two years of real gymnasium. I was always convinced that he was politically leaning toward Nazism. However, when I demonstratively chose as my *Maturaarbeit* (thesis) the subject of *Palaestina als Wirtschaftsgebiet''* (Palestine as an economic area), he assisted me with suggestions and gave the paper the highest rating.

At the faculty of law at the university, two very prominent professors, one of criminal law and the other of economics, were well-known anti-Semites, but, as teachers, and examiners, there was little to complain about.

A similar attitude was found at the courts. Sometimes the atmosphere was thick with anti-Jewish under- and overtones, but the final decisions were, in great part, still based upon the law. Whether this phenomenon dated back to the centuries-old monarchic tradition of a fair bureaucracy is hard to determine. But these factors, connected with the general pleasant and easy lifestyle of Vienna, might have had their influence—conscious or unconscious—when Jews pondered the future and made the unfortunate decision to stay and not to leave the country.

Why Did the Jews Not Leave Vienna in Time?

Why did the Jews not leave Vienna, since the economic conditions were so unsatisfactory during the republic, and anti-Semitism was constantly rising? Why did they wait until Hitler actually marched into Austria in order to try to get out and save their lives? These are good questions—but there are no good answers.

If not before, but certainly after, Hitler's coming to power in Germany in 1933, it would have been reasonable to assume that the threat of the Nazis, combined with domestic anti-Semitism and the bad economic situation, would have induced many Jewish families to emigrate. It was not so. Except for a number of young Jews, who went to what was then Palestine—some on certificates (legal permits issued by the British administration) and some on simple visitors' visas—very few left. Among all my many friends and acquaintances, I did not know a single person, who went to the United States before March 1938. A few years later, an entry permit was, after life itself, the highest treasure to dream of.

Whether the reason for this astonishing phenomenon of indecision, despite increasing adversity, was simple shortsightedness or disbelief in the reality of the Nazi threat, there must also have been an underlying feeling that Vienna's lifestyle had some redeeming features that made it hard to dissociate from.

The Viennese Lifestyle

Life did go on, on many levels in Vienna. Just as anti-Semitism was an inherent part of the "routine," so was the normality and, yes, in many respects the pleasantness of life. The excitement of the cultural scene, the beauty of the city and its surroundings, the easy access to sports and relaxation, the typical coffeehouse atmosphere, all this continued side by side with the uglier aspects of Vienna.

As it often happens in depressed economic and troubled social conditions, cultural life blossomed just as it did in Berlin under similar circumstances. Vienna was changed after 1918 into a provincial city economically and administratively, but its theater, opera, music, and operetta flourished more than ever. At the Burgtheater and in der Josephstadt, (Max Reinhardt's theater), theater-lovers queued for hours for cheap tickets, and teenage girls swooned, not for rock stars but for Raul Aslan and Alexander Moissi, famous actors of the traditional, classical theater. A new premiere was the talk of the town, and its merits were hotly debated in university halls, coffeehouses, and on dates. Theater families, like the Thimigs, and actresses and actors, like Paula Wessely, Max Pallenberg, and Hans Jaray, were Viennese institutions.

At the opera, students earned their spending money by hiring themselves out to organizers of *claques* (controlled applause) for this or that tenor or baritone. People would stand for hours at the *Bühnentuerl* (exits for actors) to catch a glimpse of their favorite artistic idols.

The Theater an der Wien was the great palace of a revived Viennese operetta, with the incomparable Robert Stolz as its chief representative.

A dozen other theaters, like the Volkstheater, Volksopera, Kammerspiele, Raimundtheater, and many others, presented modern and traditional plays to enthusiastic and responsive audiences.

Cabaret and *Kleinkunstbuehnen* (smaller more experimental theaters) featured sharp Viennese wit—or was it Jewish or a mixture of both? Their sarcastic and ironic style drove full houses to salvos of laughter. Herman Leopoldi modernized the sentimental *Wiener Lied* with his wonderful *chansons.*

The Konzerthaus and Musikverein continued to offer the finest and best that music could offer. The Wiener Philharmoniker were still one of the great orchestras in the world, and it was every conductor's and soloist's dream to conduct or play with the *Philharmonische.*

There were more than half a dozen morning papers published in impoverished Vienna, ranging from the prestigious *Neue Freie Presse* to a more liberal *Tagblatt,* from the more sensational *Journal* to the *Kronenzeitung,* aimed at what was called the *Hausbesorger* audience (the Viennese variation of the French concierge). There were also party papers, like the *Arbeiterzeitung* for the Socialists, and the *Reichspost* for the Christian-Social Party. All these papers, and additional midday and evening papers, published not only news and information and vigorously presented their political views; they were also justifiably proud of their traditional literary supplements. A Viennese specialty was the *Feuilleton,* a kind of sophisticated review of or commentary on intellectual happenings, a genre that had made Theodor Herzl famous.

New theater productions, a new book, and literary discussions became major events that interested a wide stratum of the population, not only a small circle of "elitist" intellectuals. Young people, according to their political or ideological viewpoint, were pro or con, but issues were hotly debated.

Sports were another facet of Viennese life that blossomed in those difficult times. *Fussball* (soccer) became the great passion. Austria—for all practical purposes Vienna—produced a *Wunderteam* (miracle team) that for years dominated the world's *Fussball* scene. Hakoah, the Viennese Jewish sports club won the coveted *Meisterschaft* (Austrian superbowl) in a memorable year. I shall return to this subject in a later chapter since it assumed for many Viennese of my generation a surprising im-

portance. Soccer ranked as the most popular pastime, but skiing, swimming, track and field, and waterpolo all attracted ever-increasing numbers of youth in a wave of sports enthusiasm.

Skiing came naturally, and beginners could exercise right at the outskirts of Vienna at the Kobenzl or Kahlenberg. The more experienced could spend the weekends or just Sundays on the Schneeberg or the Rax, Vienna's *Hausberge* (adjoining mountains).

The public transportation system functioned well and was quite inexpensive, thus enabling rich and poor to make gorgeous *Ausfluege* (excursions) to the lovely Wienerwald in a comfortable way and with very little cash.

By the late twenties, Vienna, slowly recovering from its postwar shock, had built a chain of summer pools and adjacent sports facilities, rarely, if ever equalled by other communities. Gaensehaufel, Stadionbad, Kritzendort, and Klosternauberg were all easily accessible and affordable. Our group of friends frequented three pools regularly. The Schoenbrunnerbad was for serious swimming. It was olympic size, ice cold, and wonderfully situated in the former Emperor's gardens; the Hitzingerbad was for socializing, since good-looking girls in all shapes, sizes, and age groups could be found there; and the Grinzingerbad was for Sundays, when our fraternity brothers would gather there with their dates and then in the evening move on to a favorite *Heurigen* in the neighborhood.

In winter, there were ice-skating arenas like the Eislaufverein in the center of town (still operating today near the Intercontinental Hotel) or the Engelmann Arena, in a more outlying district. Skating facilities were converted in the summer to tennis courts, thus adding to others provided by clubs and private owners, available for a tolerable fee. There were tennis facilities sponsored by political groups like the *Arbeiter Tennisverein* (Workers' Tennis Club), which was a middle-class club without a single worker as a member. Tennis was at that time still considered a "capitalist" sport, and the club was nothing more than a front group of the Socialist Party. Since the location was particularly favorable, my friend Nubi and I liked to play there. We

were tolerated, though known as the "Zionists" and, as such, a bit isolated in the "Socialist Tennis Society."

There were lots of interesting, pleasant, and fairly inexpensive things for old and young to do. Kids did not have to congregate in parking lots to have fun. There were no drugs, and there was no drunken driving. Young people did not own cars, and the idea that a generation later, in the United States, sons and daughters of former Viennese would have to have their own cars, upon reaching the ripe age of sixteen, would have seemed preposterous. Among all my vast circle of young people, I knew only two who had access to an automobile, and this also only from time to time, when the car was not needed in the family business.

Schools were good and managed to give their students a measure of *Allgemeine Bildung* (general education).

Nobody left home upon entering the university. Apart from the vast social ramifications that this staying together signified, it meant that higher education, when it descended upon a family, did not threaten financial disaster or insurmountable debt. Renting rooms was customary only for students from small towns who had to move to Vienna for their studies. Tuition costs were negligible, maybe in the neighborhood of one hundred dollars a semester, and there were ample opportunities for reducing this in case of need. Since room and board were free—at home—and tuition costs minimal, it is strange that there is still a widely held belief in the States that the central European system was elitist, allowing only the wealthy to study. This was not so. Elementary and intermediate education were free and universities dirt cheap.

There is, however, some truth in the "elitist" label, but it applies to a completely different feature of the educational structure. The undemocratic and unfair element was that a decision had to be taken at a very early age—about fourteen—concerning the direction of a child's future studies. One branch was the *Bürgerschule,* which did not lead to university, and another the *Gymnasium,* which opened the way to the university and eventually to a profession. This early decision often depended upon

whether a child at that period of his or her life seemed academically gifted or not. Material considerations, however, also played an important role, not because gymnasium or university was expensive, but because they lasted too long. The much shorter *Bürgerschule* enabled a youngster to earn a living much sooner and thus to contribute to the financial needs of the whole family. But already in the last decades of the monarchy, and certainly during the republic, more and more children from workers' families went on to gymnasium and university.

Vienna remained, after the dissolution of the Hapsburg Empire, on the geographic fringes of Central Europe. Despite this forced provincialization, it lost only slowly the cosmopolitan touch it had inherited from its imperial days. Viennese loved to travel and to get out of their unaccustomed narrow borders. But they were also happy to come back. A famous advertisement greeting returning travelers on railway stations and on highways, stated:

> *Worauf freut sich der Wiener? . . . aufs Ankerbrot and aufs Hochquellen Wasser. . . .* What is the returning Viennese looking forward to? . . . Anker bread and pure mountain water. (Anker was the name of a famous brand of bread.)

This commercial subtly played to the inner feelings of the Viennese population, indicating that life might seem more exciting outside Austria's reduced borders, but the basics, what people really needed, like bread and water, were still best in Vienna.

This review of the amenities and the pleasant lifestyle of Vienna, will, of course, by no means explain why 200,000 Jews, a large, dynamic, superbly intelligent community, watched for five years—since 1933—the frightening developments next door in Germany, without any significant attempt to save themselves.

Surely shortsightedness, emotional inability to imagine unimaginable horrors, and understandable reluctance to break up

homes and residences were the main factors, but the attractions of the peculiar Viennese atmosphere must have been at least a contributing element.

My Escape from Vienna

I left Vienna on Tuesday, March 15, 1938, four days after the Anschluss. In later years, I always received many compliments for my quick decision, which probably saved my life. These bouquets were completely undeserved. On the contrary, my stupidity was unlimited. At the beginning of March, about ten days prior to Hitler's final move, we organized a rally of a Jewish self-defense group patterned after a military formation in Poland, set up by Jabotinsky's Zionist Revisionist movement. Austria's last chancellor, Kurt von Schuschnigg, was invited and attended the rally as guest of honor. At the end, I had an opportunity to talk to him briefly and mentioned that March was the time when I always went skiing—would he consider it advisable to leave in view of the tense situation in and around Austria. He answered, without hesitation, *"Herr Kollege, aber selbstverstaendlich, fahren's nur."* (Of course, you should travel.) *"Herr Kollege"* was the Viennese way to address a younger man, who, however, had already received the university's coveted title of "doctor."

It will be to my eternal shame that though already deeply steeped in political life, I accepted without a moment's hesitation the chancellor's certainly well-meant advice. What made things particularly incomprehensible in retrospect was the knowledge that my and my friends' activities in the militant Zionist Revisionist movement and the anti-Hitler boycott organization made us a natural target for the Gestapo. Moreover, a month earlier I had published a book, *Kampf um Zion* (Fight for Zion). It de-

scribed the fight for freedom of the Irish, the Italians, the Poles and the Czechs, and compared their struggles with the aspirations of the Jewish people for a state of their own. The book attempted to draw the conclusion that, throughout history, only militancy and willingness to fight have brought oppressed peoples the ultimate reward of freedom. There had been just enough time for the book to become known by its critics for its so-called "militaristic" stance, which by necessity had to increase the danger for me in case of a Nazi takeover.

I probably wanted to hear and believe what the Chancellor had to say, because, the next day, I departed for St. Anton am Arlberg, an alpine ski resort near the Swiss border.

On Friday, March 11, 1938, I went to bed with the Austrian red-white-red flag flying over the hotel. When I awoke the next morning, the village and the whole valley was a sea of swastikas. The world had changed overnight.

I did make my way back to Vienna on Sunday, via Salzburg, where I had to change trains. I witnessed there the triumphant entry of the German army—triumphant because of the jubilant mood of the population. In Vienna—for once wisely—I did not go home but checked into the Hotel de France am Schottenring.

I had someone phone my mother to inform her where I was. A couple of Gestapo agents had already been looking for me and had talked to the maid. She had truthfully informed them that I was away skiing as I always was at that time of the year.

My father had left two weeks earlier on a business trip to Romania and later made his way to Palestine. My mother, who was a "jewish mother" in the finest sense of the word, did not panic. She brought to the hotel, over the next couple of days—in installments, so as not to alert our maid—a suit, shirts, shoes, and socks. I had in the hotel only my skiing equipment, a pair of slacks, and a tuxedo. This latter outfit might have come in handy later in a job as a waiter, but otherwise was of little use in my wanderings in the next ten years. In any event, my fleeing Hitler with almost nothing in my baggage but a tuxedo made me the butt of innumerable jokes for a very long time.

On Tuesday, March 15, 1938, I left Vienna by train for Trieste. Fortunately, I had a valid passport, and there was no time yet for the German authorities to have instituted exit permits. During these first few days after the Anschluss, thousands of Jews could have saved themselves by getting on a train and leaving everything behind. Very few did.

Before my departure, some of my fraternity brothers and my mother gathered at the house of Lene Altmann, the fiancée of one of my dearest friends. She lived with her parents near the Suedbahnhof, from where my train departed. We had dinner, and then the whole group accompanied me to the station, in order not to leave my mother alone. It was a difficult farewell—uncertainty and fear were hanging heavily over us all. Until the next day when a prearranged signal reached my mother from Trieste, she did not know whether I actually made it to the train and, if so, whether I had passed the border checkpoint.

On the train I was sitting near a nice woman with her two little girls. They were all very "non-Jewish" looking. Just prior to the border passport checkpoint, unnoticed by my neighbor, I dropped a note into her purse with a phone number in Trieste and an urgent plea to inform my friend there that I had been arrested—if arrested I was. Upon reaching Italian soil, I told her what I did, apologized, and asked her to open her purse and return the note. She read it and burst out crying and laughing. She was as Jewish as I was.

From Trieste I moved to Paris. My mother managed to join me there two months later, thanks to a special visa arranged for her by a Paris branch of our family. She too went to the station with an overnight bag and left everything behind.

I never saw my father again. He rests in Israel's earth in a cemetery near Tel Aviv.

We made it to the States after the fall of Paris, my escape from a German prisoner-of-war camp, my mother's flight from Paris to Casablanca, and a miracle in the person of the American Consul there, who got us the visas for America. Some of these vignettes might deserve a description in later chapters.

Part II

Duels and Colors—the Jewish Student Fraternities in Vienna

Kadimah and Masada were the names of the fraternities I belonged to and remain closely associated with till this very day. "Kadimah" means forward and eastward in Hebrew, and Masada is, of course, the fortress where Jewish patriots made their last stand against the might of the Roman Empire. Kadimah was a university and Masada a gymnasium (senior high school) fraternity.

The year 1983 marks the hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Kadimah, the oldest Jewish *Studenten-Verbindung* in the world. Verbindungen is the approximate word for fraternities. This date is therefore a special incentive to include the origins of the Kadimah in these vignettes. The main reason, though, is that the story of the Kadimah, and of all other Jewish national fraternities in Vienna, presented a colorful and unusual feature of Viennese life and proved of considerable importance to Zionist and pre-Israel history.

The active role of the fraternities ended with the Anschluss in 1938 and the extinction of the Jewish communities in Central Europe. They exist today only as the bearers of proud names and in the friendship and loyalty of their surviving members. It is an actuarial certainty that, within the very forseeable future, there will not be a single witness alive to the history and traditions of these groups. Therefore, writing about these *Verbindungen* is like writing one's own obituary—but, since it is not a

personal but a collective story, it can be done with some pride and a great deal of tenderness.

Student fraternities in Vienna and in Central Europe had nothing but the name in common with American fraternities. *Verbindungen* were small, closely knit groups, formed according to political belief or ideology and held together by personal friendship and loyalty. They were governed by a set of rules and rituals that became the inextricable fabric of their existence. They developed in the territories of Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in the time of the revolutionary ferment of 1848. At that period, the *Verbindungen* were a liberal force, associations of students who fought for greater freedom and for increased participation of the rising intellectual and middle classes in the governmental structures, which were still very much under the control of the aristocracy. European universities had always been refuges of learning and free inquiry. As such, they had enjoyed the respect of and high standing in their communities that American intellectuals acquired only fairly late in this century.

The reactionary wave that followed the liberal winds of 1848 moved the student fraternities into an ever-greater emphasis of nationalist ideas as compared to the notions of universal freedom and liberal progress prevalent in the *Sturm und Drangjahren* (stormy years) of the March revolution. A great part of the fraternities in Vienna, fascinated by the ascent of Prussia and later the formation of the German Reich under Bismarck, became outright *Deutschnational* (German national). Others proclaimed themselves as conservative Catholic, following the lead of the Christian-Socialist party, which remained the dominant force in Austria until 1938.

The original liberal fraternities gradually lost their significance. As time went by, they found their new members mostly among Jews who were on the lookout for complete assimilation in a liberal framework. Since the political climate of the eighties and nineties was already marked by the first serious signs of

modern anti-Semitism, there was no room anymore for Jews in the German nationalist or clearly labeled Catholic fraternities.

The *Verbindungen* had acquired early in their existence certain "eccentricities," which became part and parcel of their structure. One was the adoption of an honor code that obliged every member to request and fight a duel if his "honor" were impinged and a proper apology not offered. A second characteristic was the *couleur,* the adoption of fraternity colors to be worn as a ribbon across one's chest and a distinctive cap as headgear. Many Americans will have seen these student customs in old films and will surely have considered them as quaint or even romantic. However, these customs were taken very seriously by the students who belonged to these groups and by their *Alte Herren* (elders, alumni) who maintained a lifelong fierce loyalty to their *Verbindungen* and their insignia.

To set the stage for the entry of Jewish fraternities into the life of the universities and Jewish communities, it must be clearly and unequivocally stated that their structure, way of life, and rituals were taken from the German *Kulturkreis*—from the surrounding German culture.

Duels, except for the first recorded encounter won by Jewish David against the Philistine Goliath, were relics of the Middle Ages and knighthood, later adopted by French nobility and the Prussian *Junker* class and then somehow taken over by students. Colors too went back to the guilds of the Middle Ages, and the songs, which could be heard at outings and *Kneipen* (beer-drinking festivities) reflected German traditions. Occasional brawls were also not in exact conformity with Jewish lifestyle.

Despite this improbable and paradoxical background, the Jewish national fraternities became the first proponents of modern Jewish identity and the Jewish national struggle for liberation as expressed in Zionism.

The Founding of the Kadimah

It was in the year 1882, when a group of Jewish students from the eastern part of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy

banded together to form a Jewish fraternity in the University of Vienna, with the avowed purpose to fight assimilation and spread the Jewish-national idea. Moritz Schnirer, Ruben Bierer, and Nathan Birnbaum were the three young men who conceived this notion, and they called their small group by the Hebrew name *"Kadimah."*

The name was suggested by Perez Smolensky, an already famous Hebrew writer living in Vienna, who helped the enthusiastic young people of the Kadimah in their first difficult steps. With the approval of the Austrian authorities, received on March 23, 1883, the new association formally came into existence.

The whole idea of the "founding fathers" of the Kadimah seemed revolutionary at best and absurd at worst. Vienna was at the very forefront of emancipation, the seeming bastion of liberalism and unstoppable progress. It was a period when the assimilationist idea was at its peak, and complete integration into the surrounding culture and civilization was the hope of Western Jewry.

Jews in the East, on the other hand, were in their vast majority still deeply steeped in Jewish tradition and continued to live in the half-ghettos of their *shtetls.* The year 1882 was also the year of cruel pogroms in czarist Russia and the beginning of waves of Jewish emigration to Western Europe and, in ever-increasing numbers, to the United States.

The first few years of the Kadimah were more than rocky. The new group went public with a poster at the university calling on all Jewish students to rally to the new banner of Jewish regeneration. Still in its first year, the Kadimah organized the first public celebration of Hanukah as a national, not only religious holiday, by pointing to the Maccabean insurrection as an example of future Jewish militancy. Ridicule, Jewish antagonism to the "troublemakers" and deep skepticism were the answer.

Most of the students who had joined in the beginning were from the East and were still emotionally tied to their Jewish identity. Their national conscience also had been stirred by Leo Pinsker's book, *Self-Emancipation,* and the consequent first signs of a revival of Hebrew writings and literature.

By the end of the eighties, however, this original group of students was followed by colleagues from the rising Jewish middle class from Vienna and by students from Prague, Moravia, Silesia, and Bukovina, where Jewish emancipation had already greatly progressed.

Thus, the first Kadimahner joined because they were already conscious Jews, and later ones because they looked to the Kadimah to help them find their Jewish identity.

The new members brought also a new activist outlook to the task of the *Verbindung*. They became propagandists and missionaries, agitators, writers, and orators. The Kadimah thus remained until the meteorlike appearance of Theodor Herzl, the center of gravity for the fragile idea of the newborn Jewish nationalism.

In practically every university town of the monarchy, Jewish fraternities were formed, following the example of the Kadimah. New cultural and gymnastic groups were encouraged and functioned openly as Jewish associations. Dr. Fritz Loehner-Beda, a member of the Kadimah later founded the famous Jewish sports club Hakoah. In Germany, national student organizations came into being, and in London a Jewish student group assumed the name of Kadimah.

In Vienna itself, German nationalistic students began their first anti-Semitic demonstrations at the university, and the Kadimah took up the task of physically protecting Jewish students.

The Viennese Jewish community was in the hands of a self-content oligarchic group that was greatly disturbed by the activities of the Kadimah and did everything to undermine it. It was, however, impossible to stem the growing influence of the new ideas.

For the assimilated Jewish students of Vienna, the German liberal fraternities, with their colorful insignia, caps, and ribbons, had exerted a great attraction. Therefore the newer members of the Kadimah pressed for the adoption of those paraphernalia in order to lure these students away from their assimilationist milieu and bring them into the ranks of the Kadimah or other Jewish nationalist fraternities that followed in her footsteps.

In 1893,—ten years after its founding—the Kadimah went one step further and, with the other Jewish *Verbindungen*, accepted the principle that it was the "obligation of every member to give satisfaction with arms, if any other arrangement satisfying one's honor was impossible." Thus dueling and fencing became part of the Jewish fraternity routine, and successes in this field contributed greatly to the rise in self-respect and consequently to the attraction the new Jewish nationalist idea exerted in the Jewish student bodies on the campus in Vienna and the other cities of the monarchy.

Three years later, in 1896, the German nationalist student convention assembled in Waidhofen, a little city near Vienna, and adopted the Waidhofner Beschluss (decision of Waidhofen), declaring Jews "without honor" and consequently forbidding their members duels with Jewish students in "disputes of honor." Though this decision has been often overlooked by historians researching the beginnings and chronology of modern racial anti-Semitism, it was the first act in the monarchy where anti-Semitism was exclusively and openly motivated by race and blood. Though the official Austrian government reaction to this Waidhofner decision was negative and led to the temporary dissolution of the German nationalist student bodies, it was a stunning blow to those Jewish circles which maintained their dream of full assimilation into German culture and nationhood.

The Kadimah and the other Jewish fraternities adopted the practice that whenever the Waidhofner Principle was invoked, it had to be answered by a slap in the face of the German student involved. Since that time, fights and melees between German anti-Semitic students and Jewish fraternity members were a not-infrequent feature of Viennese university life. For the first time, the Kadimah received applause and commendations for its courage and defense of Jewish honor from the Jewish establishment.

Basically the innovative idea of the Kadimah consisted of the fight against assimilation by assimilationist means. It created organizational forms and styles appropriate to the times and attractive to a new generation, which was consciously or unconsciously longing for a modern "Jewishness." And national-

ism was the trend of the times after the decline of liberalism in the monarchy, the formation of the German and Italian nation-states, and the dramatic increase of the nationalist separatist movements of the Hapsburg Empire.

Few institutions seem as anachronistic today as do duels. However, in the eighties and nineties of the last century, dueling to defend one's "honor" was still customary and morally obliging in the academic strata of Austrian society and certainly so in the officer's corps of the army. It was also the time of rising anti-Semitism under Schoenerer and Lueger in the streets of Vienna, and particularly at the university. Jews who excelled in matters of mind, who were outstanding lawyers, doctors, and writers were considerably less prominent in physical activities. The time of sports had not yet come.

This was the social environment that induced the Kadimah and other Jewish fraternities to adopt the principle of dueling. A group that fought for Jewish national regeneration and Jewish militancy had in the contemporary atmosphere of Vienna no choice but to use all means then available to pursue its aims.

In January 1896, Theodor Herzl's *Judenstaat* was published, and the book changed the course of Jewish history. The Kadimah and the other Jewish fraternities found the cause and the leader they had been looking for.

It was the Kadimah that rallied immediately and enthusiastically to Herzl's support. A petition was organized and signed by all student fraternities and other Jewish national organizations in the monarchy, asking Dr. Herzl to take the active leadership of the incipient movement. Herzl's diaries make frequent mention of the devotion and the fervor of the Kadimah and the other student groups and the encouragement they gave him in this difficult first period of Zionism.

One of the probable reasons why Herzl felt such an affinity for this particular milieu is the almost-forgotten fact that Herzl in his student years was himself a member of a *Verbindung*. Herzl was the typical Austrian Jewish liberal with strong feelings for

German culture and as such a member of a German national fraternity called Albia. (His fraternity name was "Tankred.") He left the Albia in protest against an anti-Semitic resolution passed on the occasion of a university-related issue. This incident, though isolated at that time, helps explain Herzl's reaction to the anti-Semitism of the Dreyfuss trial in Paris in 1895, which triggered in Herzl his return to the Jewish people and drove him to conceive the *Judenstaat*.

In February 1896, Herzl spoke publicly for the first time to the Jewish community at large, and it happened in the framework of a *Farben Kommers*, a ceremonial banquet organized by the Kadimah. On this occasion, all the Jewish *Verbindungen* wore for the first time their *couleur*, the outward insignia of belonging to a specific fraternity.

The Kommers, however, was an event that went far beyond an academic affair. Greetings and promises of support came from organizations and individuals—also non-Jews—from all over Europe. Herzl's speech was enthusiastically received and widely reported in the press.

Members of the Kadimah were at the beginning Herzl's chief activists. Schnirer and Kokesch were the organizers of the first Zionist congress in Basel in 1897. Another Kadimahner, Dr. Isidor Schalit, became editor-in-chief of *Die Welt* (the world), the first Zionist newspaper.

Members of the Jewish *Verbindungen* became the most enthusiastic propagandists of Zionism. As students and intellectuals, they enjoyed respect in the Jewish community at large and therefore attracted many followers. Ten members of the Kadimah were delegates at the first Zionist congress. Others fought the battles in the official Jewish bodies where the levers of power were still tightly held by the old assimilationist establishment, and inspired new Zionist groups all over the monarchy and Central Europe.

The idea that had been dimly conceived by a few young idealists in the early eighties thus converged with the dream of a modern-day prophet like Herzl, who wrote in his introduction to his second Zionist work, *Altneuland*" (old new land), the clas-

sic words: *"Wenn ihr wollt ist es kein Maerchen."* (If you want it—it will not be a mere fairy tale.)

Herzl was forty-four years old when he died, in 1904. A whole people was mourning. Vienna gave him the burial of a king in Israel. Another forty-four years later, the state of Israel was born.

The First World War ended this first period of successful pioneering efforts of the Viennese fraternities. Numerous fraternity brothers who fought in the Austrian army lost their lives for *"Kaiser und Vaterland"* (for emperor and fatherland), and many others were wounded and crippled. All got their thanks twenty years later, when, after the *Anschluss,* they were driven out of the country, if they did not perish in Nazi jails and concentration camps—some located on Austrian soil and manned by Austrian guards.

The First World War, however, brought also the Balfour Declaration and the Jewish legion that fought with the British for the liberation of Palestine from the Turks. Zionism entered its political and practical stage of settling and building up a Jewish land in Palestine and securing its political base.

The *Verbindungen* in Vienna were quickly reconstructed, and relations with the fraternal groups in the successor states reestablished. In addition to the *Aktivitas* (active members), the *Alte Herren Verbaende* (alumni associations) played an ever-increasing role in the Zionist life in Austria. The old German liberal fraternities that used to attract so many Jewish students were a thing of the past. Jewish students did not believe in them anymore, and non-Jews followed the general trend of political polarization, They joined the Socialist ranks, which considered the idea of *Verbindungen* as antiquated and against the spirit of "proletarian equality," or they entered Christian-Socialist fraternities, which in a period of tremendous economic difficulties helped greatly in their future careers. In ever-increasing numbers, they also became members of German nationalistic *Verbindungen,* which quickly developed into Nazi strongholds. Thus,

the university followed the general pattern of the political climate of the first republic with its multiplying radicalization and consequent violence.

The Jewish national fraternities had come a long way from an outsider position to a leading role in one of the largest and most important Jewish communities in the world. Its active members and *Alte Herren* were the promoters of all Jewish initiatives in defense of Jewish rights. In 1936, free elections to the *Kultusgemeinde,* by law the official representation of the Viennese Jewish community, gave the Zionists a clear victory and thus the dominant role in its affairs. Its president was Dr. Desider Friedman, a member of the Libanonia, an old and renowned Jewish fraternity. In the same year professor Sigmund Freud, whose son had been a member of the Kadimah since his student days, accepted honorary membership in the Kadimah. Earlier, the only representative in the Austrian parliament of the first republic who was elected on a Jewish national platform was Robert Stricker, a member of the Veritas in Bruenn, another Jewish fraternity of long standing. Stricker, one of the most prominent leaders of the world Zionist movement, was killed by the Nazis in a concentration camp. His son, living in New York, is my fraternity brother from the Kadimah, known as "Campo" everywhere. He and his wife Jenny have been my lifelong friends.

On March 11, 1938 with the march of the Nazi hordes into Vienna, the story of the Jewish National *Verbindungen* came to an end. Many members of the Kadimah lived after 1938 in Haifa, Israel's beautiful port city. Today there is a street called "Rechow Kadimah," thus honoring the name and memory of this historical group.

I feel it my duty to enumerate all fraternities that existed in Vienna and to mention some in other cities, in order to record those names that meant so much to so many people and have played such an important role in the history of Central European Jewry and of the Jewish liberation struggle in general.

The example of the Kadimah was followed by the founding of the Unitas, Libanonia, Ivria, Maccabbea, Robur, Emunah, and Zefirah. There was a gallant *Verbindung* named Charitas in Graz, one of the citadels of Austrian Nazism. Strong ties were maintained with the Barissia in Prague and the Veritas in Bruenn, as with the Hasmonea and Hebronia in Czernowitz. Jewish fraternities in Germany were organised in the KJV (Cartel of Jewish *Verbindungen*).

In the first decade of the century, Jewish national *Mittelschulverbindungen* (fraternities of Gymnasium students) made their appearances. They aimed at younger students in order to prepare them for university life and to incorporate them as early as possible into the Jewish national movement. Each of these "junior" fraternities was associated with a senior fraternity and shared its facilities. They had the same ideology and ritual—except dueling, which had to be postponed until university registration. Giskala, Hyrkania, Masada, Hasmonea and Balfoura, were the names of these fraternities.

In the thirties the alumni group of the fraternities (*Alte Herren Verbaende*) formed an important and influential association called Igul (roughly "group"). Its task was to coordinate Jewish political activities of the respective member oganizations. After 1938, it still functioned for many years as a social meeting point for former alumni living in Israel and New York.

Masada—My Other Fraternity

My entire life was largely determined and intimately connected with "my" *Verbindungen*. I joined the Masada when I was in gymnasium (senior high school), and the Kadimah when I entered university. I remember that in the last year of high school I had to undergo an appendectomy. Dr. Felix Mandl, the prominent surgeon who performed the operation, announced at one of his bedside visits—followed by a batallion of white-clad assistants and students—with a voice and intonation that defied all possible contradiction, that come fall, I would be expected to join his Kadimah. I did.

Fifty years have passed, and the world has gone through terrible convulsions, but, till this very day, my closest friends are my old fraternity brothers from the Masada and Kadimah. They live in Israel, the United States, Argentina, Australia, South Africa, England, and France. Hitler drove us to the four corners of the earth, but we never lost one another. Year after year, there are fewer of us, but those that live meet at monthly Kadimah meetings in Israel and in New York or at carefully and long-prepared Masada get togethers.

No travel agency can be as reliable as fraternity brothers making arrangements for mutual visits. Brettl and his wife, for instance, have never failed to appear at the airport in Tel Aviv to pick up *Bundesbrueder* from the Masada. Kadimahner coming to Israel were offered hospitality and meeting places by Bal and Otto Liff and their spouses. Otto was a true pillar of the Kadimah till his recent death.

It would be a rare week when those of us who reside in the United States, like Ei, Gisl, Nubi, Campo, or Grins, do not take advantage of Ma Bell's cheap rates on the weekend to phone one another, chat, gossip, and make plans. We sometimes argue and criticize one another, but woe to anybody from the outside who would dare to say a negative word about a *Bundesbruder*. My son considers them as close family—in lieu of his real uncles lost in the Holocaust—and these sentiments are certainly reciprocated.

I believe that the secret of these enduring friendships consisted in the belonging to a group that had as its basis a common ideological denomination. We were deeply involved in Zionist activities in and outside the university. Many of us were already active and highly visible in Zionist organizations in our student days. We marched and demonstrated, and we were speakers at meetings and organizers of assemblies and conventions. After Hitler's rise to power in Germany in 1933, fraternity students helped initiate and propagandize the anti-German boycott.

Most important was the uncompromising stress on *Zusammengehoerigkeit* (belonging together). The fraternity was composed exclusively of students and thus of individuals of roughly similar intellectual qualities and interests.

The *Verbindungen* accepted only a small number of new recruits. To become a *Fux* (the lowest entry grade), one had to be a *Hospitant* (guest) for quite some time in order for the members to judge the adjustment of the newcomer and vice versa. One negative vote sufficed to be blackballed. To move up in the hierachy and become a *Bursch* (fellow), a review of the integration into the general life of the *Verbindungen* was required, an examination in Jewish and Zionist history and fraternity usages had to be passed, and another unanimous decision taken in regard to the permanent status of the *Fux*.

Upon formal acceptance, the new *Fux* chose an experienced fraternity brother as his advisor and counselor. He was called *Leibursch*. It was the duty of the older colleague to help the new member, who became his *Leibfux*, with all his problems. As a symbol of this new and special bond, they would buy each other a *Zipf*—a ribbon in the colors of the fraternity, held together with a gold or silver clasp, on which a dedication was engraved and which was to be worn attached to the then-fashionable vest-pocket watch, thus plainly visible.

Only members who proved to fit fully into all the aspects of fraternity life became the leaders either as *Erstchargierter* (first in charge) or *Zweitchargierter und Fuxmajor* (in charge of the new recruits and their education) or as *Drittchargierter* (third in charge and functioning as secretary).

This slow selective process weeded out all those who for one reason or the other did not adjust to the political and social lifestyle of the group, with its vast program of joint activities, upon which the *Verbindungen* insisted with a vengeance. This "togetherness" distinguished the *Verbindungen* from a *Verein* (association or club) and made only a relatively small active membership possible. An *Activitas* of about twelve to fifteen members at one time was the maximum that this intensive group life could bear. Of course, the number of alumni grew constantly since each active member became automatically an *Alter Herr* upon graduation.

Twice a week we met at the *Bude* (literally "shack," but meaning fraternity home). Punctuality was one of the first commandments. *Bude* at seven—meant *Bude* at seven. Being in time was policed by the *Fuxmayor,* and lateness was punished with *Strafpauken* (additional fencing exercises) or postponement of advancement and, in chronic cases, with expulsion. The evening's program began with *Pauken* (slang expression for fencing), which was both physical exercise and training for possible future duels. This was followed by meetings called *Konvente,* where newer members received their "education" and older members, the *Burschen,* decided about program activities and generally mapped the course of the fraternity. A lecture on events in the university, current affairs, or Jewish and Zionist history closed the evening.

The *Konvente* featured a strict ritual according to which every participant had to ask formally, in Latin, for the right to speak. The *Konvent* was always introduced and concluded with the singing of the fraternity anthems. On the table were laid two swords adorned with the colors of the *Verbindung.*

Once a week *Couleurkafe* (coffeehouse get-together) was scheduled, and everyone assembled after dinner, and young ladies were also welcome. Alumni too used to attend frequently and enjoyed the contact with the younger members. The *Alte Herren* might themselves just have graduated and thus reached the ripe age of twenty-five, but the newer members treated them with respect and liked to listen to their more or less "legendary" achievements in the fraternity. Those tales then became, by tradition and embroiderment, part of the fraternity folklore.

For innumerable years my *Verbindung* occupied the same table at the Promenaden Cafe, on the Ringstrasse. Students and alumni could be found there every Wednesday night, and the idea of skipping such an evening was as preposterous as the idea that the coffeehouse might have given that table away or would have forgotten to put the small fraternity flag in the middle of the table.

Young ladies who were new to the circle had to pass sort of muster. They were presented to the *Corona* (group of people)

with considerable trepidation, since a mere raising of an eyebrow might indicate a negative impression and thus make future social occasions somewhat uncomfortable. Therefore, the fraternity brother introducing his new love would carefully brief her in advance about "appropriate" behavior and general idiosyncrasies—just as he would have done prior to presenting her to his family.

Saturday was a difficult day. Tradition required that on Saturday mornings all university fraternities participate at the *Bummel* (stroll) on the university grounds. Each fraternity had its customary place, and all active members were expected to appear. The word "expected" in *Verbindung* lingo, of course, meant obligatory duty. This seemingly pleasant assignment had, however, turned, in the course of time and particularly in my generation of rapidly rising anti-Semitism, into a pretty grim routine. Most every *Bummel* ended with an attempt to throw the Jewish fraternities out of the university. It was the unflinching duty of the Jewish national students—at least as we saw it—to resist physically the ten or twenty times more numerous anti-Semitic students and give way only inch by inch. Every Saturday a number of Jewish students got more or less seriously bruised, but we developed "advanced" war tactics and used to drag some of the attackers with us and beat them up according to the laws of reciprocity.

My mother dreaded Saturdays. She was always afraid of a serious mishap, but for nothing in the world would she have uttered a word of restraint or caution. She knew that attendance at the *Bummel* was considered by us a matter of Jewish honor, and she did not feel like making life more difficult for me by complaining. In turn, I never failed to phone her casually around noon when the "ceremonies" were over, and we had reached the safety of our coffeehouse.

The Viennese university strictly adhered to the principle of so-called "academic freedom," and thus police intervention was excluded, no matter what trouble went on inside the walls. The university authorities—particularly after Hitler's rise to power in neighboring Germany in 1933—played a double game by al-

ways politely receiving delegations of protesting Jewish students, but not doing anything in the way of interfering with the rapidly growing student body that openly identified itself with the Nazis.

Saturday night, however, was a different story. This was traditionally the fraternity's fun night. Most of the time it consisted of one of the more controversial entertainment forms—the time-honored *Kneipe* (beer-drinking party). The *Kneipe* has always been the mainstay of organized student life in German-speaking regions of Europe. It was a beer-drinking party all right, but governed by a strict ritual and ceremonious behavior. A considerable number of *Alte Herren* would regularly participate either out of nostalgia for their glorious student days or because they just simply liked the fun of the *Kneipe*. However, the desire to spend an evening away from home under the patriotic pretext of "fraternity duty" could in some cases not be completely ruled out.

The *Kneipe* was divided into two parts, the official and the unofficial. The first started with the singing of the fraternity anthem and other traditional student songs, like the *"Gaudeamus."* Then came salutations and presentations by the "first in charge"—but no drinking as yet, except formal toasts. Drinking started only at the unofficial part. The mood became more informal by the minute, though the "praesidium," usually an experienced *Alter Herr,"* who was in charge of the *Kneipe,* never lost his grip on the proceedings, which in turn never lost their decorum and orderliness. Each participant was supposed to present his favorite student or drinking song, and one of the *Alte Herren,* known for his sense of humor and quick improvisation, would present a *Bierschwefel,* a talk on a completely nonsensical subject, thrown to him by the audience. He then had to make out of it a seemingly serious speech, delivered in perfect prose without an error in grammar and with dramatic and oratorical flair. Some of these improvisations were masterpieces of political sarcasm and irony. All fraternities had in their midst some outstanding practitioners of this "art." Every good point was an opportunity for a toast, and every example of bad or

unruly behavior was punished by the praesidium with a drink *pro poena* (for punishment).

The *Contrarium*, the man sitting on the opposite end of the banquet table, was also selected for his quick wit and ability at repartee. The evening generally ended in great merriment and mutual adoration. This, of course, was helped by a goodly quantity of good beer, always served from a keg. Bottled beer would have been considered a sacrilege—not to mention the unmentionable: beer in cans.

From time to time there were visits to one of the favorite beer or wine cellars frequented by students. Occasionally these outings ended with brawls when anti-Semitic remarks were thrown at us. Since beer or wine cellars were not university territory, police did intervene if necessary, and then students from both sides of the quarrel would end up at the police station. These interludes, however, were considered nothing but formalities by both the students and police. They were classic examples of the double standard. Tradition wanted it that *Raufereien*, as brawls were called in Viennese, or minor infractions like turning over a street sign, if commited by a student—even a Jewish student in the anti-Semitic thirties—would be considered benevolently as understandable youthful *Ueberschwang* (exuberance) but as despicable rowdiness if perpetrated by others. The police officer on duty would hardly ever register a name or impose a fine on students but rather issue a good natured and uncle-like reprimand. He might even inquire about fraternity attachments and then ask to pass on his respects to a judge or lawyer who, he knew, belonged to the same fraternity. With a remark along these lines: *"Ja, wenn man noch ein Student ist . . ."* (sure, if one is still a student), uttered with proper nostalgia, the police encounter was over.

The *Raufereien* never deteriorated into the use of knives or guns. Nobody ever gave any thought that this might happen. The same was true for the Saturday-morning *Bummel* at the university. The time for the *Nacht der langen Messer* (night of the long knives), as the Nazis later called their night operations against the Jews in Germany, had not yet arrived.

Duels were illegal in Austria but silently tolerated and accepted if transacted as part of a traditional student "routine." Duels with firearms were a thing of romantic novels, and only saber duels were customary among fraternity students.

In case of a challenge because of a physical or verbal insult, a *Vertretersitzung* (meeting of seconds) was arranged, which—needless to say—was held in a coffeehouse. If a peaceful solution could not be negotiated, the seconds decided upon the time and place of the duel. The formalities of such meetings were strictly prescribed and minutely observed.

Duels always took place on the *Bude* of one of the *Verbindungen* to which the contestants belonged. The physical risks were minimized by a body and sometimes even eye coverage. A mark on one of the cheeks was called a *Schmiss* and was often considered an honor. A doctor, normally an *Alter Herr* of the contestants' own fraternity, attended the duel and treated the "wounded." Seconds assisted on both sides and decided whether the duel should be continued or ended. In most instances the duelers would part "reconciled" and shake hands. Serious injuries occurred only rarely. Fraternity doctors took very good care of their younger colleagues.

A fraternity celebration normally closed the proceedings. Helas, the hero and center of the occasion could sometimes not participate properly—it would have been too painful to open his mouth for a gulp of beer.

Another *Verbindung* custom was the "name giving." In a mock ceremony, usually during a *Kneipe,* every new member received a *Couleurname* (fraternity nickname), and from that moment on he was called only by that name. Often the nickname caught on to such a degree that other friends, acquaintances and even family switched to it. A fraternity brother living in Israel was called by his wife only "Lach," his nickname.

The meaning or significance of these names were in almost all cases far fetched and generally the product of an inventive *Alter Herr.* I was, for instance given the name of Madras, because I supposedly had hair like a *Matratze* (a mattress). Till today, many people in many different countries call me "Madras" as naturally as if it had been my first name since birth.

My wife and son and, as a curiosity, my foreign-service associates who met my fraternity brothers when they visited us at our posts, knew them only by their nicknames. My address book too had them registered only as Schirl, Vagy, Isol, Thury, Dover, Fumy, and so forth. The meaning of all these names is just as "highbrow" as my own "Madras."

In the first photo taken of my son as an innocent baby, he appears adorned with the fraternity ribbons put on by his *meschuggene* (nutty) father—so described by my wife. Since then, every viewer of old family photos was either enthused or appalled—depending on his background.

A few years ago we had one of our sporadic international reunions at my home in Washington. My fraternity brothers saw this photo and decided on the spot that Peter, since he had once worn the fraternity insignia must get a *Couleurname* of his own. They "baptized" him with the name of *Gigerl*—a Viennese slang expression for someone who likes to dress modishly. Since then, regards to my son are only addressed to "Gigerl."

Boredom never existed in the fraternity. We were absorbed with issues that we felt were worthwhile, and, thus, we had no time to be preoccupied with ourselves. The *Verbindungen* provided all the emotional outlets and above all cameraderie, friendship, and mutual support so needed by young people.

We had our quota of *Verbummelte Studenten* (dropouts) but they were an insignificant minority. Most of the fraternity members were good students, graduated in time, and were successful in their careers. Alumni of the fraternities became respected and sometimes famous doctors, surgeons, lawyers, and scientists. They occupied top positions in the Jewish community and rose to leadership posts in the Zionist organizations. They became, later, the major activists in Jabotinsky's Revisionist movement. The crucial test for their abilities and their human stamina came after they had fled Austria and had to begin a new life. They passed the test well.

Fraternity life, however, was not to everybody's taste. Some

people of high potential that we regretted losing could simply not adapt. The customs seemed at times rigid and "togetherness" exaggerated. The continuous emphasis on pride in Jewish identity, activism, and ability of self-defense, caused friendly and sometimes not-so-friendly controversy and was too much for some people. But whoever liked the lifestyle, and the ideas behind it, profited enormously and derived a sense of "belonging" lasting for the rest of his life.

Millions of American TV viewers saw the film *Masada* and the moving ceremony at its end when the new Israeli army recruits swore their loyalty to Israel with the cry "Masada will not fall again."

In January 1982, I was with my wife in Israel and arranged the trip in such a way as to enable a *Bundesbruder* living in Buenos Aires, who had recently lost his wife, to be with us. We went up to visit Masada, the fortress near the Dead Sea. My friend Rips (this was not only his fraternity name but the one used by his business associates as well) and I were standing on top of the mountain and, like two old fools we were lustily singing the old Masada fraternity song: *"Ist olir der Turm bekannt, er schuetzet rings das Land, er wird Masada durch alle Zeit genannt."* (Do you know the tower, it protects the entire land. . . It will be called Masada for all eternity.) We surely knew it, we had sung the song half a century ago.

I remember another "nostalgic" incident during my days following the occupation of Berlin at the end of 1945. I had absolutely decided to find some of the old student songbooks, which were called *Bier Bibel* and used to be published in an elaborate and attractive binding, I had, of course, lost my copy when I had to flee Vienna. I found some of these old and beautiful "treasures" in a hidden little bookstore. I still recall the incredulous look on the face of the store owner when a man in American uniform was eagerly buying up all German student songbooks he had in his inventory.

The concept of Jewish fraternities must be seen in the con-

text of their times and not from today's viewpoint. At the period the Kadimah was founded, dynamic Western Jewry was striving for complete emancipation. Unfortunately, the trend seemed to lead to eventual Jewish abandonment. In its simple and basic form it was the idea of the Kadimah to accept modernization and the dynamism of the West, but to substitute the new concept of Jewish self-liberation and eventual creation of a Jewish homeland for assimilation.

After the Holocaust and in the fourth decade of the Jewish state, it might seem strange and even outlandish to have, as it was stated earlier, fought assimilation with assimilationist methods. But what were these assimilationist methods? One was the idea of self-defense. It was considered "un-Jewish" and therefore assimilationist because it had not been practiced for two thousand years of Jewish exile. Self-defense, however, had never been a foreign concept to Jews, as every Bible-reader well knows. Passive suffering and nonresponse to acts of violence is not a basic Jewish trait but was born out of weakness and their status of perpetual minority.

The phrase "a Jewish boy does not fight back" was an expression of ghetto mentality, and, if Jews wanted to leave the ghetto in all its manifestations, they had to change these instinctive reactions. Herzl later proclaimed *"Wir wollen aus Judenjungen junge Juden machen."* (We want to change "Jew boys" into Jewish boys). This in essence was what the Jewish *Verbindungen* visualized when they introduced fencing and dueling and insisted upon physically fighting against every attempt to curtail the presence of Jewish students at the university.

Discipline and ritual were two other aspects of fraternity life. Again, we have to think back a century, when Jewish life in the *schtetls* of the east, though rich, warm and intimate, was isolated and self-contained. Certain concepts highly valued in the West, such as punctuality and decorum, were not considered particular Jewish virtues. A change in these psychological attitudes was necessary if normalization and modernization were to be achieved. This was the "philosophy" behind the insistence of the *Verbindungen* on precision, absolute reliability, respect of

the hierarchical structure and the observance of form in all proceedings. I deeply believe that the fraternities in doing so contributed not only to the enrichment of the personal lives of their members, but also to the strengthening of the Jewish national liberation movement. No modern state can exist without the concepts of self-defense, personal and collective discipline, sense of belonging, and a feeling for form and ceremony.

There was still another concept that the *Verbindungen* tried to give their members and it was also considered as un-Jewish. It was the right of young people to enjoy life. The Jewish experience in the Diaspora has taught the cruel lesson that there was very little joy to be expected and that therefore the duty of young people must consist exclusively in their devotion to study. For centuries this meant holy studies like the Torah and the Talmud. With the emancipation, the universities took the place of the Yeshiva and the Cheder, and a frantic Jewish work ethos accelerated the scramble for material and professional advancement. Fun, play, and expressions of youthful exuberance were considered totally inappropriate for Jewish young people. Chaim Nachman Bialik, the greatest Jewish poet of modern times, describes in one of his moving Hebrew poems, "Hamatmid" (the zealous), a student who does not know anything but the Yeshiva, who does not see daylight, and does not notice the beauties of nature. He is pale and physically frail, and his youth wanes as the days go by.

In the West, it was not the Yeshiva anymore; it had changed to a modern gymnasium, *lycée,* or university, but it was still the only duty of the Jewish student to absorb as quickly as possible all knowledge available and to devote every ounce of his strength to the books. There was no color in his life, no physical activity, never youthful behavior. The Jewish boy became a caricature of himself with his round shoulders, his nearsighted eyes, his flabby muscles. All the Jewish suffering of centuries seemed already concentrated in his prematurely old look.

The *Verbindungen* tried to change these deeply rooted attitudes. They proclaimed the almost revolutionary idea that "to learn to laugh," as Jabotinsky expressed it later in one of his novels, was not shameful and above all not "un-Jewish."

Thus, in historical perspective and retrospective, the borrowings of symbols of the fraternity lifestyle from the surounding German *Kulturkreis* becomes understandable. Those were the only precedents and examples available. They were the instruments of a physical and psychological regeneration needed in the process of normalization and eventual nation-building.

The *Verbindungen* were attacked from the very beginning. Assimilationists hated them because of their pride in feeling Jewish. The traditionalists criticized them because of their "un-Jewish" attitudes and behavior. However, just as Zionism advanced to become the mainstream of Jewish life, the *Verbindungen* grew to become its avant garde. The ideas and concepts of militancy, discipline, national pride, and self-reliance developed as the basic ideology of Jewish rejuvenation.

Vladimir Jabotinsky's militant revisionist message seemed to incorporate into its ideological platform many of the basic ideas that the *Verbindungen* had preached and practiced on a much narrower level. No wonder then, that the majority of active members—not necessarily the alumni—joined Jabotinsky's movement and became its most active proponents.

I remember very well how and when I first became acquainted with Jabotinsky's philosophy. We had a meeting at the *Bude* of another Jewish fraternity, the Unitas, and one of their *Alte Herren*, Arthur Koestler, spoke about Jabotinsky and his new doctrine, of which he had become an enthusiastic supporter. Most of us present were fascinated. Shortly thereafter, Jabotinsky visited Vienna and delivered one of his unforgettable speeches. We became his disciples, and almost all of us remained faithful to the man and his heritage.

It is ironic that Koestler himself, one of the first converts to revisionism in Vienna, dropped out very early and became an active and engaged Communist. This extraordinarily gifted writer then achieved another first by being, with Ignazio Silone, the earliest apostle of deep and lasting disappointment with Communism—still before the outbreak of World War II. He then

returned full circle to his first belief and supported the Jewish insurrection against the British. Though he remained an admirer of Jabotinsky's political genius, he felt he had to say farewell to Zionism and the young state of Israel after its foundation.

It is a strange aspect in the turbulent history of Zionism that two of its greatest protagonists, Herzl and Jabotinsky, who created the ideology of the political and militant Jewish struggle for freedom, were people of so-called assimilated backgrounds. They came from nonreligious, worldly, and cosmopolitan families. Herzl's environment was German, Jabotinsky's Russian. Herzl never spoke Yiddish; Jabotinsky had to learn it.

A people's strength is fed by many and often contradictory currents and sources. This was also the case of the Jewish fraternities in Vienna with their non-Jewish characteristics and customs. Different periods of history require different approaches, and many actions and reactions that seem strange and even bizarre in hindsight turn out to be correct steps taken at that juncture. The concept of the *Verbindungen* fullfilled its historic role by rallying three generations of Jewish students to the idea of Jewish renaissance and furnishing the ascending Zionist movement with activists and leaders.

The few Jewish fraternity students who still live and the many who went before them can be proud of having participated in the great adventure of recreating Jewish nationhood.

Vienna, *"Die Herzlstadt"*— Theodor Herzl's City, and Jabotinsky's Zionist Revisionist Movement

Every year on July 3, the anniversary of Theodor Herzl's death, the Zionist community of Vienna assembled for its annual ritual of pilgrimage (*Herzlgrabgang*) to Herzl's tomb in the old and peaceful cemetery of Doebling, a beautiful suburb of Vienna. Thousands of people participated in this homage, almost always favored by ideal summer sunshine. It was a solemn, but colorful spectacle. Families brought their children and initiated them into the dreams of the bearded visionary whose picture could be seen in so many Jewish homes. Youth groups marched in their different uniforms followed by the Maccabi gymnastic clubs, and sports groups. Political and social associations, adhering to the infinite varieties of Zionist credo, carried their banners and slogans.

The procession, however, was always led by the Jewish national fraternities with their ribbons and caps and their rank order determined by the date of their founding. Thus, the Kadimah, my fraternity, was always at the very head of the march. Nothing could ever compare to my youthful pride when, during the semesters when I was *Erstchargierter* (first in charge), I led the whole parade, passing slowly in single file before the grave. Returning, I would see my parents marching with their group and notice the happiness in their eyes.

For reasons unexplained, and unexplainable till this very

day, Herzl's grave was untouched and undamaged during the years of Nazism. His remains were transferred and laid to eternal rest on a hill overlooking Jerusalem named Mount Herzl. It was one of the first acts of the sovereign government of the *Judenstaat* that Herzl dreamed of when he wrote his revolutionary tract.

My father was a Zionist, my mother was a Zionist, and so was I—for as long as I can remember. Ours was not a religious home. My father, though very learned in all things Jewish, was a strange mixture of agnosticism and the strongest imaginable Jewish national and Zionist convictions. Very early he became a follower of Jabotinsky's brand of Zionism, and I joined the movement in my student days. My mother was equally committed and an activist in her own right. Zionism in Jabotinsky's militant formulation was the family's overriding concern.

Polarization and politicization of life in Vienna during the years of the republic applied not only to Austria's politics in general, but in equal measure to the ideological differences within the Jewish community and the Zionist movement itself. Young people and even children were no exceptions. One of my dear friends till this day is Dr. Lonek Reich, a physician in New York. I met him for the first time on a playground in our neighborhood park in Vienna's sixth district, where we both lived. I was seven, and he six years old. Before we started our *Kugerl* game, (marbles), I asked him the classical question: *"Bist Du auch ein Zionist?"* (Are you a Zionist too?) and he gave me the equally classical and somewhat indignant reply: *"Nein, ich bin ein Sozial Demokrat."* (No, I am a Social-Democrat.)

Needless to say that Lonek's parents were devoted Social-Democrats. However, our friendship survived this initial cleavage of opinion, and, like so many other Jews who "erred" in their youth, he has become a devoted follower of Israel.

In those days, it was apparently not axiomatic that children had to develop characteristics and political persuasions in diametrical opposition to those of their parents. I often wonder how our fathers and mothers did it. Maybe they preferred to follow their natural instincts rather than read "how-to" books, study pseudoscientific essays, or consult, at the slightest problem, with psychiatrists and psychologists.

Early Zionist Struggles

Vienna was Theodor Herzl's city, but Zionism as a political movement in Vienna grew slowly in his lifetime. Viennese Jewry of the last decades of the nineteenth century and till the end of the Danube Monarchy in 1918, was a community of immense intellectual activity and talent, which contributed in a decisive way in giving Vienna its specific cosmopolitan and world-view character. Its fast-growing middle class shared a deep belief in liberalism and steady and almost "unpreventable" progress. They felt that the monarchy was good to them, and they identified with it and its institutions.

Indeed, there can be little doubt that the standard and the quality of life under Emperor Franz Joseph was improving for all his citizens. As far as the Jews were concerned, it was certainly one of the more fortunate periods in the history of the Jewish communities in Europe. Thus, the majority of Viennese Jews saw themselves as Austrians of the "Mosaic" religion and were deeply disturbed by new strange ideas of Jewish nationalism, and Herzl's call for a Jewish state.

The collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire meant also the collapse of the pre–World-War-I liberal belief in the irresistible progress of material well-being and the parallel improvement in human equality for everybody, including, of course, the Jews. This rude awakening brought about a sudden flourishing of the Zionist movement in all its variations—nationalist, religious, socialist, centrist, and many more. The old Viennese Jewish community began for the first time to devote its remarkable talents to the furtherance of specific Jewish tasks. A daily paper was founded—the *Morgenzeitung*—and a Hebrew high school (gymnasium) came into being, named after the revered Zionist chief Rabbi, Dr. Zwi Perez Chajes.

Cultural groups devoted to Jewish studies flourished, and Zionist associations of different political ideologies multiplied. Jewish *Turnvereine* (gymnastic clubs) called *Maccabi* came into

existence and became the center of physical education and moral regeneration for thousands of Jewish youths. Hakoah, the great all-round sports club, with its extraordinary achievements, became the pride of the Jewish community.

The steady rise of Nazism in next-door Germany, and its illegal variety in Austria itself, finally converted the majority of Viennese Jews to Zionism.

In the twenties, a big gap opened in the Zionist world movement. After the enthusiasm and colossal hopes of the Balfour Declaration and the establishment of the British mandate over Palestine came the increasing disappointment over the systematic British retreat from its promises and obligations. The Zionist leadership of Chaim Weizmann emphasized practical aspects of colonization and step-by-step progress in immigration and settlement rather than Herzl's idea of a Jewish state to be realized by political means. Vladimir Jabotinsky emerged as the new fiery leader of the opposition.

Revisionism

Vladimir Jabotinsky—he adopted his Hebrew name "Zeev" only much later—came from Odessa, the Russian Black Sea port, a cosmopolitan and intellectually sophisticated city. He was brought up in a Russian-assimilated environment, but already in his student years had become active in Jewish self-defense preparations. He turned to Zionism and quickly became one of the rising personalities of the movement in Russia.

Jabotinsky was—like Herzl—a unique and romantic figure in modern Jewish history. A Renaissance man of the most diverse talents, he was a writer, orator, linguist, translator, soldier, politician, statesman, and, above all, a leader of unequalled charisma and vision.

It was Jabotinsky's revolutionary idea to launch the call for a Jewish legion in the First World War. The legion, the first

Jewish organized military venture since the revolt of Bar Kochba, eventually participated as a unit of the British army in the campaign against the Turks and marched under General Allenby into Palestine. One of the main thoroughfares of Tel Aviv is named Allenby Street. Jabotinsky himself served as second lieutenant in the ranks of the legion.

In 1921 he founded, in Jerusalem, the first Jewish self-defense group (*Haganah* is the Hebrew word for self-defense) when Arabs started attacks against the Jewish population. Having become widely known and acclaimed for his decisive role in the formation of the Jewish Legion, he was coopted as a member of the worldwide Zionist executive board. However, he resigned soon in protest against what he believed to be weak policies of Chaim Weizmann, the president of the Zionist movement. Jabotinsky then founded the Zionist Revisionist movement and thus started a completely new chapter in the agitated history of Zionism.

He called his new movement "revisionist" since its program revised fundamentally the then-current concept, favored by Weizmann and the majority of the Zionist world executive, that systematic practical progress in Palestine, purchase of land when and if possible, building of agricultural settlements, creation of social innovations like *Kibbutzim* (collective settlements), and cultural achievements would, in God's own good time, achieve Jewish independence. Jabotinsky did not deny the usefulness of all these approaches but warned that they would all prove insufficient and insignificant in the dark and threatening years to come.

Jabotinsky presented an all-encompassing program of revision of these policies. He asked for a return to the political concepts of Theodor Herzl—the necessity of remedying the eternal minority status of the Jewish people by creating a Jewish state where Jews would be a majority and their country the ingathering place for the Jews who would have to face monumental catastrophes in Europe.

Jabotinsky elaborated the theory of militant Zionism by stating over and over again that no people had ever won freedom

without fighting for it and that only a political offensive coupled with military preparation would eventually produce a Jewish state. Without fighting for freedom, *"Bedam u Baesch"* (by blood and by fire), the Jewish people would never be redeemed. Weakness, he said, might be pitied—or not even that—but it would not be rewarded.

One of Jabotinsky's great achievements was the creation of a worldwide youth movement, the Brith Trumpeldor or Betar. Trumpeldor was a hero of the modern Jewish immigration to Palestine who died in defense of his settlement when attacked by an Arab mob. Betar was one of the last fortifications to fall in the battle against the Romans. Thousands of young men and women were educated in this youth organization in Jabotinsky's teachings and eventually helped form the cadres of the Jewish Liberation Movement.

Jabotinsky organized a strong self-defense force in Eastern Europe, which was named "Brith Hachayal" (soldiers units). The revisionist movement also started a naval school in Livorno, Italy. This added to the attacks against Jabotinsky, who was now sarcastically accused of increasing his "militarism" by adding "Jewish sailors" to "Jewish soldiers." These ridiculed Jewish sailors later played an important role in the first attempts of clandestine transports to Palestine.

In Jabotinsky's wonderful Samson book, Samson, a prisoner of the Philistines, outlines in lapidary language to the emissaries of the Israelites, the requirements of survival: "Forge iron—select a king—and learn to laugh . . ." These were the lessons that Jabotinsky wanted to teach his young followers: military preparedness, unity and discipline, and enjoyment of life.

Jabotinsky's ideas found both an enthusiastic response and unmitigated opposition. The whole idea, of militancy, of "blood and fire," of strict discipline, of ceremony and symbols, struck either a deep cord of understanding or an equally deep-seated feeling of rejection. Jabotinsky was labeled a militarist and Fascist. His ideology was attacked as "un-Jewish"—un-Jewish because it was unaccustomed and new after two thousand years of exile and passivity.

Split in Zionism

One of the determining factors of the Zionist pre-war history was the deep enmity between Chaim Weizmann and Vladimir Jabotinsky. It was an implacable antagonism between two strong personalities who differed fundamentally in their political outlook, practical approaches, and evaluations. It was an enmity that eventually permeated the whole Zionist movement and led to its division and split.

Weizmann, a world-renowned chemist at the University of Manchester had played a historic role in the building of the Jewish state, as one of the chief architects of the Balfour Declaration issued in 1917 by the British government. This declaration was the first official document recognizing and approving the Zionist aspirations for a "homeland" in Palestine.

During the First World War, Jabotinsky and Weizmann cooperated very closely, and Weizmann was fully on Jabotinsky's side when he launched his appeal for a Jewish legion.

The later rift between these two men and their ideologies was never healed. On the contrary, it continued when Ben Gurion became the undisputed leader of the Zionist movement and then of Israel. It was present in the schism between the Haganah and the Irgun, during all the years of the fight against the British and was continued by the decades-long political quarantine of Menachem Begin and his party.

It took almost thirty years of an independent Israel, the rise of a new generation of native-born Israelis, and the immigration of masses of Jews—from North African and Asian countries, Morocco, Algiers, Egypt, Syria, Libya, and so forth—who had never witnessed or participated in these deeply divisive Zionist disputes, till Begin and his coalition—the successors of Jabotinsky—could emerge from the "wilderness" and become the government of Israel.

It is impossible to grasp today how deep a gulf separated the "official" Zionists of all shades and the adherents of Jabo-

tinsky. Friends and families were divided and fought bitterly among themselves. Many members of our family, traditional Zionists, simply hated Jabotinsky. My father and his brother Oskar could spend nights arguing and quarreling about the merits of the different positions of Weizmann and Jabotinsky. In 1933, both went to a Zionist congress in Prague, and so did I. My father and my uncle spent the whole night preceeding the opening of the congress, discussing and disagreeing in advance with the momentous speeches to be delivered the next day. Both Weizmann and Jabotinsky were supposed to issue their programmatic statements, and one of their epic rhetoric duels was expected.

I was early in the assembly hall, which was crowded to the farthest corners. I had reserved two seats for my father and uncle. The session started and got into full swing—but they did not appear. I got seriously worried and rushed out to the lobby and then to the street to investigate. All of a sudden, I saw both of them standing in front of the congress building, completely oblivious of all happenings and engaged in their own private argument about the merits of their respective Zionist ideologies. They walked up and down, stopped, shouted at each other, and swung their elegant canes in anger. It was a hysterically funny spectacle. I interrupted and inquired casually whether it would not be wiser to listen to the speakers in person rather than speculate and argue about what they might say. A bit ashamed and laughing about themselves, these old warriors finally made it inside the congress hall.

Jabotinsky was a spellbinding speaker. Older people compared him with Clemenceau, the former French prime minister and a legendary orator. In later years, it was only Winston Churchill who could move his audience to such an extent as Jabotinsky and whose lapidary formulations turned to political weapons as efficient as if they had been steel and iron.

The chief activists in the revisionist party in Vienna were young university graduates and students, many of them mem-

bers of the Jewish national fraternities, like Dr. David Buxspan, Dr. Willy Perl, Dr. "Moll" Gorby, Paul Lustig, and me. We joined a few older Jabotinsky enthusiasts like Dr. Arieh Koeppel, a noted theoretician and economist, and Dr. Wolfgang von Weisl, also a member of a fraternity and a remarkable orator and writer. Hans Perutz, an industrialist was our "senior" and one of the financial mainstays of our organization.

The worldwide revisionist movement was growing tremendously, and just as it attracted in Eastern Europe the traditional Jews, in Vienna it proved able to gather a generation of younger people who had remained nominally Jews, but had lost any inner contact with Judaism. In the Austrian provincial towns like Graz, Linz, St. Poelten, and Amstetten, there existed even another category, the "forgotten" Jews—Vienna had forgotten about them and they themselves had forgotten that they were Jews. Jabotinsky's call stirred all these different people and made them rally around his fiery declarations of struggle and ultimate liberation.

The Viennese Betar, led by Otto Seidman, Erich Wolf and other devoted young men and women, became particularly popular in the formerly assimilated parts of Viennese Jewry. Equally, Betar groups sprung up in virtually all provincial towns where there was any Jewish population. A particularly strong and active group existed in Innsbruck, the center of Tyrol. The Austrian Betar with its smart uniforms, fine discipline, and Zionist enthusiasm was one of the prides of the movement.

In the spring of 1981, I attended a reunion of Betar members from Austria in Tel Aviv. Many Betarim from Austria had succeeded in reaching the shores of Palestine, thanks to the so-called illegal immigration and were thus saved from the Holocaust. Most of them fought later in the ranks of the Irgun, some in Lechi, known as the "Stern group." The reunion was held in the "Jabotinsky House" in Tel Aviv, the headquarters of Begin's party, which also contains the Jabotinsky museums and archives. It took place in a period when at long last Manachem Begin, the former head of the Betar in Poland and the former commander of the Irgun, had become prime minister. It was a

wondrous moment to see hundreds of grown-up men and women, all of them veterans of the revolt against the British and the Arab wars of aggression against Israel, stand at attention, as the hymn of Betar was intonated, remembering how it had all begun when they were kids in Vienna.

I met Begin for the first time in 1934, at a revisionist conference in Crakow, Poland, which I attended as one of the delegates from Vienna. It was an important gathering, since it was destined to be the forerunner of the revisionist exit from the overall Zionist world organization and the establishment of an independent new Zionist organization. Begin delivered a major address at the opening session. Of course, I understood Yiddish well, but I had never heard before a lengthy programmatic speech in that remarkably plastic, but often maligned language. Begin was then already the rising star of the new generation of the Jabotinsky movement, and there was little doubt about his future leadership role. After my return to Vienna, we tried to invite him for a series of speeches and events, but the Austrian government, because of the mounting political tension in the country, was not willing to issue a visa.

I said that, of course, I understood Yiddish. I had heard it spoken often enough, and, after all, it was basically rooted in German—though a German spoken a few hundred years earlier. Jews took that language with them when they were expelled from the various German states and moved on to Eastern Europe. Combined with Hebrew and ornamented with new Slavic expressions, it became the day to day language of the Jewish East.

In any event, my knowledge of Yiddish did not protect me from a nice little language mixup when I arrived in Crakow. Right after checking into the hotel where the delegates were housed, I entered the adjoining coffeehouse, as one is duty bound to do in a city that once belonged to the Hapsburg monarchy. I noticed a number of delegates clustered around tables in the rear, and I approached them happily. I was just about to

shake hands when one of them shouted invitingly: "*Setz Dech aweg . . . .*" This is almost the exact German "*Setz Dich weg. . . .*" meaning clearly and without any shadow of a doubt," sit somewhere else. . . ." Deeply offended, I turned around and walked out of the coffeehouse. After all, I had come from faraway Vienna, and my colleagues were telling me in blunt terms to remove myself! One of them, Abraham Stavsky, a giant of a man and years later a martyr of the Jewish liberation struggle, ran after me and shouted repeatedly: "*Schechter, fawushe setzt Du Dech nischt aweg?* (which I again understood to mean, "Why don't you sit somewhere else?") I furiously replied that I certainly intended to do so, but in other surroundings. It took quite some time and intensive comparative language research to clarify that, for some strange reason, the Yiddish phrase "*Setz Dech aweg. . .* " is the exact opposite of its German counterpart. It means "*Setz Dich dazu. . . ,*" in English, "Sit down with us . . ."! This incident was the joke of the conference, and, till this very day, people in Israel from the "old guard" would ask me upon entering their houses to "Setz Dech aweg. . . ."

There was never a greater calumny than to call Jabotinsky a fascist. Fascism was identified with Nazism, and for a Jew to be branded as a Fascist in the time of rising Hitlerism was the gravest and most hurtful insult. This particular libel added, more than anything else, to the bitterness in the split between the two sides. Jabotinsky was a true liberal of the nineteenth century with its ideals of national liberation and belief in universal and individual freedom and progress.

He was a man of old-fashioned courtesy and the highest standards of personal and ethical behavior, whose vast erudition was deeply steeped in the old European cultural tradition. A linguist of extraordinary achievement, he spoke and wrote in most European languages. His translations of classical literature into Hebrew and Russian are considered classics by themselves.

Jabotinsky wrote weekly columns for the revisionist and Jewish press all over the world. He often used the pseudonym

"Altalena" for his writing. In honor of Jabotinsky's memory, this name was given to a boat, which was equipped with arms and men by Irgun sympathizers in the United States in 1948. It was supposed to bring these desperately needed reinforcements to the Israeli soldiers struggling after the declaration of statehood against the invading Arab armies. The *Altalena* was destroyed on the shores of Israel upon Ben Gurion's orders, since he was afraid that the arms and men aboard the ship might strengthen the Irgun. It was one of the great tragedies in the short history of the new state, which will be an eternal subject of dispute among Israelis of the new generation. But it could never be forgotten by the contemporaries of that historic period.

Jabotinsky came often to Vienna. It was centrally located, we had a strong and young movement, and he was enamored of the Betar, his "children" as he called them. Above all, it was Herzl's city, the birthplace of modern political Zionism.

It was in the spring of 1935 when Jabotinsky decided definitely to leave the Zionist World Organization. He felt that European Jewry was headed for a cataclysm and that a political offensive on a worldwide basis had to be undertaken to secure free immigration into Palestine, leading to eventual Jewish statehood as envisaged in the Balfour Declaration and the British mandate. Since the Zionist establishment could not be moved that way, freedom of action was of utmost importance and had to be secured immediately. Before, however, completing this fateful step of leaving and thus splitting the Zionist organization, Jabotinsky conceived the idea of submitting the plan to the members of the revisionist movement and its affiliates in a worldwide plebiscite. The date of the plebiscite was set for a Sunday early in June. Emissaries from the Revisionist Central Office in Paris visited all country organizations to discuss the aims of the plebiscite and its modalities. One of them was Dr. Joseph Schechtman a close collaborator of Jabotinsky, who later wrote a two-volume biography of Jabotinsky's life and Zionist leadership.

Two days prior to the plebiscite, Jabotinsky, returning from a trip to the United States, came himself to Vienna. A meeting of a small group took place in the home of one of our supporters.

Jabotinsky asked for our opinions as to the outcome of the plebiscite and the time and place to plan the forthcoming founding congress of the New Zionist Organization.

He held his head slightly inclined in his characteristic pose and listened attentively to all arguments. But his mind was made up. There was no time to lose, he stated. The situation in the world had deteriorated rapidly, and the official Zionist Organization and other Jewish bodies had lost their dynamism and with it the ability to handle the unprecedented crisis that was about to engulf the Jewish people. He was convinced that the plebiscite would endorse by an overwhelming margin his proposal to create a new instrument of Zionist activism. Jabotinsky then paused for a moment and suddenly asked us whether we could undertake the convening of the founding Congress of the New Zionist Organization right here in Vienna within a very short period of time.

All participants spontaneously agreed that the Congress would be organized as Jabotinsky desired and would be held in Vienna in September of that year—the year 1935. We posed one "condition": For Jabotinsky to stay on in Vienna one day longer and to take part in a mass manifestation of the Betar on Sunday, the day of the plebiscite. The manifestation was scheduled to be held in a big stadium in Vienna with the whole Jewish community invited.

News spread quickly that Jabotinsky would participate in the open-air gathering of the Betar. Members of the Revisionist movement voted at the plebiscite booths Sunday morning and then, together with thousands of other Jews, streamed into the stadium in the afternoon. It was a gorgeous day and the spectators applauded and cheered the columns of marching Betarim with their flags and banners. Jabotinsky reviewed the parade along with a few friends from one of the grandstands. All of a sudden a heavy rainstorm soaked the stadium and everyone fled to the covered sections. The young people on the field, however, continued unperturbed. At that moment, Jabotinsky left his protected place and joined "his" youngsters. In their enthusiasm, the kids broke ranks and singing and dancing, they surrounded Jabotinsky in the torrential rain.

Three months later, on September 7, 1935, we opened the founding Congress of the New Zionist Organization in Vienna's Konzerthaussaal, with worldwide participation. Jabotinsky, in one of the greatest speeches of his career, outlined in truly prophetic manner the terrible years to come, followed by the redemption of the Jewish people by a Jewish state fought for by a Jewish fighting force.

The aim of the Nazis in the midthirties was to make all German-occupied territories *Judenrein* (free of Jews) through either forced emigration or concentration camps. The decision to wipe out European Jewry—the "final solution"—was still a number of years away.

Jabotinsky forseeing the worst, traveled the breadth and length of Eastern Europe, from the Baltic to Poland, with his cry and supplication: *Juden es brennt* (Jews, the world is on fire.) "Evacuate, leave everything, and save yourselves. Liquidate the exile, or the exile will liquidate you."

The only place that seemed a natural haven was Palestine, ruled by Great Britain under an international mandate, the justification of which was to help build a "Jewish national home." Britain, however, was afraid that a massive influx of Jewish refugees would cause opposition among the Arabs and thus make its already precarious military situation even more difficult. The British government consequently decided to curtail almost completely any Jewish immigration to Palestine, thus cutting off the virtually only remaining escape route for the entrapped Jews of Europe.

When the revisionists started to organize a clandestine channel of emigration to Palestine, the *Aliyah Beth* (the world "*Aliyah*" means literally "ascent" and is used for immigration to the land of Israel, and "Beth" stands for "second" in this context, meaning parallel or additional) the Jewish establishment opposed this desperate attempt as "adventurous" and "illegal."

Two factors undoubtedly played a role in the relative pas-

sivity of the official Jewish leadership in this and other fields. The first was the desire at all costs to accommodate Great Britain, which was fighting a desperate war against Hitler. The second factor was the inability to fathom that Hitler's policies were really concentrated on the physical destruction of European Jewry. Therefore, the imperative necessity of emigration to Palestine by all possible and impossible means was not understood at that time.

There was, however, a third element present, hard to grasp a generation later for all those not intimately familiar with Zionist history. It was the deep cleavage between the militant groups led by Vladimir Jabotinsky and the restrained factions under Chaim Weizmann. One of the specific reasons forcing the Revisionist movement to find alternate routes and methods for emigration to Palestine was the fact that the few available certificates (official entry permits) were allocated by the Zionist organization mostly to groups and individuals of their own ideological coloring. The Revisionists were not among them.

In one of his articles, ridiculing the opposition of the official leadership, Jabotinsky called this clandestine *Aliya* the "national sport of the Jewish people." In the later years, of course, all segments of the Zionist movement played their heroic role in this "national sport."

Ships, under Greek, Turkish, Panamanian, or other flags of convenience, were leased and then crammed with Jewish refugees assembled in many different ports. Ships were at a premium, and those that could be obtained were hardly seaworthy. Travelers on those boats had to confront overcrowding, storms, sickness, lack of food and water, and German minefields. Above all, they had to slip through the blockade of the British navy before beaching on the shores of Palestine, helped by Irgun detachments and at later phases by the Haganah. Many boats sank, and many Jews perished, but tens of thousands made it to Palestine and survival.

Dr. Willy Perl, who was instrumental in organizing these expeditions from Vienna, called his fascinating book on these incredible adventures *The Four Front War*, "four fronts" signi-

fying the Nazis, the British, the elements, and the Jewish establishment.

Americans and filmgoers all over the world will remember *Exodus,* which depicted such a clandestine transport prevented by the British from landing in Palestine and diverted to camps in Cyprus.

Many of the great heroes in Israel's short history—from the Irgun and the Haganah—were involved in these rescues of thousands of otherwise-doomed Jews.

The world reacted to Hitler's openly announced policies aimed at the destruction of European Jewry with supreme indifference. It kept what Walter Laqueur called "the terrible secret" of mass slaughtering and did nothing to help. Today it again stubbornly refuses to believe Yasser Arafat and the PLO when they just as openly and clearly declare that their ultimate goal is the destruction of Israel.

It might well be that in this hard and brutal world one cannot trust friends anymore, but no Israeli government and no responsible Jew, after the horrifying experiences of one generation ago, can take the risk not to believe enemies.

Jabotinsky died in August 1940, at the age of sixty, in New York, amidst his beloved youngsters, when he was visiting a nearby Betar camp. He left a proviso in his last will requesting that his remains be transferred to the soil of the future Jewish State, if its government would specifically decree that this be done. There was an almost biblical grandeur in his unshakable conviction, even at this desperate juncture of history, that the Jewish State would rise from the ashes of European Jewry, and the only "detail" to be settled would be the official request of a future free Jewish government.

It took the demise of Ben Gurion before this was accomplished, but, in 1960, the Israeli government under Prime Minister Levi Eshkol solemnly ordered the transfer of Jabotinsky's remains to Israel. Today Zeev Jabotinsky, his wife, Jeanne, and his son, Eri, are buried on Mount Herzl, near Theodor Herzl, the father of Jewish independence. Their graves overlook the incomparable panorama of Jerusalem, the capital of Israel.

On September 9, 1981, Menachem Begin, Israel's Prime Minister, was on a state visit to the United States. Upon his arrival, the White House prepared a beautiful reception on the lawns, with all the pomp and ceremony due the leader of a friendly and allied nation. President Reagan greeted Begin in the most gracious way. When the two national anthems were intoned and a platoon of the different armed forces of the United States passed before Reagan and Begin, I was suddenly gripped by deep emotions. What a difficult and deadly road had to be traversed in a few decades since 1940, when Jabotinsky died, a lonely man in the gloomiest hour of his people's long history. Forty years later, his successor, after the Holocaust, after leading an underground insurrection against the British, after four wars of survival against overwhelming odds, finally emerged as the freely elected head of the government of a proud Israel. And here he was, received at the seat of power of a good, generous and mighty nation, with all the pomp and splendor available on such occasions.

Near me, watching the ceremony were a few military attachés of the Israeli embassy in dress uniform. One of them held his little boy high up, so he could better see the goings-on. The boy must have noticed that I was embarrassed, covering my eyes with a handkerchief, and he asked his father in Hebrew: "Why is this man crying on such a beautiful day?" His father, himself a younger man for whom the existence of Israel or the visit of Begin seemed a matter of course, answered with just a trace of sympathetic condescension: "He is probably an old Zionist and remembers things of the past. . . ."

Indeed the old Zionist did.

Part III

Memories—Family and School

We were a small family in Vienna. I had no brothers or sisters. On the other hand, both my father and mother came from families with numerous children, and, therefore, I was part of a fairly extended group of uncles, aunts, and cousins. The majority of my father's family lived in lands that belonged once to the monarchy, but were now part of Poland and Romania. They were almost all ardent Zionists and had, one after the other, moved to Palestine before the outbreak of World War II. Thus, I have a wonderful array of cousins and next-generation young relatives in Israel. On my regular visits there, I enjoy the get-togethers and some "hot" discussions about Israeli problems that often are still rooted in issues and animosities of decades ago.

The "Schechter" in the Israeli part of the family has long disappeared, as it was changed in Israeli fashion to truly Hebrew-sounding names like Amitai, Yashuv, and Darom. All of them and their children are firmly rooted in Israel, have served the country well in war and peace, and can be justly proud of their own and Israel's achievements.

The memory of my father was preserved in a book written by the husband of one of my cousins, Shimshon Melzer, a well-known Israeli writer, who devoted a chapter to the "Tales Uncle David told me." Uncle David was my father, who excelled as a teller of stories of Jewish and talmudic wisdom and of anecdotes and happenings generally.

My mother's family was concentrated mostly in Vienna.

There was a steady coming and going and mutal visiting with a feeling of warmth and belonging that is sorely missed in these days of the "nuclear" family and continuous mobility from place to place. I was particularly fond of my uncles, with whom I maintained a close relationship.

The younger generation was, in some cases, separated by considerable age differences and, therefore, by diverse focuses of interest. My oldest cousin Manfred, for instance, was already finishing his law studies at the university, when I was still in what was the equivalent of junior high school. After the Hitler years, when he lived in the South of France and I was stationed in Europe, we and our wives became very close. Politically, the interests of the family ranged from Zionism to Socialism to indifference and in between.

A great part of my Viennese family perished in the Holocaust; only a few of the younger generation survived.

As in each family, we had our share of "characters" and a treasure of anecdotes and expressions that were savored in family gatherings and family gossip. I have made a point of preserving some of those by retelling them to my wife and son. Thus, it is a happy feeling of continuation to hear Peter state on an appropriate occasion in the middle of an English phrase: *"Nein, kann man immer sagen—wie der Onkel Fisch gesagt hat. . . ."* (There is always time to say no, as Uncle Fisch liked to say.) This was the way Uncle Fisch from Budapest used to explain his ground rules as to how to make a lot of money: To accept any business proposal, since there will always be enough time to say no if the situation should change. Since the family never really fully approved of this particular relative—he married my mother's sister—they expressed their old-fashioned reservations by never calling him by his first name—he remained forever only "Onkel Fisch." His wife, Delka, was an older sister of my mother's and her favorite. She visited us often in Vienna and survived the war in the most dreadful of circumstances, having lost both her children to the Nazi murderers.

One of my favorite uncles was Jakob, who was—as there always is in each family clan—an adviser and helper of everybody. A man of infinite decency, he only deeply regretted that I had not become a Socialist like him. Still, he would attend every public meeting I addressed, fighting two contradictory feelings: pride in his nephew, who seemed to be moving up in the world, and heartfelt resentment against every word I uttered. Onkel Jakob was, by the way, the classical drawing-room Marxist. During his bachelor days—he got married only very late—he did very well as a businessman. Though vituperating against "capitalism" and "worker exploitation," he would never have taken a meal in a place other than the "Meisl and Schadn" on the Neue Markt, which was one of the wining and dining places of the aristocracy and high bourgeoisie. Any questioning of his highly nonproletarian tastes, Uncle Jakob would contemptuously dismiss as "anti-Socialist provocation not worthy of a serious reply." On the other hand, there was no way of taking a walk with Jakob. He always had pockets full of change ready and was on the lookout for beggars. He would cross the street every few minutes whenever he saw one, and distribute his coins right and left.

Uncle "Pulko" as he was called, a smallish, but nice-looking man, was the only Bohemian in the family. He was not particularly happy in his marriage, traveled a great deal and was not exactly averse to female attractions. He embodied all the considerable charm of the Hermans—the family of my mother. He was great company with his humorous stories and thus very well liked by the young in the family for whom he showed great empathy—never having completely grown up himself. It was probably his restlessness that saved him, since he ended up in Istanbul, where he continued to live during and after the war.

The elder of the family was Uncle Isidor, a man with a great personality and presence, who presided with old-fashioned authority over his wife, Frieda, and their four children. He certainly could not be called "permissive" in his educational methods, and my cousins, when growing up, had to resort to all sorts of ruses to slip out of the house in the evening—which they man-

aged very well. Nothing could make my uncle so happy as to have the whole brood together for dinner, and he would then enunciate a strangely constructed, half-German, half-Yiddish statement: *"Wenn ich sehe alle Kinder um mich herum—kommt mir zu ein Stueck Gesund."* (When I see all the children around me, they renew my strength.)

Isidor's oldest daughter, Casy, married a Frenchman and moved to Paris. Since the three sisters and the brother were particularly close to one another, and Casy, a superbly intelligent woman, forsaw the dire events in Central Europe, she managed to transfer all three to Paris. Casy's husband was the editor-in-chief of *Paris Soir,* the largest French paper before the war. It was my family in Paris who got a special visa for my mother, thus enabling her to slip out of Vienna and join me in Paris in May 1938. Until Casy's death a few years ago, she remained the center of that closely knit Parisian family group. We saw her regularly during our assignments and travels in Europe and loved her dearly.

The two other sisters, Lilly and Helene—well installed and married—live in Paris, and there is rarely a year that we don't manage to meet in Paris or somewhere in France. The same is true of brother Leo, who moved back to Vienna to work for the Central European Office of the Council of Europe. He is now Professor Leo Hermann and still one of the best dressed and most entertaining men in Vienna.

One of my other cousins—we were still children at that time—contributed a remarkable turn of phrase to the family repertoire. He was visiting us, and my mother had admonished me to be very nice to him and, when playing, to give in to his preferences. All seemed to go well, but eventually he ran out of ideas. I then started to make suggestions such as marbles, soccer, hide-and-seek, and other fascinating activities. His reply was invariably precise, short, and negative. When, exasperated I then asked, *"Was willst Du spielen?"* (What do you want to play?), he produced a simple reply: *"Ich weiss nicht, aber was Du willst, will ich nicht."* (I don't know, but what you want, I do not want.) Often I wondered whether the Russians might not have

picked up their way of negotiating from this consctructive approach.

Some family expressions cannot even be traced to a specific source, such as the description of a person with constant health complaints as in reality being "gesund wie ein Baer" (healthy as a bear). It was never sufficiently explained on what the reputation of permanent good health of bears was based. Another saying of vague origin was to deny any signs of fatigue or tiredness with an irritated *"Ich bin nicht mued; mued ist ein Pferd"* (I am not tired; only a horse is tired).

My mother used to assert with absolute authority that in our small family nobody was really sick unless he lost his appetite, and this was rarely the case. My parents remembered with particular pleasure as a good example of the family's interest in food—certainly not uncommon in Vienna—what I selected as a gift on a very special occasion. I was asked what I would like to get on the day of my *Matura* (graduation from gymnasium). Without a moment's hesitation, I replied that my desire would be to be favored with such an amount of *Walderdbeeren* (wild strawberries) that even I would have eventually to say *"Genug"* (enough). I passed the *Matura*, I got strawberries, and I ate and ate—until at last I had to admit defeat.

One of the permanent jokes of my father—and though he repeated it in different versions dozens of times, he still managed to enrage my mother—was to announce after an excellent dinner the following: *"Das Nachtmahl war gut und reichlich—aber ein wirklich vollkommenes Mahl sollte aus Vorspeise, Suppe, Fisch, Fleischspeise mit Gemuese und Kartoffeln, Salat, Kaese, Kompott und Mehlspeise bestehen."* (The meal was good and opulent—but a truly perfect meal should consist of appetizer, soup, fish, meat with vegetables and potatoes, salad, cheese, stewed fruit, and dessert.)

My father adhered to the dress code of the old monarchy and looked rather distinguished in his *Steifhut* (derby) and a cane, which served no facilitating purpose—it was sheer ornament. He smoked only cigars, and, though he could have bought

a week's supply at one time, he would under no circumstances have done so. On the contrary, every morning on the way to the *Elektrische* (tramway) he would stop at his favorite *Tabak Traffik,* a licensed cigarette and tobacco shop, to get his daily ration. This was a welcome opportunity for my father and the tobacconist to engage in a preliminary review of the day's events. A unanimous conclusion was always reached that things had been infinitely better in the olden days and that improvements were hardly to be expected.

Tabak Traffiken dated back to the times of a monarchical monopoly and used to be called *K&K Tabak Traffik,* K & K meaning *Kaiserlich und Koeniglich,* licensed by the emperor of Austria and King of Hungary. The republic changed nothing in the system, except that the word "K & K" was erased, but in most cases remained clearly readable.

My mother was never strict about my going out at night, even when I was a teenager, and she was rather relaxed in her educational principles. Still, those were different times with different taboos. Occasionally she felt it her duty to cover up for me *vis à vis* the maid. It was already after my university graduation, but I was living, of course, with my parents, as was the custom in Vienna. I went through a period of coming home very late at night—as a matter of fact, rather early in the morning. My mother felt embarrassed and told the maid, *"Der arme Herr Doktor hat jetzt Nachtarbeit"* (the poor Herr Doktor is on night duty). Our good maid treated me, therefore, with particular tenderness and served exquisite breakfasts to an overworked and probably exploited young man. My wife, a generation later, liked to ask Peter, when he came home later than usual, how his *"Nachtarbeit"* was.

Parenthetically, it should be added that employing a maid in Vienna at that time was by no means a sign of riches or luxurious living but—for good or worse—customary in middle-class Vienna.

In September 1981, after Begin's visit to Washington, I was asked to participate in a one-day conference in New York given by the Heruth, the organization supportive of Begin's govern-

ment in Israel. I was supposed to deliver one of the speeches opening the discussion. Begin would then attend the closing session in the evening and make a programmatic declaration to the veterans of the movement.

When I entered the lobby, I saw many old friends and associates. Some of them I had lost sight of since the days of Vienna forty-five years ago. Nevertheless, we recognized one another, and one of them, now living in Connecticut, embraced me and introduced me to his wife and other friends. He said some complimentary words about my Zionist activities in Austria a generation ago and then added: "But Dr. Schechter cannot be compared with his mother—she was beautiful, intelligent, and the pride of the movement."

Nothing could have given me greater satisfaction than to have my mother remembered in such a way after so many years.

I attended, for eight years, the same school, a *Realgymnasium,* and was very attached to it. The traditional gymnasium taught both Latin and Greek for the full eight years. The republic introduced a twist in this curriculum of classical education by maintaining the Latin, but replacing the Greek with a living language—French or English. This modernized version was called *"Realgymnasium."* The *Realschule* had no Greek or Latin, only modern languages. It lasted only seven years and secured entry into the *Technische Hochschule* (engineering faculty) but not to the university, for which the classical education with Latin remained a precondition.

Many of the professors were outstanding, and I owe them a great deal of gratitude. The director of the school helped with some disciplinary problems, which, of course, today would not even be called problems. I picked up my lifelong interest in history and geography from a remarkable and devoted teacher in the first few years. I have my French teacher to thank for my excellent French, which probably saved my life many years later.

Other professors tried to instruct me in mathematics and science, and their success was minimal, but I would not have done better with new or any sort of mathematics.

School at that time must have been pretty tough, compared to today's requirements, but it does not seem to me that we suffered particular "stress, pressure, or tension," favorite terminologies in today's educational system.

The Austrian school system had an interesting feature. Religious instruction was obligatory and continued to be so during the republic. Three times a week, for one hour, the class divided students into Catholic, *Evangelische* (Protestant), and Jewish students. They all received their religious instruction separately, paid by the official government school system. The only difference between the times of the monarchy and the republic was that, during the latter, parents could declare their children *Konfessionslos* (without religious affiliation), and they would then be excused from further religious education.

Most of the students in my school remained together till *Matura,* and I still remember their names and seating arrangements.

Half of my classmates were girls who did well in their studies since they were willing to devote much more time to the voluminous amount of homework demanded by the teachers. The male part of the class population, on the other hand, was very busy with soccer, other sports, and frantic attempts to impress the girls with these and other extracurricular activities.

There were the usual flirtations, secret and not-so-secret *rendezvous* and even serious relations that led to lasting friendships and, in some cases, marriage. As I think back, it seems to me that the famous "generation gap" was by no means as great as it is made to appear these days. The difference might have been that girls were less "aggressive," took the initiative less frequently and were content to let the young men act as the suitors and possibly "conquerors." Still, the young ladies managed their interests very well—as they have done throughout the ages.

Approximately half of the student body was Jewish. Therefore, anti-Semitism, though it existed, was less of an issue than in other schools with different compositions and, of course, later in the university.

Among Jewish students, the division was between the Zionists and their opponents. The anti-Zionists considered themselves either as Social-Democrats or as completely assimilated into the German *Kulturkreis* (cultural area). The connection of these young people to Judaism consisted exclusively of their not attending classes on high Jewish holidays.

The ideological rifts became more accentuated as we grew older and the political situation in Austria deteriorated. Some of my schoolmates and I joined Masada, and some became members of other Jewish fraternities; eventually we formed a Zionist nucleus in school. Consequently, hot debates during recess were as natural as political armistices after school, when soccer took over.

Despite this early political divisiveness—typical of Vienna in the days of the First Republic—I continued to have friends with whom I perpetually disagreed and argued, but to whom I was nevertheless much attached. One of them was Mimi, a girl who went to school with me for eight years. Whenever we had a date, I would find an occasion to castigate her as a *laecherliche Assimilantin* (a ridiculous assimilationist). Needless to say, I always maintained that she had "provoked" me by making fun of my and my friends' Zionist and fraternity enthusiasm.

Mimi is still a dear friend, but, when I see her now on my occasional visits to New York, it is she who insists upon talking about Israel and all the dangers that confront that country.

Fussball! Soccer! Austria's "Wonder Team" and *Hakoah*

In the twenties and thirties, a soccer delirium hit Vienna. Viennese of all ages, sexes, creeds, and political colors were united in an almost Brazilian like enthusiasm for *Fussball* and their chosen team favorites. This supportive climate and an almost freakish sudden emergence of talent produced magnificent clubs and later an Austrian *Wunderteam,* which ruled over its international competition for many years.

These good old Austrian soccer times are long since gone—as are the good old times in many other fields. As a Viennese magazine stated it a few years ago: "During the Wunderteam period, the players played wonderfully and received hardly any money for their efforts. Today the players play very badly but for unfathomable reasons get a lot of money for it. . . ."

In those golden soccer days there were about a dozen teams in the Viennese upper league. The provinces did not count and were not represented at all. Each club had its stadium in one of the Viennese *Bezirke* (districts) and drew the majority of its fans from the surrounding areas. There were three teams, however, that had outgrown their local attachments and commanded a vast army of devotees: Rapid, Austria, and Hakoah. They were for years in fierce competition, and matches between them were called "derbies" and sold out weeks in advance.

Rapid was the most popular Viennese soccer club and conquered the coveted *Meisterschaft* (championship) many times.

Austria had a much smaller following, but, since its original base was in one of the wealthier suburbs of Vienna, it attracted the economically better-off classes of the population—*"die feinen Leute"* (the fine people), as the Viennese rather contemptuously would call them.

The Hakoah was a completely different story. It was a Jewish sports club, and its Hebrew name meant "strength." It had been founded years earlier with the express purpose of providing and caring for the physical education and preparation of young Jews. It served this purpose very well, but had had as yet no dramatic achievements to its credit. It began to excel in many different sports—from swimming to water polo to field and track and skiing—simultaneously with the ascent of its soccer team.

In the early twenties, the Hakoah was still an almost unknown and modest participant in the second Viennese soccer league. The soccer talent virus, however, must have touched all the religious and ethnic strains of the population, because all of a sudden Hakoah began winning game after game. The news of a Jewish team in tough competition for the move to the top league spread, and more and more people made their pilgrimage to the poorly maintained and highly uncomfortable minor fields hidden in the outskirts of Vienna. Irony wanted it that Hakoah's chief competitor in that critical year was a club called Germania, and the contest between these two teams assumed proportions that in the overheated political atmosphere of Vienna far overshadowed a simple sports rivalry.

A halfway intelligent brain should probably retain worthier data and facts—but I recall as if it had been yesterday the move of the chief hero of Hakoah into the first league. His name was Isi Gansl, and he played center forward. Isi scored the most incredible goals and commanded grudging admiration from even the worst Hakoah-haters. Thousands of Hakoah fans would shout in unison, "Isi-Isi," and hopes were sky high when Hakoah left Germania behind and joined the exclusive clubs of the upper league.

The Viennese Soccer Craze

Like every kid in Vienna, I played soccer practically from the moment I could move my feet. Streets, parks, hallways—everything was for Viennese youngsters a potential soccer field. Schools in Vienna did not have their own playgrounds and sports facilities. Physical exercise was limited to *turnen* (gymnastics), which probably was very healthy—but kids had only one passion, and this was soccer.

I was very lucky since I did not have to beg like other children to be allowed to go to the games. My father insisted in my accompanying him—and he had hardly any trouble convincing me. My father had never played the game and at the beginning had only the most rudimentary knowledge of what it was all about—but he knew that a Jewish team with a Hebrew name was playing and needed supporters. It was, therefore, his and his son's duty to provide that support. Thus, two of the most rabid soccer and Hakoah fans in all of Vienna were born, to be joined soon by a third—my mother.

Games were usually played on Sunday afternoons. And, on every Sunday the scenario at the Schechter household was, with minor variations, the same. By ten in the morning, my father would start to walk around nervously and announce with a desperate tone in his voice that we would undoubtedly miss the game—invariably of "decisive importance"—because Mama would not be ready with the *Nusstorte* (nut cake) or *Mohnstrudel* (poppy seed pie) for the Sunday luncheon. And the Sunday luncheon featuring these or other Viennese delicacies was absolutely necessary to fortify oneself against the rigors and excitements of a soccer game involving the beloved Hakoah. Mama did not even feign to react to all these exhortations. Luncheon was, of course, ready in time, as was the strudel and she herself, for the family expedition to the stadium.

The first years in the upper league were a bit rocky for our team. But the players got better and better and the number of

fans increased by the thousands. Still, it was always Rapid and Austria that ended up in the top positions. Rapid had in its ranks some truly great players. One was "Rigo" Kuthan, who already as a very young man looked old because of his *Glatze* (bald head) and deceptively slow movements. However, he not only produced some of the most cunning passes of the game, but was also able to stop a ball with his behind—a feat not equalled even by the great Pele in later years. Another Rapid player was Uridil, nicknamed the "Tank," since he played with sheer physical force and simply broke through the adversary's defense. A song *"Heute spielt der Uridil"* (today Uridil plays) was for years on Vienna's hit parade. Austria's heroes were the brothers Kalman and Jenoe Konrad from Budapest, some of the most elegant and complete players of all times.

Hakoah decided to strengthen its team by bringing in a number of excellent Jewish players from Budapest, the neighboring capital of Hungary, where soccer was rivaling Vienna's in quality and popularity. These new players added a good dose of paprika to the team. Nemes, Eisenhofer, and Fabian became household words in Viennese soccer, and some of the exploits of the Hakoah team began to make Viennese *Fussball* history.

One of the great matches was an international game in a hotly contested regional tournament, where Hakoah played against the famous Prague team of Slavia. It took place in a tightly packed stadium in Ober St. Veit, a Western suburb of Vienna. The first half-time ended with an unprecedented debacle for Hakoah. Slavia was leading with the highly unusual score of 5:1, and it looked like a complete collapse for Hakoah. Icy silence reigned when the players returned to the field. Soon the silence changed into absolute bedlam, and a soccer miracle happened. Within five minutes, Hakoah scored two goals and continued its relentless pressure. A few minutes before the end, Hakoah had tied the score, scored another goal, and finished the game with a sensational 6:5 victory. A Hakoah player—Wortmann—had achieved the hat trick: three personal goals. On that rare occasion, Hakoah was the most popular team in Vienna. The "Jews" had beaten the "Czechs"!

There is a special reason why I recall this game so well with all its extraordinary details. That past week I had had some disciplinary troubles in school. My mother knew, of course, everything about the problem, but we had decided to wait for an appropraite moment for full disclosure to my father. When we left the above-described game, all engulfed in rosy feelings, my mother whispered to me just one word: *"Jetzt"* (now). I understood immediately and in-between a sharp analysis of Hakoah's offensive strategy, I managed to casually comment upon my present difficulties. My father uttered a strong and dutiful damnation like *"unglaublich"* (not to be believed) and, without a change in his voice, continued to discuss the game. When the subject came up again, it had lost its edge and was settled "peacefully" and forgotten when next Sunday came around and, with it, a new soccer challenge.

I was the envy of all my friends because of my parents. Since both my father and mother were Hakoah "Anhaenger" (fans), I was not only permitted to attend all the games—I was also privileged to go with them on a comfortable *Sitzplatz* (reserved seating ticket). My friends, on the other hand, had to use their meager spending allowances to buy a standing-room ticket, which did not provide kids with the longed-for view of all the happenings on the field. In the half-time intermission, we arranged, therefore, a lively moving from one section of the stadium to another. We had worked out an elaborate system of "crossing points"—varying with the different stadiums—which almost never failed.

Fussball was for me and my friends not a mere spectator sport reserved for Sundays. We played before school, after school, and during breaks—whenever and wherever we could. My afternoons were devoted to the Esterhazy Park. This was a neighborhood park in the sixth district, where we lived. As soon as possible after school and luncheon, "our crowd" assembled there, and the game began. The bigger boys played on the bigger square, the smaller on the small one. The trouble was that ball-

playing was *verboten,* and the police would requisition the ball—anyway only a poor imitation of a true soccer ball—if they caught us. Some of us, therefore, had to take turns in standing guard at the different entrances to the park to warn by a prearranged system of signals of the impending arrival of a *Wachmann* (policeman). We would then quickly disperse and sit peacefully on benches when the policeman arrived. He knew it was all faked, but generally did not bother too much. The games resumed a moment after he had turned his back.

Once, however, I had miscalculated, and the *Wachmann* caught me *in flagrante*—executing the misdeed. He took my name and address and mumbled that he was fully aware that I was one of the organizers of the illegal ball-playing in the park. I still did not take the matter seriously. Little did I know what was about to happen.

My Uncle Oskar, my father's brother, had arrived a day earlier on a business trip from Czernowitz and, of course, stayed with us. Czernowitz was an old Austro-Hungarian town, which at that time was called Cernauti and belonged to Rumania. After the Second World War, the Russians annexed it, as they annexed many other old monarchical towns, and today Czernowitz has disappeared behind the Iron Curtain. Czernowitz had a large Jewish population, and its cultural atmosphere was entirely Austrian. Uncle Oskar was one of my favorite uncles despite the fact that he imagined—and liked to point out—a certain likeness of his profile with Goethe. It so happened that at that time I was not at the best of terms with Goethe, the *Dichterfuerst* (prince of poets), since I had to learn by heart his innumerable ballads.

Anyway—when I returned home from the park, my parents were not there yet; only Uncle Oskar received me. I noticed immediately that he was greatly disturbed and upset. He started out with the assurance that he would never mention to my parents the "terrible" events of the day if I would solemnly promise never, but absolutely never to repeat what I had done today. There was no use reiterating that I was completely unaware of any misdeeds—it convinced my good uncle even more that his beloved nephew had became a hardened criminal. He

repeated over and over again that what I had done was bad under any circumstances but literally unheard of at my age. Acts like these would unquestionably jeopardize my entire future and bring shame upon our honorable family. He finally disclosed the facts in an emotional outburst: *"Kannst Du leugnen dass Du heute palestert hast? . . . Der Polizeimann sagte auch dass es nicht das erste Mal war . . ."* (Can you deny that you *"palestered"* today . . . and the policeman said that it was not the first time . . .). After a fit of uncontrollable laughter, I finally managed to ask my uncle whether he knew what *palestern* meant. He did not. Goethe had never taught him the intricacies of Viennese slang in which *"palestern"* equalled—playing ball! When the policeman had come to complain to my parents, Uncle Oskar, deeply steeped in the German classics, could not bring himself to admit that he had no idea what the policeman was talking about. The presence of authority and the weighty sound of the word convinced him that *"palestern"* must be a combination of stealing, robbing, mugging . . . if not worse. When my parents were later apprised of what happened, a good time was had by all—at the expense, of course, of poor Uncle Oskar. However, I was wisely but firmly counseled to move my soccer activities somewhere else—at least for a while.

I went to gymnasium in Ottakring which was considered a rather tough district. The location of the school, however, had incomparable advantages. It was in easy reach of the Schmelz, a Godforsaken and dreary area of flatland and as such, the "paradise" of innumerable soccer players—and it was not *verboten.* We had a school team that had not covered itself with distinction till the transfer, to our school and my class, of Karl Popik, a boy who was strong as a bull and a masterful soccer player. Our team started to score victory after victory, and he and I became lifelong friends. We both joined the Masada a couple of years later, and his fraternity name became "Nubi." We studied law together and graduated together. He lives in Buffalo and is one of the group of inseparable *Bundesbrueder* I tried to describe in my chapter on the fraternities.

In spring and summer on late afternoons, we played once a week at the *Naschmarkt*. This was Vienna's largest open-air fruit-and-vegetable market, and, after 5:00 P.M., its debris was cleared, and the stands were moved to the sides. The young men who were the helpers at the market formed a soccer team and received "guests" on their inviting playground. We must have had a masochistic streak to go there, since the helpers were quite a few years older, stronger, and were what was called in Viennese, *Puelcher* (sort of street gangs). Their "captain" was a tall and lanky youngster called *"der lange Zuze."* He was long all right, and a bad and very mean soccer player. It gave me untold satisfaction to dribble around him, and he derived equal pleasure in return from hitting me. But, apparently, a "victory on the Naschmarkt" must have been worth it.

If at that period of our lives we had had a "modern" and "permissive" school system, Nubi and I and most of our school comrades would have ended up as semi-illiterates. Innumerable years later, my son, Peter, went to a private, so-called progressive high school in Washington, D.C. His teacher used to suggest to him to read as homework some pages in a book and would add cautiously, "If you feel like it. . . ." Peter would not read those pages, since he very definitely "did not feel like it." Fortunately for me and my friends, our teachers were supremely disinterested in our "feelings"—because all we felt like doing was playing soccer on the Schmelz, the Naschmarkt, the Esterhazypark, and this for all time to come. And, equally fortunately for Peter, the director of the school changed just in time, and the new headmaster told the kids in unmistakable terms what they had to study—never mind their "feelings." And strangely enough—and maybe not so strange—Peter loved and respected his teachers who led and directed him—just as we had.

Was there anti-Semitism on the playing fields and among the fans at the big Sunday games? Of course, there was. The kids on the Schmelz and on the Naschmarkt would greet our arrival with the cry of *"De Judn san da"* (The Jews are here), even

if only half of our school team was Jewish. Slurs and insults were a part of the daily language, and fistfights also occurred. Why were we so eager to play under these circumstances? Love of the game? Satisfaction in occasional winning? Part of the strange Viennese lifestyle? I cannot say—probably a combination of all of these.

Hakoah games were sometimes wild. A lot depended upon the adversary and the location of the stadium. For instance, a match on the "Wacker" soccer field in Meidling, a tough neighborhood, would, from the beginning to the end, be accompanied by a cacophony of anti-Semitic shouts from the attendants and make life for Hakoah players and fans highly unpleasant. The top matches against Rapid and Austria were full of high tension, and, though the massive Rapid fanship could hardly be accused of consisting of "Jew-lovers," the enthusiasm that Rapid generated was based more on admiration for their team than just antagonism toward Hakoah.

The progress of Hakoah ran parallel to the advance of the Jewish national and Zionist feeling among the Viennese Jews. The idea that Jews could produce not only people with brainpower but also strong and agile sports skills—and particularly in the most popular sport, *Fussball*—was terribly exciting. Each Hakoah victory became another proof that the period of Jewish inferiority in physical activities had finally come to an end. By no means do I want to imply that each Hakoah fan analyzed his feelings minutely and thus came to these conclusions. But I do know that thousands upon thousands of Jews would never in their lives have attended a soccer game, if it had not been for the Hakoah. And other Jews, who were soccer fans because they loved soccer, became rabid fans of the Jewish team because it gave them a pride and satisfaction about themselves that they had never felt before.

The swimming, water polo, skiing, fencing, wrestling, and field and track sections of our proud Hakoah would also win event after event. Sports in Vienna were highly competitive not only in the usual sense, but also from a political point of view. A water polo match against a club called "Ewasc" with many

Nazis as members, could turn to nerve-wracking shouting competitions and often to fistfights and worse.

My father, who was normally a peaceful man, underwent a complete and sudden metamorphosis upon entering the stadium. It was immaterial whether he was seated among friends or foes. A dispute with opponents developed, of course, without effort and almost immediately. A quarrel with Hakoah fans required a bit more ingenuity. A Hakoah player, for instance, would narrowly miss a score. A man would jump up and shout a critical remark—a wonderful occasion for my father to get into action. He would address the poor soul excitedly and say to him, *"Wenn Sie es besser Koennen, warum spielen Sie nicht?"* (If you know better how to score, why don't you play?) Still, people liked to sit near my father, because his presence *per se* guaranteed a lively afternoon.

I had my Bar Mitzvah in the old main synagogue in Vienna—the Seitenstetten Temple. The rabbi officiating was Dr. Zwi Perez Chajes, the chief Rabbi of Vienna. He was the undisputed spiritual leader of the community, the first Zionist to occupy that pulpit, a great teacher and speaker. My father, though not practicing, went almost every Saturday to the temple to listen to Dr. Chajes's sermons. It was an honor to be Bar Mitzvah in Rabbi Chajes's presence and then to be addressed by him. Unfortunately, just on that Saturday, a Hakoah game was scheduled—a very rare occurrence on Saturdays—to make up for a previous Sunday encounter canceled because of bad weather. The Bar Mitzvah ceremony took place midmorning, and the game was scheduled for two-thirty in the afternoon—early but still time enough to get there with a quick luncheon on the way. The absolute imperative of attending the game, even on that exceptional day, was not open to question. Anyway, the massive parties arranged for Bar Mitzvah occasions were not customary in Vienna, and our private celebration was postponed for later in the day. As proud as my father was of his son's reading the Torah in modern Hebrew, and Rabbi Chajes's honoring our family as devoted and activist Zionists, he could not avoid stealthily looking at his watch from time to time as the

ceremony progressed. We took off for the stadium immediately—a lot of other congregants did too.

Hakoah—the Champion

It was in 1928 that Hakoah made it to the very top. The team started well and slowly moved up to be among the two or three chief contenders for the Austrian soccer championship. The lead changed from round to round, from Sunday to Sunday. The tension among the vast soccer community increased accordingly, and the main topic of discussion of Viennese in the tramways, offices, and coffeehouses was whether Hakoah would really make it—and this prospect was viewed with enthusiasm and antipathy, but never with indifference.

As if arranged by a good and experienced film director, the decision was to be reached only at the very last round. The game was against "Sportclub," and Hakoah had to win it—a draw would not suffice, since the intricacies of computing scored and suffered goals would have given the championship to another team. The game was played in Simmering, a dreary suburb of Vienna, near the cemeteries, on the way to today's international airport, which, of course, did not exist at that time.

The extraordinary tension of that game was even increased by the fact that "Sportclub," though out of the running by itself, was considered not particularly friendly to Jews and thus was expected to fight fiercely to prevent a Hakoah victory. The Hakoah fans, as many as could get tickets to the sold-out stadium, were in a state of near mental breakdown. The feeling prevailed that it was a now-or-never situation—either championship this year or giving up all these lofty aspirations. My father and mother, I, and all my friends were there a good hour in advance. We greeted the team enthusiastically when it entered the field and shouted ecstatically before the game even started. We had not begun to suspect the events that were to follow.

Hakoah played well, but not well enough. The team pressured continuously, since it knew it had to win, but the Sportclub

defense was excellent and thwarted all efforts to score. The first half-time ended 0:0—no score whatsoever. The second neared its end and still no score. The stadium was in turmoil—but all of a sudden an almost unnatural silence set in. Hakoah's goalkeeper—Fabian—was injured in one of Sportclub's rare attacks. He got up all right, but his hand was unusable, and he had to be replaced by Nemes, the best and most aggressive forward player. There was no choice—he was the only player with goalkeeper training, and the rules and regulations of the Austrian championship were so strict that they did not permit the replacement of injured players by others held in reserve for such an emergency.

Hakoah's coach moved Fabian, his arm in a sling, to the left forward position, where he would be somewhat protected but at least occasionally of use. Hakoah's dream seemed at an end—a victory impossible, a defeat almost inevitable.

There was still five minutes to play, when Nemes, the replacement in the Hakoah goal, kicked the ball far out into the field. The ball got passed to Fabian, who, because of his injury, was not considered dangerous and who was, therefore, left uncovered by the Sportclub defense. Fabian, his "slinged" arm held high, sailed toward the Sportclub goal and, with supreme effort, put the ball inside.

Pandemonium broke out in the stadium. People shouted, sang, danced, prayed, and embraced each other. With the whistle of the umpire, thousands of people broke through the barriers, streamed onto the field, and carried the Hakoah players on their shoulders in a triumphant parade. Even those who had dreaded the idea of a Hakoah championship could not hide their admiration for this dramatic feat of courage and determination.

The Schechters left the stadium in a trance as did others. The difference was that we could not talk—my father, who was a bit hoarse at the best of times, had lost his voice completely. My usually impeccably dressed mother looked disheveled, and all she and I could produce as a sound was a whisper and a whimper.

Without any organization or direction, all the masses of

Hakoah fans streamed in the direction of the center of town and assembled in front of and around the Cafe Atlashof, the seat of the Hakoah. News of the incredible victory had spread like wildfire, and thousands of Jews from the nearby Leopoldstadt, the district with the heaviest Jewish population, joined the crowds from the stadium in a night-long demonstration of joy and national pride.

A few months later, the team was invited to visit the United States. It was a triumphant tour, but, at the end, most of the players stayed in the States. After that, Hakoah was never again able to build a similar champion team. But those who remained in the States would help many members and friends when they arrived as refugees driven out of Austria after the Anschluss a decade later.

Austrian *Fussball* reached its height with the *Wunderteam.* It included a rare combination of virtuosos who assured its supremacy in European soccer for a number of years. One of the greatest of the great was Sindelar, a player for Austria. Everybody called him the *Papierene,* since he was slight, frail, and vulnerable—like a piece of *Papier* (paper). Sindelar was unstoppable and the most popular Viennese since Kaiser Franz Joseph. The Austrian wonder team was coached and led by an incomparable captain, Hugo Meisl, who was a typical old-monarchy character directing the maneuvers of his team from the edge of the field, a derby on his head and a gold-ended cane in his hand.

Hugo Meisl was Jewish, and in the best Lueger tradition the Austrians "determined" who was Jewish and who was not. Meisl was "their" Jew, and he was immensely popular. There is a vague parallel between the Austrian predeliction for Hugo Meisl and for Bruno Kreisky a few decades later. In my viewpoint, they chose better with Meisl than with Kreisky.

Other Soccer Adventures

Readers of these notes might have deduced that I was one of the great connoisseurs of Viennese soccer. I was—but there

were greater ones, such as Friedrich Torberg. He was a well-known author who spent the Hitler years in New York but returned to Vienna shortly after World War II. German was his language, and, like many other writers, he could not make the transition to English. One of his great successes a year or so prior to his recent and untimely death was a delightful book called the *Tante Jolesch,* which presented an overview of life in the old monarchy in the form of anecdotes.

Torberg was a passionate soccer fan with an incredible memory for every detail and every goal. We did not know each other in Vienna, and not even in New York, but met only in the late forties, when I was stationed in Munich, and Torberg had already returned to Vienna. I invited him for a number of literary talks on the radio network, and we became good friends. We soon discovered our mutual hobby—soccer and particularly old Viennese soccer. Thus, we started a regular quiz correspondence between Munich and Vienna with high-level and intellectual questions such as who was playing right forward with Rapid at the time of Uridil or who was the only Jewish player with Slovan (a Czech club). Torberg always had the answers to all my questions—I sometimes failed the test.

One day I was visited in my military government office in Munich by a CIC operative (CIC was the criminal investigative arm of the military government). The man seemed embarrassed to ask a colleague some "tough" questions, but eventually he had to confront me with the fact that they had my correspondence with a certain Torberg under surveillance. It obviously contained odd language and frankly looked suspicious. I was somewhat embarrassed myself to admit to the soccer "code" but at least was able to clear up the mystery.

My love affair with soccer followed me in my later years throughout my career. When I arrived in Munich, in 1947, on my first Foreign Service assignment, the city was still half-destroyed. However, cultural and sports activities were slowly reappearing, and I was surprised to learn that the Bavarian soc-

cer championship had just been reinstituted. I asked our German administrative assistant whether I could get a ticket to the next game. I received it and was seated in the dignitaries' box near Dr. Alois Hundhammer, the Bavarian Minister of Education, also an ardent soccer fan. He was a tall, bearded gentleman, who, as a strict Catholic, had an excellent anti-Nazi record and had, therefore, been immediately selected for high office by the U.S. military government. Unfortunately, it soon turned out that the good Hundhammer held highly reactionary views and, therefore, opposed the sweeping school reform that the military government wanted to introduce in the interest of Germany's democratic development.

The week before I met Dr. Hundhammer at the soccerfield, he had come out publicly for the reestablishment of the *Pruegelstrafe* (whipping of kids with disciplinary problems). Since I had just arrived in Munich, I was not aware of this controversy and did not understand why so many press photographers were eager to get a picture of a U.S. military government officer sitting with Hundhammer and peacefully watching a soccer game. I should learn very soon.

Since Hundhammer's name had just become known in the States—and not favorably, the joint soccer photo was published in the *New York Times* and many other U.S. papers, implying that certain U.S. officials were conspiring with Hundhammer in his sinister plots. I received many letters, phone calls, and telegrams, protesting my approval of whipping innocent children. Hundhammer probably remained a soccer fan, but his position as Minister of Education was lost very soon.

Much later, stationed in Rome, I found out that *calcio* (soccer) was the national fascination. It was the predominant subject of interest between Friday and Monday—before and after the games. Whether your interlocutors were diplomats or journalists, lawyers or doctors, grocery clerks or cab drivers, the *Classifica* (championship rank list) was discussed with fine Italian subtleties and with true Latin fervor. The Roman soccer situation was, in addition, characterized by a local rivalry that equaled everything I remembered from earlier days in Vienna.

The two rivals were Lazio and Roma. I attended a couple of games of both clubs and decided to become a "Giallo-Rosso" fan. Yellow and red were the colors of Roma. I correctly surmised that being cool, distant and objective was not exactly displaying favorite Italian characteristics, and anyway it was only half the fun, watching a soccer game without taking sides.

When the word spread that the latest American arrival on the diplomatic scene seemed to be a "regular guy," meaning that he attended *calcio* games on Sunday afternoons, people would ask me what reasons I had had for selecting Roma as "my" team. I would innocently answer that most Washingtonians were Roma fans by definition, since they loved and admired Rome. Even Lazio fanatics would accept that explanation in good grace.

I used to go to the game with a whole group of Italian friends—all important "contacts," as the diplomatic lingo describes people useful in the profession—and then we met our wives in a cafe in town, as good Italian custom prescribed. My son took up the taste for soccer at an early age—I think he was four when I took him along for the first time. My wife was less influenceable. Though she adored everything in and about Rome—from its antiquities, museums, and surroundings to its restaurants—she could not be induced to become involved or interested in the intricacies of the Italian soccer art.

Italians are, as is well known, deeply divided in their political views and ideologies. There has, however, always been one unifying moment in their lives, and this was any international game between the Italian national team, called the "Azzuri" because of the blue color of their uniforms, and the team of another country. I remember, as a typical example, Italy playing against Russia. Russia represented the holy Soviet Empire, and at least at that time it was "holy" to millions of card-carrying and voting Italian Communists. The Russians scored the first goal, and all the thousands of practicing Communists in the vast olympic stadium did not move a finger nor raise their voices to applaud the feat. Waves of enthusiasm, however, followed when Italy equaled and finally won the game. The ballot box

was one thing—but true emotion and sense of belonging could be expressed much better in a soccer game.

Another Italian soccer incident was just plain bizarre and funny. DeGaulle was on a state visit in Rome. In his honor, a magnificent reception was taking place in the Quirinale, the former palace of the king (today's presidential palace). It was a Sunday afternoon, and only Rome could offer such a splendid spectacle—the gorgeous palazzo full of beautiful, old treasures and beautiful young women, with everything impeccably and elegantly prepared and arranged. There was just one unusual feature: Almost every man carried a strange little gadget in his hand and acted very distraught. After a few polite words, he would excuse himself and hurry to the nearest corner and put the little gadget to his ear. The explanation was simple: A soccer game, decisive for the outcome of the championship was being played in Milan and broadcast simultaneously over the radio. Italian inventiveness could thus easily combine respect for DeGaulle, diplomatic diligence, and—love for soccer.

The nicest and most appreciated farewell gesture in my thirty-year Foreign Service career I received upon my departure from Rome. The ambassador arranged the usual reception in the chancery—the Palazzo Margherita on the Via Veneto. He gave a short speech, I replied, and then my wife and I were just about to start saying our individual good-byes to our colleagues. However, nobody "broke ranks," and we started to feel a bit embarrassed when suddenly a large group of husky young men, accompanied by a number of distinguished-looking gentlemen walked up the huge ceremonial staircase of the embassy. It was the whole team of Roma that had been invited to say *arrivederci* to their American *tifoso* (fan). This arrangement must have required quite some preparation and the secret was well kept. The time of obligatory leaks had not come yet.

I received as a memento from the president of Roma a soccer ball inscribed by all the players, and, for years to come, my son would hardly dare to touch the ball out of fear that the precious names would fade. The next day, all the Roman papers carried stories and photos of the encounter, demonstrating Italian-American friendship.

Thus the innocent soccer hobby formed as a kid in the Esterhazy park in Vienna, where I did my first illegal *palestern*, paid some professional dividends in later years.

The Viennese Coffeehouse

The most Viennese of all Viennese institutions has been since the siege of the Turks centuries ago, the *Kafehaus*. Essays and articles have been written on this subject, and nothing ever said was exaggerated. Vienna could not be separated from its coffehouse, just as the type of Viennese *Kafe* could not be imagined in a city outside the borders of former Austria-Hungary.

Kafehauser served the most diverse purposes. People discussed their business and did or undid complicated deals. Actors met to review their plays and to criticize each other. Literati gathered to quarrel about their latest books or magazine articles. Students would sit for hours over a cup of coffee and prepare their exams or visit there rather than go to their lectures or laboratories. A date would be met at a *Kafe*, and the partners then stayed there for an eternity or went to a movie later. After the theater or concert, a stop at one's favorite coffeehouse was obligatory—just to chat or to eat a *Kleinigkeit* (little something). Different groups would meet at predetermined days and hours to gossip or just to be together. And, not to forget, a *Kafehaus* offered you all the newspapers and magazines and very often international papers to read and study at your heart's content.

The most unusual of all the reasons to go to a *Kafe* was just to drop in because you felt like having a cup of coffee, paying and leaving. The *Zahlkellner* (waiter-cashier) would, more often than not, sadly comment on the strange habits of certain people with a pitying remark, like *"wahrscheinlich ein Auslaender"* (most probably a foreigner).

American tourists frequently complain bitterly about how expensive it is to have a cup of coffee in Europe and particularly in the famous coffeehouses in Vienna. They compare what they would pay for a similar beverage in a drugstore or coffeeshop at home and find the charge outrageous. They are perfectly right—from their point of view. They desire their coffee for a very precise reason—because they are thirsty or tired. They are usually also in a hurry and want nothing else than to drink their coffee, pay for it, and—mission accomplished—leave the place.

This might be a logical and legitimate reason for an American visitor, but not at all for the Viennese *Kafehausbesucher* (coffeehouse visitor) and certainly not for the commercial calculations of a *Kafehaus* owner. The cost of the coffee per se is only a small part of the price he has to charge. Basically, the customer pays for the privilege of sitting at his table for as long as he desires. The price of the coffee is the entrance fee for the atmosphere, the newspapers and magazines at his disposal, the friends he will meet, the gossip he will pick up, the people he will be able to observe, who, in turn, will watch him.

For a while, after the end of the war in 1945, it looked as if a precipitous decline of the *Kafehaus Kultur* in Vienna had set in. Many coffeehouses were destroyed, and the buildings were rebuilt to house banks rather than their original occupants. *Espressos* appeared all over town with the avowed purpose of serving coffee to the passer-by in a hurry—a *Stehkafe* (coffee standing up.)

But, as time went by, many of the old *Kafehauser* came back, and new ones appeared on the scene with the old style and customs. Many *espressos,* however, remained as a concession to "modernity" and to tourism—for those poor souls who really only want coffee.

Coffeehouses were divided into several groups. There were casual coffeehouses, to meet a friend or business acquaintaince, according to one's whereabouts at that time of the day. The second type was a *Stammkafe* where one visited regularly, often more than once a day. The main difference was the ceremony and protocol surrounding the visit. The customer, as *Stammgast*

(permanent client) would be greeted—and this was absolutely essential—by name or title. He would occupy almost always the same table. The waiter would usually not inquire about the customer's wishes but mutter a half-obsequious, half-conspiratorial *"Wie gewoehnlich, Herr Doktor"* (as usual?) and would bring the preferred coffee mixture, which could range all the way from black to white, but include a multitude of variations, such as brown or dark brown, gold, melange, *mit oder ohne Schlag* (with or without whipped cream), all this complicated by the size of the offering, which could be *klein* (small) or *Schale* (normal cup) or a *portion* which would amount to several cups.

A *Stammgast,* moreover, enjoyed also the privilege of announcing occasionally *"nichts im Moment"* (nothing for the moment), which would in no way diminish the respect due him or the number of glasses of fresh water served continually.

Friends often had *Stammtische* (reserved tables) in their cafes, where they met at set times each day or once a week. Professional groups and particularly student fraternities had their little flags or other distinguishing marks placed on their *Stammtisch* well in advance of their scheduled arrival to prevent an ignorant passer-by or newcomer from committing the unpardonable mistake of trying to occupy that table.

Coffeehouses also specialized in the type of their clientele. The Kafe Herrenhof was for the literary crowd, Kafe Central, a gathering point for chessplayers, Kafe Landtman catered to the university, and the Kafe Jesephinum was the preferred spot for medical and chemistry students, some of them studying, some just "resting."

Than there were the *nobel* (elegant) establishments in the inner city like the Sacher, or the Imperial and the *Beisl* (on the modest side) in the outer districts. But, whatever the type or location, whatever the purpose, duration or frequency of the visit—*Kafes* were the unifying element in Viennese life. Existence without them would have been impossible to imagine.

My father would arrive every evening at 5:30 P.M. at the

Schwedenkafe, his favorite abode. He sat there every day, at the same table, and had his *Melange im Glass* (coffee with milk in a glass) and read the newspapers. His reading material, however, included international papers such as the *Zuercher Zeitung*, the *Prager Tagblatt*, and so forth, and these were not available in as many copies as the local papers. Therefore, about one hour before my father's scheduled arrival, the waiter would begin to assemble newspapers as they became available and put them on a chair at the reserved table. Moreover, he would arrange them in the order my father customarily read them. One of my favorite stories about my father is how a customer, probably an innocent foreigner, asked the waiter in the Schweden Kafe for the *Prager Tagblatt*. The waiter answered curtly that the paper was unavailable at the moment. The customer, a bit astonished, pointed to the neighboring table, where the paper was lying unread, my father still absorbed in the *Zuercher Zeitung*. The waiter looked at the intruder almost unbelievingly and said dryly: *"Von dem Herrn kann ich die Zeitung nicht wegnehmen, der Herr beisst naemlich."* (I could not possibly remove the newspaper from that gentleman; as a matter of fact, this gentleman bites.)

In the midtwenties my father went to the United States. It was a difficult period in Vienna. He had an old friend in New York, and he went there considering the possibility of moving his family. He returned after a few months with negative results. Among the many reasons given one sticks clearly in my mind: *"Wie kann man in einer Stadt leben, wo es kein Kafehaus gibt?"* (How can one live in a city without coffeehouses?)

But who of the Viennese, who after Hitler, were fortunate enough to reach New York, does not remember how, in the first few difficult months, one was desperately looking for a place to sit and chat and exchange experiences—and there was nothing but a Horn and Hardart or a sad cafeteria. It took quite a period of adjustment to find out that life without a coffeehouse was still possible.

Herr Doktor—Herr Hofrat . . . Vienna's Title-omania

It is rightly said that Europeans are fond of titles. The French are pretty good in this field, calling the wife of a top general "*Madame la Marechalle.*" Neither have the Italians anything to be ashamed of, with every second man being a *professore, dottore,* or at least a *ragioniere* (a mixture of bookkeeper and public accountant). But the cult of titles has certainly reached its perfection in Austria. It is a tradition going way back to the monarchy, when a title like *Herr Baron* or *Herr Graf* or *Durchlaucht* proved that its bearer belonged to the aristocracy and thus had somehow a vague relation to the *Kaiserhaus* (emperor's extended family). To be *geadelt* (titled) was coveted beyond words and gave the thus-honored the right to use a "von" between his first and family name. Kaiser Franz Joseph in his later years used his privilege to bestow titles with some largesse, as the queen continues to do in present-day democratic England. Nevertheless, the "titling process" by the emperor had to be handled with restraint, lest it lose its selective and thus distinguishing mark.

Though the professional, industrial, and commercial classes enjoyed a steady and rapid upward movement, the prestige of the "titled" aristocracy and the military remained undiminished. Bourgeois society, therefore, had to find its own remedies to satisfy its desire for distinction. It thus invented and developed in the course of time a host of new titles and used them with relish and enthusiasm.

After the collapse of the monarchy in 1918, the republic

abolished all old aristocratic titles as remnants of a feudal epoch. The bourgeois titles were all that was left and were, therefore, used with even greater fervor. It should, however, parenthetically be noted that, after an interval of a few years, quite a few wearers of the "von" restored it as part of their name.

A Viennese without a title is an incomplete and slightly frustrated human being. But so is also the person, who has to address another with the simple *"Herr. . . ."* One can note such an embarrassing situation, for instance, at the reception desk of a hotel, when the *Herr Portier* will hesitatingly repeat the name of the checking-in guest, thus giving him an opportunity to add some sort of a title like *"Direktor"* or *"Redakteur."* The reception clerk will show his relief by gratefully repeating the title, and from that moment on the guest will be known and greeted by every member of the hotel staff, from waiters to chambermaids, only and exclusively by his title, A similar scene can be observed anytime, anywhere at medical and law offices, at business appointments, at dinner reservations, the hopeful look for the disclosure of a title that could put human relations on a higher and clearer level.

The desire to call a customer, client, or guest by a title is understandable, since it is rightfully expected that the visitor, guest, or customer will address the hotel manager, or *Maitre d'* as *"Herr Direktor,"* the chief waiter as *"Herr Ober,"* (and the manager or owner of a store as) *"Herr Chef"* or *"Frau Chefin."* (And this has absolutely nothing to do with the weighty position of an American "chef.")

Viennese titles are all-encompassing. They are a tribute to Viennese inventiveness and imagination. I do not believe that a complete inventory of titles used in Austria has ever been established or that such a job could be satisfactorily completed. There is no field of endeavors that in the course of time has not been beautified by an appropriate title.

The *"Herr Redakteur,"* mentioned earlier, might be an editor or a just beginning newspaper reporter, but he must have something to do with a newspaper or publishing business to be honored with *"Redakteur." "Herr Direktor"* became a catch-all title

in the republic for the *Nouveaux Riches,* who had gotten their riches from sometimes nebulous sources. It could also satisfy all those who did not fit into a more specific category of civilian or professional life, since almost everybody could aspire to "direct" something or the other. Thus *"Direktor"* soon became a bit "common." The agile Viennese mind, ever conscious of subtle and necessary rank distinctions, found a quick remedy in the newly created *"Herr Generaldirektor,"* which title automatically opened vistas of industrial captaincy and assured its bearer a room with a lovely view in a hotel and a preferred table in a restaurant.

Subclassifications became necessary with the ever-increasing number of people active in the branches of society "entitling" them to a title. Thus a higher job in the newspaper profession promoted its holder from *"Redakteur"* to *"Chefredakteur,"* a *"Buchhalter"* (bookkeeper) to *"Oberbuchhalter,"* (head bookkeeper).

Needless to say, each profession commands its own set of titles. A lawyer is *"Herr Rechtsanwalt."* A judge is *"Landesgerichrat,"* but a judge at a higher court is *"Oberlandesgerichtsrat."* A public prosecutor is a *"Staatsanwalt,"* and his boss is an *"Oberstaatsanwalt."* The idea of calling such dignitaries by their names alone would be repugnant even to the most egalitarian Trotskyites among Austrian Communists.

In the medical field, the hierarchical terms for those connected with a hospital may include *"Herr Assistent"* (assistant to the department head) or *"Herr Dozent"* (his supervisor, who teaches at the medical faculty), up to *"Professor,"* who would be a full-fledged teacher at the university or head of a department at the hospital. *"Medizinalrat"* or *"Obermedizinalrat"* are other, but strictly honorific medical titles.

In the theatrical profession, a prominent singer, particularly a member of the famous Viennese Opera, would be called *"Herr Kammersaenger"* or *"Frau Kammersaengerin."* An actor or actress, if part of the Burgtheater ensemble, the old, traditional, and still one of the highly regarded theaters in the German language, would expect to be addressed as *"Herr Burgschauspieler"* (Burgtheater actor). As philologists know, long and uninterrupted words do not frighten German speakers; on the contrary, they pose a challenge that has to be met.

In the business world, *"Herr Kommerzialrat"* is very honorific. One could not be elevated to that position by the whim of a waiter or barber. One became *Kommerzialrat* only by a governmental decree as a reward for a business career distinguished by something—by length if nothing else.

"Professor" is another looked-for and important title. There are many kinds of professors—a high school or university professor, a professor in medicine holding a tenured position in a medical faculty, and finally a professor who received the title from the president of the republic for distinguished intellectual, artistic, or public interest achievements. Writers, composers, or officers in international organizations could, after having risen to some stature in their fields, become *Professors.* But, whatever the origin of the title, all would be called, with great respect and reverence, *"Herr Professor,"* and their wives would be elevated to *"Frau Professor"* though they might not ever have read a book.

A clear remnant of the monarchy is the famous *"Herr Hofrat"* (court counselor). Not even the Marxist founders of the republic would have dared to abolish that beloved title. It too is conferred by the highest state authorities to people who have distinguished themselves in law and public service. The particular, somewhat nostalgic, attractiveness of this title consists in the association with the good old times of the court, thus carrying with it a Franz-Joseph type image of an elderly, benign, and very upright gentleman.

"Herr Notar" is also a highly dignified personality. He notarizes documents and certifies certain legal transactions. He must have a law degree, and only selected lawyers are admitted to the *Notar* status. It is beyond the pale of Austrian understanding that, in the United States, the highly valued services of a *Notar* can be performed by a notary public, who usually is a clerk in the neighborhood bank or travel office.

The diplomatic service has its *"Herr Botschafter"* and *"Herr Botschaftsrat,"* but there is hardly any difference between these titles and "Mr. Ambassador" and "Counselor of Embassy." The foreign service has been a rank-conscious profession everywhere and at all times.

In addition to the prosaic "good morning," "good evening," and so forth, a variety of elaborate greeting formulas have been designed to accommodate both the title of the person to be saluted and the social station of the greeter. A simple *"Habe die Ehre"* (I have the honor) is spoken swiftly and is considered polite, but fairly commonplace. *"Meine Verehrung"* (approximately, my reverence) already sounds much more respectful, but *"Meine Ergebenheit"* contains just the right shade of additional obsequiousness to be appropriate for approaching a person of higher standing.

None of the sofar mentioned impressive titles can, however, compare with the unchanging glamor and importance of the famous *"Herr Doktor."* The love affair of the Austrians with this title is legendary. The title is *gestzlich geschuetzt,* meaning that it is protected by law and thus its use or abuse by an "undoctored" person could be prosecuted to the fullest.

The doctor title is the reward for long years of university studies and rigorous examinations. One can be a doctor of medicine, of law, or of disciplines roughly corresponding to an American Ph.D. But whatever specialty, from the moment of his solemn graduation, the new *Doktor* will never, absolutely never again be addressed knowingly by his name only. He will introduce himself as *"Doktor* so and so." His calling card and his letterhead will include the "doctor," and he will be treated with the deference that, according to Austrian tradition, is due to a *Doktor.* Nobody would ever dream of abbreviating the title to "Doc"—this is one word that Austria and Austrians do not permit playing around with.

A benevolent and well-meaning explanation of the special prestige of the "doctor" title would have to concede that it testifies to a great respect for learning and study, since many of the other titles are of a more honorific nature. Whether this analysis is correct or not, the fact remains that only a fool would not use that title in Austria—if he happens to hold it rightfully. Therefore, whenever I cross the border into Austria, I automati-

cally and instinctively discover that I am a *Doktor* of the University of Vienna and start "feeling" and behaving like one.

A few years ago I travelled with my son from Switzerland to Kitzbuehel to wait for my wife, who had flown to Hamburg to visit a relative. We walked into the hotel and asked whether they had a room for us. Since we had made no reservation, the *portier* was rather short and said that a room might become available in a few hours. I replied just as arrogantly that he should reserve it under the name of Dr. Schechter. The *Herr Portier* took a deep breath, changed the tone of his voice, and said ingratiatingly: *"Mir faellt gerade ein, Herr Doktor, wir hab'n ein wunderschoenes Zimmer schon aufgeraeumt. . . . Alles in bester Ordnung."* (It just occurs to me, that we have a beautiful room just ready for you—everything is perfectly fine, *Herr Doktor*.) This little incident made a great impression on my son. I always suspect that his desire to ultimately acquire a Ph.D. is mainly motivated by the usefulness of the title in his future travels in Europe—particularly in Austria.

There is, however, a great injustice connected with the "doctor" title. The wife of a *Herr Doktor* is frequently addressed as *"Frau Doktor,"* and this infuriates all those women who have acquired a right to the title on their own and now find themselves in competition with innumerable wives of highly doubtful qualifications who, nevertheless—by simple derivation—are accorded the same honors.

This undeserved use of *"Frau Doktor"* is really superfluous and is actually getting rarer, since the Viennese have a beautiful way to address ladies—the time-honored and elegant *"Gnaedige Frau"* The *"gnaedig"* is not fully translatable—it implies roughly both dignified and revered. A woman in a coffeehouse or restaurant will invariably be asked by the waiter: *"Was darf's sein, Gnaedige Frau?"* (What will it be, revered lady?) A saleslady in a store addresses her the same way. A cleaning woman, however, will be simply called "Frau so and so." Class differences in title and speech have never disappeared in Austria.

In greeting a *"Gnaedige Frau,"* the phrase more often than not is preceeded by a *"kuess die Hand"* (kiss your hand), spoken

quickly and softly, but not necessarily executed. The Austrians are probably the most frequent sayers of "kiss your hand" but are definitely outranked as *actual* handkissers by Hungarians and Poles, who are unequaled masters in the ceremony itself. Communist domination and education were unable to eradicate this particular talent.

Austrian Peculiarities

It has always been a specialty of Viennese restaurants to charge separately for each piece of bread or each roll eaten by a customer. Except for a few deluxe places catering to an international clientele, the bill-paying scenario has remained unchanged in Viennese eateries.

Whether you are alone or with a large party, whether you ate modestly or ordered a substantial feast of many courses with wine or beer, eventually you will want to leave and announce this desire by stating loudly the age-old formula: *"Zahlen, bitte."* (The bill, please.) This battlecry is then immediately passed on throughout the hierarchy of waiters, from the *Getraenkekellner* (beverage waiter) to the regular waiter to the *Zahlkellner,* who alone is authorized to receive payment. At that strategic moment, more often than not, the *Zahlkellner* will disappear for a little while. It is generally assumed that the reason for the delay is to avoid giving the impression that the restaurant or cafe is eager to see its guest leave.

Eventually, the *Zahlkellner* approaches the table and asks innocently: *"Zahlen gewuenscht?"* (You desire to pay?) He then takes out from one of his hidden pockets a giant black billfold, large enough to hold cash payments for the entire month. These billfolds are used in Viennese restaurants today as they were used before the Anschluss, during the monarchy, and probably in the mists of Austrian history.

After the war, in the late forties, when I visited Vienna, I was so intrigued by the mystery of the never-changing billfolds,

that I tried to use my military government "status" to purchase such a treasure to show it to my old Viennese friends in the States, as a proof that in Vienna nothing ever fades away. All efforts were in vain. *"Ein gewoehnlicher Sterblicher"* (an ordinary mortal) could not acquire such a rarity. Only *Zahlkellner* know where and how to get it.

But let's return to the bill-paying ceremony. The waiter has taken out his *Zahltasche* (the billfold in question) and stands in expectation of the recitation of the dishes consumed. He will repeat with appropriate emphasis what is told to him, such as *Zwei Leberknoedelsuppen, zwei Wienerschnitzerln,* and at the same time write down on a piece of paper the price of each item. After this is satisfactorily concluded—please, note that the customer is responsible for remembering every item he has ordered—the time for the dreaded ultimate test of the honor and veracity of the guest has come. The *Ober* looks up from his writing and with a sharp glance encompassing the whole scene, including the breadbaskets on the table, will ask: *"Und wieviele Brote haben die Herrschaften gehabt?* (And how many rolls did you all eat?) Flustered and with the awkward feeling of having been caught in a flagrant case of shoplifting, the people at the table try quickly to recapitulate their bread consumption in the last two hours. Very often they will announce a higher number, just to be above suspicion. But not always will this maneuver be successful. Occasionally the waiter might well repeat what was told to him, such as *"sechs Semmerln"* (six rolls), but then add with just the right shade of slight reprimand "und drei *Salzstangerln"* (three salt sticks)—well aware of the Viennese penchant for *Salzstangerln.* His eagle eye has correctly noticed that they are missing from the now-empty baskets.

No question that this watch of the number of rolls consumed will strike people unaccustomed to such proceedings as peculiarly irritating. Even Viennese sometimes brand this tradition as *kleinlich* (petty), since it involves such an insignificant part of the overall cost of the lunch or dinner. However, it remains a facet of Viennese life, just as the probably excellent quality of the meal that preceeded the episode of the missing *Salzstangerln.*

Here I have to add another of my favorite stories illustrating an occasional Austrian tendency to *Kleinichkeit*. It also has to do with the hotel and restaurant business.

After the war, I found myself in Munich. I was still a bachelor, and a foreign-service friend, also a former Viennese, and I frequently spent weekends in Kitzbuehel, across the Austrian-German border. At that time, the dollar was not only a prestige currency but actually bought very fine living at very affordable prices.

We used to stay in one of the better hotels in Kitzbuehel, enjoying the freer and less restricted life in "liberated" Austria as compared to "occupied" Germany. One Sunday night, reciprocating for earlier invitations, we had invited a group of people for a nice dinner. Since we had stayed two nights, the bill including the dinner amounted to quite a fair amount in Schillings.

Monday, early in the morning, we paid and at the same time confirmed our reservations for two weeks later. We were just starting the car for the return trip to Munich when we saw one of the waiters running at full speed toward us. We stopped, expecting an important message from our superiors in Munich. The waiter reached us and breathlessly uttered the historic words: *"Herr Dokotr, wir haben das kernweiche Ei von heute frueh vergessen!* (We forgot to bill you for the soft-boiled egg of this morning!)

The management apparently could not have afforded to take the loss of payment of the egg and also could not have taken the risk of delay in payment by putting the fateful egg on the bill two weeks hence.

Viennese, along with inhabitants of other cities and lands not particularly favored by steady good weather—share a predilection for sun and blue skies. This attitude, combined with the passion for coffeehouses in general, led to a particular love affair with outdoor *Kafes*, as the most ideal setting for the enjoyment of refreshments and meals.

Thus, the larger coffeehouses in Vienna are all equipped

with covered terraces, which in spring and summer are crowded to the last chair. Smaller establishments have makeshift arrangements and in doubtful weather tables are set up and put away with lightning speed several times within a few hours.

Illustrative, of this almost compulsive desire to serve and be served outdoors, is the proverbial saying of a *Oberkellner* to his lowly assistant in a little coffeehouse in an outlying district: *Schani, stell den Garten raus; die Sonn' is draussen!"* (Get the garden out; the sun is coming.) "Garden" in this context might mean only a few pitiful tables and chairs.

The Viennese passion for the sun also expresses itself in an extraordinary admiration for people with a deep tan. Till this day nobody can outdo a Viennesse man or woman in his or her devotion to sunbathing. In my youth all highly advertised and vaunted sun lotions and creams were disdainfully put aside by *connoisseurs* in favor of simple *Tiroler Nussoel* (walnut oil from the Tyrol). This inexpensive potion was reputed to have miraculous tanning effects, its efficacy in its field could be compared only to chicken soup's efficacy as a cure-all for every imaginable sickness occurring in a Jewish family.

Everywhere in the world, including Vienna, a man engaged in a serious flirtation will assure his female sparring-partner that she is good-looking or even beautiful. He might more specifically praise her wonderful eyes or legs or possibly even her intelligence and wit. But only in Vienna does a man hold on such occasions a secret weapon in reserve. When the going gets rough and nothing else seems to work, he might—of course, only if the circumstances warrant it—suddenly turn toward the object of his adoration and state with a melting voice: *"Gnaedige Frau, Sie sind so wunderbar abgebrannt!"* (My dear lady, you are so wonderfully tanned.) With this most far-reaching of all Viennese compliments his success should be all but secured.

Memories of the Hapsburg Monarchy Have Not Completely Faded

After the First World War, Vienna remained the capital of a country that continued to call itself "Oesterreich," but was only a truncated, amputated piece of the old Austrian-Hungarian monarchy. Once the center of a vast empire, stretching far to the east and south, Vienna found itself now tucked away in the easternmost corner of the new small country. Innsbruck, in Tyrol, and Bregenz, in Vorarlberg, were more than twice as far as the Hungarian border. Linz was the nearest larger Austrian town, but Bratislava—formerly Pressburg—was literally at Vienna's doorstep and could be reached by an extended electric tramway.

The difficult process of adjusting to new and sometimes artificial geographic borders, trade relations, and living patterns, surprisingly, applied not only to the remaining name-bearer of the destroyed monarchy, the new Austrian Republic, but also to those regions that had been united for centuries under the Hapsburgs and were now incorporated in one or the other of the successor states. The word "surprisingly" is used purposely because, after all, the Czechs and Slovaks in Brno (Bruenn) and Bratislava; the Slovenes in Ljubljana (Laibach); and Croats in Zagreb (Agram); the Poles in Crakow; and the Italians in Trieste had fought bitterly against the so-called tyranny of the Hapsburgs and for unification with their ethnic brethren.

The first national enthusiasm was great, and the joy boundless. But slowly reality set in. Bratislava, for instance, lost its

interdependence with Vienna and Budapest. In addition, complaints were soon heard that the Slovaks were treated like poor cousins by the now-dominant Czechs. The Slovenes in Ljubljana and the Croats of Zagreb formed with Serbia, Montenegro, and other regions the new Yugoslavia, but found themselves suddenly like new minorities in the Serbian-dominated kingdom. Their lifestyle, administrative tradition, religious affinity (Slovenes and Croats were Catholic) had been for centuries quite different from those of the Serbs.

Trieste, that great city, the only port of the Hapsburg empire, with its fervent desire to become Italian, discovered that she had joined not only the kingdom of Italy but also a number of other great ports like Naples, Livorno, Genoa, and Venice. Trieste was the farthest away and thus quite superfluous for Italy. As the only port for a vast, economically unified country like Austria-Hungary, it was an indispensable, proud, rich, and cosmopolitan city, one of the jewels of the old monarchy. Now she was Italian all right—as she so ardenly wanted to be—but not really needed and thus dependent on subsidies and assistance.

Rhutenians in Eastern Galicia, surrounding bigger cities like Lvov (Lemberg) found Polish majority rule quite stringent and were not entirely sure that the changes of their political masters were of real advantage to them.

To this very day, sixty-five years and two generations after their separation from the monarchy, Zagreb, Lyublyana, Crakow, Trieste, have a distinctly Austrian "veneer." All feature cafes, which are the nerve center of city life. All still have an administrative tradition that makes the bureaucracy function better than in other parts of their new countries. In all these former Austrian places, signs, memories, and particularly eating habits still reflect the past Austrian association.

A few years ago, in Lyublyana and in Bled, a former Austrian lake resort in the Slovenian mountains, we ate excellent meals, featuring *Schnitzel, Palatschinken* and *Kaiserschmarrn,* at a time when, in other parts of Yugoslavia, food was, to be euphemistic, monotonous.

In Trieste, in 1977, when on a lecture tour for the U.S. Government, I bought, in a shop in the center of town, a card with the patriarchic face of old Kaiser Franz Joseph. A coffeehouse still popular with the older generation is kept as a landmark exactly as it used to be under the monarchy with its marble tables and cozy window ledges.

It was the time of a crisis atmosphere in Italy, with the Communists pushing for a share in the government. A prominent Triestine lawyer told me that he was retained by a group of old Trieste families to attempt to regain for them Austrian citizenship in case of a Communist takeover. All these families had in their genealogical trees—not longer than two generations ago—high civil servants and military officers in the service of the Austrian crown.

Three years ago I discovered in the *Corriere della Sera* a leading Italian newspaper in Milan, an interesting report about a conference of political scientists and public administrators who gathered in a northern Italian town to study and investigate the still-existing quality differences between the functions of public bureaucracy and public schools in the formerly Austrian parts of Italy and the rest of the country.

The old monarchy contained innumerable spas within its borders. Austrians—like most Europeans—loved and still love spas and believe in their therapeutic value. There were spas for the elimination and against the acquisition of kidney and gallstones, spas for the cure of rheumatism and arthritis, spas against throat diseases and hoarseness, spas for losing and gaining weight, and spas to induce fertility in barren women. Whether the efficacy of all these spas was an objective truth or only imagined, as American doctors seem to believe, is beside the point. They must have done some good, since people, beginning with the Romans, have gone there year after year and from all corners of Europe. They took the baths, drank the mineral waters, enjoyed the walks, relaxed, and felt better. Whether it was the *Kur* that actually helped or just the rest, relaxation, and imagination, who knows and who cares!

Many of the *Kurorte* (spas) were situated in what became, after 1918, Czechoslovakia. Karlsbad, Marienbad, Franzensbad, and Pistyan were the most famous among them. My father, suffering from arthritic pains, went to Pistyan for a number of years, and eventually the pains disappeared completely. Franzensbad was the place for young women, who could not conceive but wanted a child very badly. It had a preponderantly female clientele and thus also attracted a number of adventurous single men, who did not mind helping out occasionally with the curative effects of the famous waters.

During the two decades after the fall of the monarchy and the beginning of Hitler's war, people continued to frequent these spas, which completely maintained their Austrian character, except that the menus in the restaurants were also printed in Czech. In the last few years, the Czech Communist government, apparently eager for foreign currency, has been attempting to revive these spas and to publicize them in capitalist countries.

The lingering influence of the Hapsburg "golden" days, of course, can best be seen within the borders of republican Austria. The word "Kaiser" continues to be in Austrian terminology the synonym for "super" and the very ultimate in quality and value. In many Austrian towns good hotels will include the word "Kaiser" or *"Kaiserin"* in their names. In Bad Gastein, a famous spa two hours south of Salzburg, the two leading hotels are called Kaiserhof and Elisabethpark (Elisabeth was Kaiser Franz Joseph's wife). In Vienna there is an old dignified hotel right near the Kaertnerstrasse called the Kaiserin Elisabeth.

Kaisersemmerln are the aristrocats of the Viennese *"Gebaeck"* (breakfast rolls), and *Kaiserschmarrn* is still the ultimate in the range of the unique Viennese *warme Mehlspeisen* (warm deserts).

A few years ago, my fraternity brother Odin, living in Boston at that time, got exasperated about poor plumbing or inadequate repair work and exclaimed indignantly: *"Seit der alte Kaiser tot ist, klappt nichts mehr."* (Since the death of the old Emperor, nothing works anymore.)

But the most creative use of the word "Kaiser" to express a superlative occurred two years ago, when my wife Gerda and

I spent a couple of weeks in Bad Gastein—to take the baths, of course, and we attended the daily *Kurkonzert*. This is another old Austrian custom to be found in every spa: twice daily there are concerts on the main plaza. The conductor, who must have been in his late twenties and thus at least two generations removed from the monarchy, introduced his presentation with the following words: "Ladies and gentlemen, I hope you will enjoy the music, particularly since we are blessed with *das strahlendste Kaiserwetter* (the most brilliant Kaiser weather). Indeed the sun was shining over the mountains and valleys in all its glory. In Austrian memory and language, even beautiful weather is still identified with the old Kaiser's reign.

Part IV

The Collapse of France in 1940— My Second Escape from the Nazis

Paris 1938–1940—the "Phoney" War

I had fled Austria in March 1938 for Trieste, Italy. A couple of weeks later, in Florence, where I had some good friends, I received a visa for France. There were few refugees in Florence, and the French Consulate seemed unaware of what went on in the world. In any event, they were still willing to honor my Austrian passport.

The Italians were fairly liberal with temporary residence permits. One reason was their very bad conscience for having abandoned Austria completely in the last crucial days of its existence. Another one was that Mussolini had not as yet given in to Hitler's pressure to accelerate anti-Jewish measures.

I arrived in Paris in early April 1938. My mother, still in Vienna, received her visa in mid-May and joined me a few days later.

We had some advantages over many others of our co-refugees since we had relatives in Paris, who had been residing there for a long time. They helped us to obtain the *"permis de sejour,"* the highly coveted and hard-to-get residence permit.

A cousin from my father's side, who, in his youth, on his way to France from Poland, had stayed with us in Vienna, was also very helpful in these difficult first days. He was destined to perish tragically later, a victim of indescribable political stupidity. Though a rather well-to-do manufacturer, who had made

his way by hard work, he remained the same fanatical Communist he had been during his clandestine activities as a youth in Poland. His political reactions were Pavlovian—always reflecting exactly the editorial printed that morning in the French Communist daily *L'Humanite*. The official Communist party line intially branded the war against Hitler's Germany as "imperialist," and, therefore, in spite of the highly "regrettable" anti-Semitic "excesses" of the Nazis, not exactly the "proletariat's" concern.

Max, my cousin, accepted the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact partitioning Poland between Stalin and Hitler, with the same unquestioning obedience as the cult members who recently followed their suicide orders in Jonestown, Guyana.

Nevertheless, when the Germans broke through the Maginot line in June 1940, Max wisely left Paris with his wife and child, took his money with him, and settled in unoccupied France. However, after the armistice and the continuous friendly signals between Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia, Max packed his belongings and, as a Polish Jew, voluntarily moved back into German-occupied Paris. A few months later, Hitler attacked Soviet Russia. Max was picked up by the Gestapo and deported to one of the death camps in Eastern Europe. He was never heard from again. His wife and daughter, who had remained in unoccupied France, survived—but Max was a victim of his Communist ideological idiocy.

My mother and I lived, as was the Paris style for refugees, in a small hotel in one room with some kitchen facilities. Day after day, new friends and acquaintances appeared who had managed to escape from Vienna. Jews still trickled in from Germany as well as from Czechoslovakia, Poland, and other Eastern European countries. Grizzly stories about concentration-camp horrors began to make the rounds, and people worried desperately about the fate of their friends and relatives left behind.

Paris was full of earlier refugees and war victims. Tens of thousands of Spanish Republicans were living all over the length

and breadth of France. White Russian anti-Communist exiles were still conspicuous in Paris. However, France and the Parisians did not accept the new refugees in good grace in 1938 and 1939. With Hitler in the vicinity, "grace" was not a commodity particularly cherished.

Residence and working permits were very hard to get. The thing that was the hardest to obtain was an overseas visa to the United States, Australia, Latin America, or Palestine. A black market flourished in genuine or forged entry permits to some exotic-sounding South American countries like Bolivia or Paraguay. It would have sounded insane to me in those days if someone had predicted that, twenty-five years later, I would be stationed in La Paz, the capital of Bolivia, as a United States Embassy official and meet there some people I had known in Paris at the time they had acquired their visas.

The Café de la Paix near the Opéra was the central assembly point for Austrian refugees accustomed to meeting in a coffeehouse. It was not exactly a Viennese *Kafehaus*, and the waiters preferred to serve a Dubonnet or another aperitif—but still it made people temporarily happy to see friends, greet new arrivals, and contribute to the incessant production of rumors, a time-honored tradition in exile and danger.

I worked mainly with the Jabotinsky New Zionist Organization, where I found many associates whom I had met when they attended our big Congress in Vienna in 1935. I formed lasting frienships with some people who later also succeeded in getting to the United States. Ali and Lilly Feiler and Benya Payne, all Berliners and Jabotinsky devotees, had arrived in Paris years earlier and were already established when my mother and I appeared on the scene.

Another friend dating from wartime days was Dr. Ruben Hecht. He was a particularly good example for the attraction the Jabotinsky movement exerted on Jews from the most diverse backgrounds. Ruben came from a completely assimilated Swiss family in Basel, but in his student years became a committed follower of Jabotinsky. Later, in Haifa, he established the "Dagon" grain silo, one of Israel's great commercial enterprises. The

building is dramatically located at the entry of the harbor and, with its agricultural-archeological museum, has become a landmark of the city.

Somebody introduced me to a Hungarian chemist who had the idea of establishing in Paris—the famous city of beauty products—a small plant for the manufacture of creams, nail polish, and similar products, for the composition of which he claimed to have elaborated particularly wholesome substances and mixtures. We had a common disadvantage—lack of money. However, he had the technical know-how, and I was to contribute the managerial and organizational talent. We formed a company, gave it the high-sounding name of "Crillon," and, for a ridiculous rent, found a small, dark, and dilapidated workroom and office. There my partner started to manufacture his mysterious formulas, and I attempted to organize a distribution system. The address of our "enterprise" was excellent, right near the Madeleine. Whoever had not seen this "plant," relying only on the impressive name of Crillon and the elegant location might have been convinced that a remarkable success story was in the making. That was not the case, but it was not a failure either. Two years later, we were able, just prior to the breakthrough of the German *Panzers,* to sell the name, the incorporation, and the formulas to some French buyer who had decided to stay in Paris, even with the Nazis. Each of us received $1,000. This, then, was the money that sustained my mother and me in Morocco, where we found ourselves after the collapse of France.

The name of Crillon, however, was to follow me for a long time. When I entered the United States Government service in 1943, I must have answered the question on "previous employment" in the application form, as having been a *"gerant"*—(manager) of "Crillon Beauty Products." This entry was probably read superficially by someone who knew Paris—also superficially. For him there was obviously only one Crillon, and that was the famous Hotel Crillon near the American embassy. When I became a part of the Foreign Service, I discovered one day that I was listed in the *Biographical Register* as having been a "hotel manager." Fully aware that I had never managed any-

thing in a hotel but my own room, I tried desperately to find the origins of this entry, and, at the same time, to delete it as simply not corresponding to the truth. It took years until an investigation-minded executive officer, who was also a friend, established the mental process by which "my" Crillon had been connected with the Hotel Crillon, and eventually with the title "hotel manager." The next issue of the *Biographical Register* marked the final disappearance of this enviable but unmerited phase in my career.

Though I made my daily appearances at my "business headquarters," I really devoted more of my time to working with the New Zionist Organization. I regularly wrote articles for Zionist papers in many countries. I also dispatched frequent contributions to newspapers in Palestine, which paid the meager honorarium to my father, who lived in less-than-comfortable conditions in Tel Aviv.

As in many other countries not yet occupied by the Germans, we started to organize "unofficial" immigration to Palestine. I went to Marseille a few times to help negotiate shipping deals, equipment, and loading these miserable boats. This knowledge of Marseille and some of its slightly underground characteristics was of great help to me when I arrived there two years later after escaping from a German prisoner-of-war camp.

We waited in Paris for certificates to Palestine, to join my father there. He worked feverishly at his end, but, as I explained earlier, my role in the militant Jabotinsky movement, and my book critical of the Zionist establishment of those days, apparently precluded the issuance of the entry permits. The trouble was that we never fully understood the impossibility of obtaining these documents. It always looked as if a different approach would still be possible and that in another couple of months the situation might change for the better. On the other hand, I could not make use of the clandestine transports, since my mother would not have been able to withstand the rigors of these cruel voyages, and I could not leave her alone.

Thus, the days went by fast and furiously. The world situation continued to deteriorate catastrophically. In September

1938, the Sudeten crisis erupted and Chamberlain went to Munich and conceded to Hitler's every wish. On March 15, 1939, the German troops marched into Prague, and another of the great cities of the Western civilization became part of the empire of the new barbarians.

Many of my friends who had remained in Vienna eventually managed to depart. Some went to Palestine, and some found long-forgotten relatives in the United States and thus got affidavits and visas. By the end of 1938, my fraternity brothers Rips and Menek finally got out of Vienna, traveling via Germany, which, paradoxically, was an easier exit point at that time than Austria, and made their way to Paris. I remember how I waited for them at the train station, and Rips appeared dressed in my fur-lined coat, which he had carried for me from Vienna. The fur had been completely torn out, since the Germans were always suspicious of illegal currency-smuggling. Both men stayed for months in Paris with Rips' future wife, Lene, until we found a source for Bolivian visas. Argentine transit visas were then issued, and, with the help of a decent and influential Argentine whom they had befriended on the boat, they received permission to disembark in Buenos Aires and settle there. As long as one still had the will to move, there was some hope—staying in Hitler's Europe was equivalent to a death sentence.

On September 1, 1939, Germany attacked Poland, and thus started the Second World War. Hitler's mechanized might was concentrated on the destruction of Poland, which was achieved in record time. The annihilation drive against the Jews in Eastern Europe started in earnest. The French armies were mobilized behind the "impregnable" Maginot line. A British expeditionary force reached France—but all remained quiet on the Western Front.

On the surface, life in Paris continued undisturbed during this "drôle de guerre"—the funny, or phoney, war. But there was a steadily increasing unpleasantness and malaise in the air. The public mood swayed between confidence that Hitler would

never dare to attack France frontally, as Germany had in 1914, and the cynical belief that the Western powers had declared war on Hitler only symbolically, and that everything would return to normalcy once Hitler had achieved his objective of subjugating the "nasty" Poles.

Acts of xenophobia could be noticed daily. Jewish refugees who had fled from Hitler were eyed with suspicion and had to struggle harder than ever for permission to stay in Paris and avoid forced residences that would have cut them off from all contacts with foreign consulates and shipping agencies, thus making eventual emigration impossible.

Thousands of foreigners who had found refuge in France volunteered for the French army. Jews from many countries—Spaniards, White Russians, South Americans—men of all backgrounds and origins waited patiently in barracks and government offices to sign a sheet of paper, pledging themselves to serve under the French flag.

The treatment of these volunteers, numbering 40,000 to 50,000, gave clear proof, even in the first days of the war, of the absolute unpreparedness of the French military and the malevolence of other French authorities. Despite the fact that they had volunteered, many foreigners were thrown into internment camps. Quite often, men with sons serving in the French army could be found in these camps.

Already at that early date the suspicion arose—later proven beyond doubt—that the government officials who were imprisoning and persecuting refugees from Hitler's terror, were actually in the service of Germany, spreading confusion in order to sap French morale and resistance power.

A few months later, foreign volunteers, especially Spaniards, Russians, and former Poles, were gathered in special camps and incorporated into the so-called "Régiments de Marche de la Légion" (marching Regiments of the Foreign Legion). In North Africa, Sidi Belabbes, the traditional center of the Foreign Legion, housed mostly Austrians, Germans, and other Central European refugees.

The Foreign Legion of 1940 continued the same iron disci-

pline and antiquated training methods that were used for traditional Foreign Legion recruits, adventurers, and sometimes even criminals who had gathered from every part of the world. It was a stupid and senseless torment for political refugees who were not seeking adventure, but who had enlisted to fight against Hitler and for the defense of France.

After the armistice with the Germans was concluded on June 22, 1940, the volunteers were supposed to be demobilized. The police then used methods that had never been thought possible in France. They came to the indicated addresses with search warrants, demanding the certificates of demobilization, which they took away for "reexamination." Later, they declared blandly that they had never received them. They demanded working contracts but strictly refused working permits. The foreigners were given a choice between internment and emigration, but one could not get permission to leave the country, even if one had the chance. War decorations were also "reexamined" or withdrawn. And, yet, the fate of those former volunteers in France, sad and revolting as it was, was still paradise compared with the tragic conditions of the volunteers who found themselves in North Africa.

The Fall of France

All "funny" or "phoney" aspects of the war ended on May 10, 1940, when the German tanks started the "Blitzkrieg" and broke through Belgium, Holland, and the eastern and northern provinces of France. The Maginot line, built to defend the country in a war fought in the style of 1914, crumbled before the savage onslaught of modern tanks and aircraft. At the same time the very fabric of French society was being undermined by skillful German infiltration and vicious propaganda.

"Mourir pour les Sudetes, Mourir pour Danzig, Mourir pour les Juifs?" (Is it worth dying for the Sudetenland, for Danzig, for the Jews?) These were the slogans of the German *Flüster-Propaganda* (whispering campaign), and from one day to the next it did not seem to make sense to die even for Paris or France.

Churchill became Britain's Prime Minister the day the Germans invaded Belgium, France, and Holland. His first tragic task was to extricate the remnants of the British expeditionary force from Dunkirk in the beginning of June. Some 235,000 British soldiers and 115,000 Frenchmen were saved in this operation, which would prove crucial in England's fight for survival.

Hitler marched up the Champs Elysées to the sacred Arc de Triomphe on June 14, and, on June 22, 1940, Pétain and Laval signed the armistice with Nazi Germany.

All of continental Western Europe was occupied. France was divided into a major German-occupied zone, comprising the entire industrialized North and the coasts and ports of Normandy and Brittany opposite England. A so-called unoccupied territory in the South was ruled by a French puppet government out of Vichy, a famous spa.

Taken Prisoner by the Germany Army

In early May, a few weeks before the fall of Paris, I was inducted into one of the *"prestataire"* units, auxiliary military formations attached to the French army. Paris was in indescribable confusion and anxiety. People were trying desperately to move themselves, their families, and their belongings as far away as possible from the immediate path of the Germans. Bribery, corruption, distrust, and utter chaos prevailed all over. Black-market–gasoline and –food prices increased hourly. Hoarding was the order of the day, and rumors of all sorts spread like wildfire.

I participated with friends in the preparation of a vehicle, gasoline, and food, and they promised me solemnly to take my mother along when the day came to flee Paris. The plan was to head for the nearest port still free at the time and to attempt to get on a boat to England. I would try to do the same thing, providing I got out alive from wherever my *"prestataire"* batallion would be sent.

My unit moved to a makeshift camp near Quimper, the

westernmost point of Brittany, one of the westernmost provinces of France. We were given French uniforms, military papers, and some rifles that appeared to be museum pieces. We had not received training or instruction, nor had we any idea what to do or what to accomplish. . . . Neither had our officers.

We were transported north in old, discarded railroad cars. We learned of our destination only upon our arrival. During our trip, we were forced to disembark a few times because of German bombings. Once, two planes strafed us from so low that we had to jump from the slowly moving train and hide in ditches and bushes.

The members of the unit were all Hitler refugees, Germans, Austrians, Czechs, Hungarians, mostly Jews, but also gentile socialists, leftists, militant Catholics, and Protestants, who had chosen life without the Nazis. I found among this group of about a hundred, Robert "Roy" Mehler, a member of another Viennese Zionist fraternity with whom I would later share my escape.

All of us were deathly afraid, since the news over the radio made it quite clear that we were straight on the route of the German army moving rapidly toward the French coastline. We did not have to wait too long. About a week after we had arrived in Quimper, a battalion of German infantry reached our position, and we were taken prisoners.

The first shock was witnessing how about half a dozen members of our unit produced identity cards showing them to be members of the German armed forces or intelligence organizations. They were feted by their captors and driven away. I had no idea who they were, since I had never suspected them and also had had no opportunity to talk to them during our short time together.

The second surprise was the relatively low-key treatment by our German captors. The commanding officer was a captain in his mid-thirties, as Prussian as a cartoon, with saber scars on his cheek, obviously a career officer. He announced with a grating voice that we were being taken prisoners by the victorious German army, that we should have to observe unquestioningly all commands, and that we should be treated as prescribed by

the Geneva Convention. With that, we were dismissed and permitted to stay in our tents. Of course, we had been searched immediately after the Germans captured us. All weapons had been confiscated, but personal belongings like money or watches were not taken away.

The Captain did not establish a roster of nationalities and did not divide the group into Jewish and non-Jewish prisoners as we had expected him to do as his first act. He had addressed us in German with a simultaneous French translation delivered by one of his sergeants. However, he must have been immediately aware of the fact that almost everyone—except the French officers—understood German perfectly.

Since our worst expectations did not materialize, tensions relaxed momentarily. For a few days, we stayed where we were, and received three daily meals of Germany army rations. The Germans did not molest us, and the Captain had no visible contact with any of us. We waited, not knowing for what, and the future hung heavily on all of us.

On the fifth or sixth day, at the morning roll call normally taken by a sergeant, the Captain appeared and announced with the same grating voice that his unit was a combat group and, as such, not there to watch over prisoners of war. Consequently, he expected to be relieved of this task shortly and the Gestapo would arrive within the next forty-eight hours to take over his camp. His short speech was delivered only in German and was not translated. He saluted and disappeared.

We were desperate and dumbfounded. Why had the Captain made this announcement? To enjoy our terror? It did not seem so. He had treated us fairly and had not asked anyone whether he was Jewish or not. Why had he emphasized that he was a combat officer and had nothing to do with prisoners of war, and why had he informed us specifically that the Gestapo was due to arrive within a couple of days?

I took two or three people aside and asked them whether they felt, as I did, that the German Captain wanted to alert and warn us. None agreed outright with me, but nobody could offer any other explanation.

Later in the day, I had made up my mind. I, for one, would try to escape that night. I discussed it with Roy Mehler and convinced him to join me. The risk—of being shot trying to escape—was great, but the risk was even greater if we waited for the Gestapo.

During the day, we developed our plan. We put some of our midday rations into our pockets and decided to leave at around 10:00 P.M., at a point of the camp near the latrines and in the general direction of the highway. We would try to reach the next village still in darkness, attempt to get peasants or workers' clothes, and then start on the long trek, direction south, into the unoccupied zone of France.

Roy was a fine choice as a companion, since we had known each other for a long time and trusted each other. I told him that I was very good at arranging and organizing things but—very unhandy. In practical terms, this would mean that I would be responsible for finding a loaf of bread or a can of sardines, but that he would have to cut the bread and open the can; otherwise we would starve. We agreed on all the details of the first phase of our plan, then tried to get some rest, but we were much too nervous to sleep.

Escape

After lights out, we did not return to our tent, but sat undisturbed in the dark waiting for our chosen hour. At 10:00 P.M. we casually walked to the latrine and from there continued walking slowly but not stealthily, leaving the compound behind us. Suddenly, I had the feeling that someone was watching us. I turned around and had the fleeting impression that the Captain was standing nearby, observing our departure. I shall never know. In any event, this anonymous and unknown German Captain—intentionally or not—was the motivating factor in my second escape from the Nazis' clutches.

We were outside the camp in a matter of minutes. In a couple of hours we had reached a small village, dreary and in

utter darkness. We knocked at one, then a second door, but there was no reply. At the third door, an old farmer—or possibly a fisherman—opened the door, and, after he saw our French uniforms, he let us in. We explained to him that we had just escaped from a German prisoner-of-war camp, and we needed civilian clothing, some food, and directions to the next highway. We both said a silent prayer for the peace of soul of our respective French teachers in hich school who had this night enabled us to deal with Breton peasants or fishermen.

The man was short on words, but both he and his wife were extremely helpful. We got what we wanted, changed, and rested a couple of hours. In the morning the man brought us by horse and buggy close to the main highway. All this he did unenthusiastically but efficiently and competently. We said *au revoir* and almost immediately got a ride in a rickety truck to the next small town. We wanted to get away as quickly as possible from the vicinity of the camp and the Gestapo batallion that was supposed to move in.

Our first achievement was the procurement of a map. Only then did we realize how "out of the way" our geographic location really was.

Our aim was Toulouse or Marseille, and it was a long and tortuous trip. It proved possible only because the Germans, having conquered France in an easy war, followed at that moment the policy of being "friendly" to the French. They thus hoped to gain the support of the French and capture their fleet and colonial possessions in order to accelerate the war against the British.

Our immediate problem was to leave Brittany and the coastal area. We decided to circle around Nantes and then follow a generally southeastern direction via Limoges and Montauban. Bordeaux, as the most direct gateway to the south, had to be avoided because it was serving as the temporary seat of the French government.

We continued to hitchhike from village to village, and in the afternoon we were stopped by a small German truck. For a moment we were terror-stricken—but the driver just offered

us a ride. He spoke broken French, and we answered in torrents of rapid French to avoid the possibility of his noticing our German accent. The ride was concluded successfully in the next town, and from then on we specialized in German transportation. It was, paradoxically, the safest way to travel, since it avoided the danger of patrol cars and inspection by German military police or French gendarmerie. We stayed overnight in isolated farmhouses or very small villages and, in the general confusion, did not arouse suspicion.

True to our agreement, I scrounged for food, information and shelter, and Roy opened the cans, cut the bread, and helped out with car repairs when one of the ridiculous vehicles we were sometimes offered broke down. Occasionally, we had to stay for hours near a highway, when column after column of German military vehicles passed by and all other traffic was banned.

In general, we followed our directional plan, though some considerable detours, depending on the rides we were offered, were unavoidable and very time-consuming.

Marseille—Gateway to Freedom

After about a week of traveling south in mostly short spurts, without ever having slept in a bed or changed clothes, since we had to be ready to move at a moment's notice, we approached the line that divided the German-occupied zone from the unoccupied zone. The most difficult task seemed to be ahead of us: How to cross the line, which we expected to be heavily controlled. By then we were terribly tired, and our brain power greatly diminished. We decided to play real poker and—if possible—to attempt to pass the border in a German vehicle. We knew that some German transportation was going through Toulouse, since some German soldiers had earlier told us so. We caught a ride in a German van and asked them where they were heading. The driver casually answered, "To Toulouse." We were equally casual in replying that this happened to be our destination too. We crossed the dividing line without incident and

were dropped off in the center of town. We could hardly wait for the truck to disappear from sight, before we fell into each other's arms. The French regime at that time may have been bad and treacherous, but "bad" is a very relative term—at the moment we were out of the immediate reach of the Nazis.

One hour later, when we were trying to eat our first hot meal after what appeared to us an eternity, I was struck by a kidney attack accompanied by excruciating pain. Roy got me to a hospital, and I implored him to leave me there and continue on. There was no sense in risking both our lives once we had gotten that near to possible "salvation." He made it to Spain and eventually the United States.

My memory of the next few days in Toulouse is completely hazy. Because of the pain, I must have received some strong sedation in the hospital. The next thing I remember is waking up in the small apartment of a middle-aged Jewish-Hungarian couple who had fled from Paris. They had picked me up in or near the hospital and had taken me home. I tried to reach them later from Marseille, but they were gone. How often have I wished and prayed that they too might have found a haven.

I took a train to Marseille and, as my first action, managed to obtain a military discharge paper at a *garde mobile* (military *gendarmerie*) station. Everything in those days depended on the kind of official one had to deal with. Without a discharge document, I could not have checked into a hotel or moved around for ten minutes without being arrested.

My greatest worry was my mother. I had no idea whether she had actually left Paris before the Germans entered or, if she had, where she was. I figured that she would try to get in touch with my father in Tel Aviv, and my cousins who had fled to the South of France, in the assumption that, if alive, I would do the same.

Unbelievable as it may sound, telegraph, telephone, and mail service functioned and was not much worse than in normal times. The war had been so short, so undestructive, that the

communication system, at least in unoccupied France, was not noticeably interrupted.

I sent telegrams to my father in Tel Aviv and to my family in Southern France, and within forty-eight hours I received replies with the address of my mother in Casablanca, Morocco. A little later, I got a cable from her directly.

Marseille was bursting at its seams with tens of thousands of French refugees and foreigners of all nationalities. Everyone seemed to have only one aim—to continue running. The ever-present fear was that the status of "unoccupation" might end any minute and, with it, all hope of getting out of France and Europe. People made friendships, exchanged names, and the next morning the friend of the night before had disappeared and was never heard from again.

My plan was to get to Morocco, to join my mother and thus to remove myself from mainland France and the vicinity of the Germans. My knowledge of Marseille, which I mentioned previously in connection with my activities in obtaining "unofficial" transportation to Palestine, came in very handy. The people I approached were very conversant with what I wanted, and there was nothing in the summer of 1940 that was not arrangeable in Marseille.

My demobilization card became the basis for a whole sheaf of papers, correctly issued by the French military, but containing a number of "incorrect" data, which alone made their authorization possible. My personal description was factual, but I was categorized as having resided in Casablanca when called to my auxiliary unit and, therefore, was authorized to return to my place of residence on a French military transport ship that brought Moroccans and other residents back to their homes. The price I had to pay for this documentation included, therefore, free transportation, which was a nice bonus.

My happiness about this arrangement and the euphoria of knowing my mother was alive were rudely interrupted when, sitting in a cafe in Marseille, I picked up a newspaper and read of the death in New York of my beloved and revered Zionist mentor, Zeev Jabotinksy. I had been so busy running away from

the Germans and saving my life that only now did I suddenly realize that the world seemed to have come to an end. Most of Europe was under Nazi occupation, Hitler's war machine was poised to attack England, and European Jewry seemed to be doomed. Jabotinsky's death at this juncture symbolized for me all these catastrophes. It was the first and only time in these hard two years since I had left Vienna that I broke down completely.

Reunion in Casablanca

The troop ship left as scheduled, and I got on it after my papers had had a very cursory examination. The ship was incredibly crowded, but it was summer, and, by staying on deck, one avoided the smell and narrowness of the below-deck accommodations. I do not remember how or what the food was, but the enforced leisure, the sun, and the feeling of being safe—at least for the moment—helped me to recuperate and make a halfway decent appearance when we arrived a few days later.

Thousands of people waited on the dock in Casablanca, but I noticed my mother almost immediately and I finally learned of her "odyssey." She had left Paris with our friends a day before the Germans entered. They had driven to a port in Normandy and gotten on a boat that they thought was heading for England. When they woke up the next morning, they learned that the final destination of the ship was Casablanca. Her friends left in Bordeaux, but my mother, wisely, continued on. With the help of the Jewish community in Casablanca, she found a room with a kitchen, which would become our home for the next seven months.

From Casablanca to the United States— a Miraculous American Consul General

Humphrey Bogart's Casablanca

In the heart of Casablanca rose the equestrian statue of General Lyautey, a legendary French military figure. He was not only a *"Maréchal,"* thus holding the highest rank in the army, but also the true creator of Morocco as a French protectorate. He had built cities, roads, railways, and bridges, and developed Casablanca from sand dunes and dilapidated slums to the country's largest port, the real "gate to Morocco."

After the first few days of understandable happiness about our escape from the Nazis, my mother and I realized very quickly that Casablanca was not Maréchal Lyautey's city anymore. Germany had efficiently taken over French Morocco. German troops were there, German secret police, and German propagandists. We thus fully understood the highly temporary character of Morocco as a refuge.

The collapse of metropolitan France changed with one stroke the belief of the Moroccan population in the military power of France. France's grandeur seemed to have dissolved into thin air. Distant and brilliant Paris, the nerve center of the French "protector," was occupied by the German army, and German agents began to traverse Morocco and to chant the hymn of German strength and invincibility.

The "Armistice Commission," as the German troops stationed in Morocco were officially designated, consisted of a

massive civilian staff and one uniformed member of the "Luftwaffe"—air force. This "commission" was continuously reinforced by "tourists" and additional military and, in its very proportions, resembled a small army of occupation.

All villas and hotels in Anfa, the exclusive residential suburb of Casablanca, were requisitioned and put at the disposal of these German forces. The German commanding General and his personal staff stayed at Anfa's largest hotel, and about five hundred armed and uniformed members of the air force were also concentrated in this section. The only restriction imposed on this military unit was that they were obligated to don civilian clothes when visiting the center of Casablanca, some twenty minutes away.

The presence of the Germans in Morocco was not a secret. Every resident of Casablanca who rode out to the seashore had to expect to be removed from the beach by French police with the polite remark that *"ces messieurs"*—these gentlemen—wished to play soccer. *"Ces messieurs"* were German soldiers.

Strategically, Morocco's advantages for future German plans were of immense importance. A first-class, full-gauge railway connected Casablanca with Tunis, and parallel to this ran a broad highway, offering transportation from Italian-ruled Tripoli to Morocco. Casablanca had a wonderful harbor and was potentially an ideal U-boat base. From here and more southerly points, German submarines could imperil the London–Cape sea route. Spanish Morocco and Tangiers could be occupied from French Morocco, if needed as bases for an assault on Gibraltar.

The morale of the French population, mainly concentrated in the big cities, was bad. The whole country was enveloped in an atmosphere of uncertainly and fear. The Vichy police were all-powerful. Every telephone call was monitored; all mail was read; informers were everywhere. Concentration camps sprang up and were filled with de Gaullists, pro-Britishers, Jews, and others in disfavor with the authorities.

Every day in the early hours of the morning, numerous German soldiers could be seen at the post offices, dispatching great quantities of food to their relatives in Germany, while the

French were prohibited from sending even the smallest parcel to their starving families in France.

In the prefectures of Casablanca and larger cities sat members of the German armistice commission. Strict control was maintained over all foreigners in the country. Every exit and entry permit had to be approved by the German commission. Thanks to the help of some decent French officials who were secretly supporters of de Gaulle, hundreds of refugees obtained papers that the German authorities certainly would not have approved, had they been aware of them.

German propaganda activities, aimed at the complete undermining and elimination of every vestige of French prestige, were cleverly orchestrated. Leaflets and circulars passed from hand to hand. Arab drivers and servants were hired by the hundreds and excellently paid. Arabs who had studied in Germany were to be encountered at the markets and fairs. The famous Arab storytellers who, for the price of a coin, would recite endless tales to a spellbound audience, spoke often of the new "apostle of truth"—Adolf Hitler.

While the lowest groups of the indigenous masses and a certain section of the intellectuals at the Islamic University of Fez succumbed to German propaganda, the Sultan, the nominal ruler of Morocco and his viziers maintained their anglophile leanings and thus helped to prevent a stampede of the native population to the Germans.

One of the darkest blots of shame on the Vichy regime's record was the slave labor on the Trans-Sahara Railroad, to which thousands of foreign volunteers for the French military had been condemned.

The legionnaires in North Africa were never released after the armistice. They as well as soldiers and members of auxiliary units who were of foreign origin were marked for deportation and work on the Trans-Sahara Railway. The project was supposed to connect the French North African possessions with the West African coast and Dakar. It was designed to bypass the British blockade and to bring urgently needed raw materials safely from French West Africa via Morocco–Algiers to Hitler's Europe.

The working conditions were extremely severe. In the winter, the temperature was below zero; in summer, the deadly heat of the African desert sun was unbearable. The hygienic conditions were miserable. Disease, suicide, and futile attempts at escape were increasing.

France might have had in the past an incomparable record as a country providing generous refuge and asylum to people escaping oppression, revolution, and civil war, but she did not live up to her tradition during the Hitler years.

The Eichmann trial that would be held years later in Israel, with its far-flung investigations and testimonies, developed an almost unique panorama of the behavior of the European nations toward persecuted Jews and other anti-Nazi refugees. It is significant that the Dutch and the Danes emerged as those with the greatest degree of courage and humaneness—not the French.

Herbert S. Goold—the American Consul General

About two weeks after my arrival in Casablanca, the situation was getting critical. I was unable to obtain even a temporary residence permit for my mother and myself unless I could show a visa for another country. On the other hand, deportations to the dreaded Trans-Sahara Railway increased daily. The only exception applied to foreigners in possession of a visa who were awaiting passage to an overseas country.

Though I had no affidavits and I had made no previous visa applications, I decided to call at the American Consulate. When I arrived there, I saw long lines waiting at the side entrance. It was not quite clear to me why, and I therefore entered through the main gate. I spoke to the young lady at the reception desk in French, asking for *"Monsieur, le Consul General."* Since I had come through the main entrance and spoken to her in fluent French, the receptionist probably assumed that I had reasons of State to see the top man, since visa matters were not handled at that level. She asked me to wait a few minutes and then

ushered me in to meet Herbert S. Goold, the American Consul General. Thus a true miracle story began to unfold.

I found myself in the presence of a tall, silver-haired man, deeply tanned, with the bluest eyes I have ever seen. All of a sudden it dawned upon me that I must have committed a terrible blunder. I surely was supposed to have stood in line with all the people outside, and here I was, in the inner office of the Consul General. I felt deeply embarrassed and expected to be thrown out momentarily.

Hesitatingly, I asked for permission to recite my story briefly. I described my situation and my background. I told how I had gotten to Casablanca and that, frankly, I had no immediate hope of getting an affidavit. Friends who had reached the States would certainly be willing to do things on my behalf, but it all would take an inordinate amount of time. In the meantime, I would be sent to the Sahara, and my mother would possibly be deported back to Hitler's Europe. I added that I could not even provide proof of my story, since I had lost everything and that, to reassemble all my documents, I would first have to reach a safe haven.

Mr. Goold had not reacted during my talk. He kept on watching me intensely. He did not throw me out, but he also did not ask a single question. After what seemed to me an endless minute, he got up, went over to his desk, and started writing. He returned with a handwritten letter on his personal stationery, which he asked me to look over. It was addressed to the Prefect of Casablanca, informing him that, since I was expecting a visa to the United States, my mother and I had to be at the call of the U.S. Consulate; the issuance of temporary residence permits would therefore be in order and appreciated.

I hardly trusted my eyes when I read the letter. Mr. Goold must have noticed my surprise, confusion, and gratitude. He suggested I deliver the letter immediately to the Prefecture. There would be ample time to discuss the visa situation at a later date. He added that certain letters were best written by hand rather than dictated, and for the first time I saw on his face the wonderful smile and the ironic twinkle in his eyes that I would get to know so well in the years to come.

I hurried to the Prefecture with my precious letter, and the procedures there took quite a few hours. When I returned to our apartment with the residence permits in my pocket, I found my mother in a state of happy excitement equaling mine. She said that, right after lunch, a wonderful American lady, introducing herself as the wife of the American Consul General, had come by, inquiring whether my mother needed anything and casually mentioning that I had called on her husband that morning.

We were deeply moved. Not only had hope once more become a part of our life, but—even more important in our state of depression—we had proof that, even in these cruel and brutal times, kindness and human solidarity still existed.

In the months to come I had the privilege of meeting Herbert Goold quite often. We developed deep feelings of affection and admiration for him and his wonderful wife, Cora. Mr. Goold honored me with his trust, and we often had long talks about the war, Hitler, Zionism, and the United States. The Goolds felt the issues of the war with the deepest personal concern and were passionately involved. The American Consulate, which Mr. Goold headed with consummate skill, was a veritable oasis of freedom in the sizzling, spying, corrupt, and corrupting atmosphere of 1940 Casablanca, immortalized in Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman's masterful film.

One day—I shall never forget that occasion—Mr. Goold invited us to the residence for drinks. With his characteristic smile, he started a short speech: "Ed, I have both good and bad news for you. The good news is that I have special visitors' visas for you and your mother. . . ." I jumped up and wanted to embrace him, but he interrupted and said: "You had better wait for the bad news . . ." He continued, "I am not going to issue those visas to you. If you arrive in the United States on a visitor's visa, you will not be able to work, and you will not qualify to become a citizen. This is not what I have in mind for you. You will stay in Casablanca until I can obtain regular immigration visas for you both." I was shocked. At that moment, I had one aim in life, and that was to get my mother and myself out of

Morocco and to the United States. It was completely immaterial to me what kind of a visa we had. I pleaded and I begged—but to no avail.

Mr. Goold reassured us that all would end well. He repeated that for the time being we were safe in Casablanca, and, therefore, it was important to think about my long-range future. Arriving in the United States as regular immigrants and future citizens was therefore, of paramount importance. The waiting period would also provide me with a more thorough knowledge of Morocco and its underlying problems, and this might prove very helpful once we were in the States. Mainly, Mr. Goold counseled—patience.

I did not have it—but I also had no choice. How often in later years was I to bless him for his sage advice.

Moroccan Jews

I had already traveled outside of Casablanca and had visited beautiful Rabat and a number of smaller towns. I had conferred with the leaders of the Jewish community, who had, in turn, introduced me to many well-informed and intelligent people.

Morocco was a fascinating mixture of people. Berbers, Arabs, Jews, black former slaves, French, Spaniards, Portuguese, Italians, many tribes and races, desert- and mountain-dwellers, old inhabitants and recent immigrants . . . they all lived together and were at the same time completely separated from one another.

In origin, history, and composition, the Jewish community of Morocco was one of the most interesting communities of the worldwide Jewish dispersion. Nowhere else could one follow footprints of three thousand years of Jewish history as well as in this westernmost corner of the Mediterranean Sea.

The first Jewish arrival into North Africa and especially Morocco took place long before the destruction of the temple. Modern historical research has established that the Phoenician colonization of the Mediterranean basin was paralleled by a Jewish penetration of this part of the globe.

Near and about Carthage, corresponding to the region of modern Tunisia, numerous Phoenician and Hebrew settlements had sprung up and engaged in commerce and navigation. Thus, the Jews constituted, with the Berbers, the oldest part of the entire population of Northern Africa.

After the destruction of the second temple, there was another wave of Jewish immigration into northern Africa. But the composition of this group was entirely different from the first settlers. The Jews in this wave were brought over as slaves. They were deported to northern Africa by the Romans, whose custom it was to offer almost the entire male population of their conquered countries on the slave markets of the then-known world.

The third wave of Jewish immigration took place between the eighth and the eleventh centuries, in the wake of the Arab invasion of northern Africa. Arab-Jewish nomad tribes were to become of great importance in the formation of the future Jewish communities of northern Africa. They formed an essential link between the Jews, who had settled there a long time before, and the Arab conquerors, and thus contributed to the rapid "arabization" of these communities.

The tragic expulsion of the Jews from Spain, in 1492, meant the beginning of a golden epoch for Moroccan Jewry. Tens of thousands of Spanish Jews, among them the most outstanding scholars, scientists, physicians, and mathematicians of their time, settled in Tangiers, Fez, and Tetuan. These Spanish Jews, however, were unable to raise the broad masses of the indigenous Jewish population to their own level. Thus, they continued to cling to their own circles and formed, in time, a sort of Jewish "aristocracy."

It was fascinating to observe to what degree the social grouping of "Moroccan" and "Spanish" Jews was still maintained. With a traditional link to the nations that persecuted them, peculiar to the Jews as to no other people, these Spanish Jews continued to use the ancient Castillian tongue with such clarity and purity as to arouse the envy of many a Spaniard.

More than a quarter of a century later, when I was stationed

in Caracas, Venezuela, I met the Bentatas, a Spanish-Jewish family who had migrated from Morocco a long time ago. The patriarch of the clan was one of the best-known and most respected international lawyers in the city. His wife was the undisputed center of the household, a remarkable lady and a most versatile hostess. At the same time, the Bentatas remained devoted and traditional Jews. The yearly Pesach seders (Passover meals) they conducted in ancient Sephardic ritual, which my wife, son, and I always attended, belong to our most cherished memories.

The indigenous Moroccan Jews spoke a Judeo-Arab dialect and in their traditional garb sometimes seemed to parallel Polish and Carpatho-Russian Jews in the small provincial towns of Eastern Europe. The kaftan was replaced by the Moroccan tarbush, but often gesticulations and the manner of speaking and walking were somehow similar. Quite frequently their sons were already Europeanized and were managing complex businesses. However, young Moroccan Jews remained on the whole faithful to the old family ties and traditions of the past.

At times one came across the most peculiar human types. Some of the Jewish craftsmen were of an almost-biblical beauty. On another occasion, one could find a fastidious-looking Jewish communal elder in his flowing garb or a shy and forlorn Berber Jew in a tattered, motley-colored garment on his visit to the town from his inaccessible mountain dwelling.

Relations between Arabs and Jews in Morocco have had a checkered history. As in other Arab countries, periods of fairly tranquil coexistence were followed by oppression of the Jewish minority and even occasional massacres. A type of second-class citizenship, however, had been characteristic for most of the time and for most Jews—except possibly for those of particular high standing, such as doctors, lawyers, and scientists.

Nazi propaganda resorted immediately after the armistice to its unfailing cure-all: Jew-baiting. Though it did not lead to immediate anti-Jewish riots or excesses—thanks also to the very progressive attitude of the ruling Sultan, who was held in great respect by his Jewish subjects—it proved to be a time bomb with

a delayed effect. The German propaganda undoubtedly contributed to the strong anti-Jewish feeling that erupted after the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. It led to the mass exodus of the Jews from Morocco to the new Jewish state.

Jews were also forced to leave the other Arab countries where they had resided for countless centuries—often longer than the conquering Arabs. They fled with practically nothing, leaving their houses, money, and other belongings behind.

This mass emigration paralleled the flight of Arabs from Israel, when, after the proclamation of statehood, Arab armies marched on newly born Israel from all sides. Israel's Arabs were lured into leaving by Arab propaganda, promising them a quick, victorious return and the spoils of war. Those Arabs did not have to abandon their homes, and many of them were smart and stayed in their towns and villages and became citizens of Israel.

The only sensible way to deal with these mass migrations caused by war and upheaval would have been to consider them as population exchanges, as occurred on an unprecedented scale in other parts of the globe after the Second World War. Millions changed homes as a result of the partition between Pakistan and India. Masses of Poles left their residences in eastern Poland when it was taken over by Soviet Russia and moved into new Polish territories on the western borders ceded by Germany. Equally, millions of Germans were expelled into Germany from east Prussia, Silesia, and the Sudetenland. There were other population adjustments among Romanians, Slovaks, and Hungarians during the same time period, and these movements started even earlier with the population exchange between Turkey and Greece after the First World War.

This Arab-Israeli adjustment would have been particularly equitable since the number of Arabs leaving Israel, and Jews forced out of Arab countries was almost equal—around 700,000 people. Israel absorbed all Jewish refugees who chose to come to the country. All that would have been required was an equal gesture and treatment by the Arabs, who had ample land area and resources to receive and integrate their brethren. Unfortu-

nately, they were not willing to do so, and thus the Palestinians remain until this very day the only large group of refugees from World War II and its aftermath who continue to be homeless and unwanted.

Even at this late stage, there will eventually be no other solution than the acceptance and integration of the Palestinian refugees into more than twenty Arab independent states, many of which in the meantime have become immensely rich due to their oil wealth.

Final Departure

During our nervous waiting period, both Herbert and Cora Goold knew how to maintain our morale. I never had to ask about the progress in the visa matter. Mr. Goold always broached the subject by himself, knowing very well that it was uppermost in our minds. He always assured us that he was watching the matter personally.

In the meantime, again upon his suggestion, I was preparing the next and all-important step after the issuance of the visas . . . transportation. By that time, it was 1941, and trans-Atlantic shipping was becoming scarcer every day. The only port of exit left was Lisbon, and passage from there was at a premium. The transit from Casablanca to Lisbon, however, was not as difficult to obtain.

Fortunately we succeeded in booking passage on a Portuguese boat leaving Lisbon for New York in the middle of May. We kept hoping that our visas would arrive by that time.

One morning, by the middle of April, Herbert Goold phoned and suggested that both my mother and I appear in his office, bringing with us whatever papers and documents we had in our possession. We were there before he could finish the sentence. The immigration visas had arrived, and they were solemnly stamped into our temporary travel documents. We were deeply moved, but, in typical Goold fashion, he did not give us time to express our gratitude. He complimented us out

of his office with the admonition to secure passage to Lisbon as quickly as possible.

We were able to obtain reservations, with the departure date set for a week later. We needed exit visas, but, with genuine United States immigration permits and the assistance of a friendly French official, that did not pose too much of a problem.

We said goodbye to the many friends we had made in Casablanca and were ready to leave. The Goolds, in their infinite kindness, took us aboard the ship to make sure that no last-minute obstacles would interfere with our departure.

Last Exit from Europe—Lisbon

After wartime France and North Africa, Lisbon seemed to us a city of light and affluence. As a neutral capital, it was catered to by all belligerents and presented—superficially at least—the aspect of an oasis of tranquility. Shops were well stocked, coffeehouses and restaurants offered wide varieties of food and drink, and people were very friendly.

We stayed only two weeks, waiting for our transatlantic "liner," but it was sufficient time to note that, under the placid surface, Lisbon was overrun by agents and informers from all possible countries and governments, thus well deserving its title—at that time—of the "spy capital of the world."

Lisbon was full of refugees of all nationalities, waiting desperately for ever-harder-to-get passage out of Europe. We met some people we had known in Vienna and Paris and hoped to see again in the States. The day before our departure—our funds had meanwhile shrunk to practically zero—I received a loan of fifty dollars from a Belgian friend, enabling us to start life in America on a more "opulent" basis.

The boat was a Portuguese freighter of about 3000 tons loaded with cork. This meant that it was floating unpleasantly on top of the waves, but otherwise it was clean and the crew and officers pleasant and understanding.

I became violently seasick from the moment of our departure

until we arrived. My mother, on the other hand, withstood the rolling and waving as if she had been a descendant of Phoenician or Hebrew sailors and explorers. We stopped for a day on the beautiful Portuguese island of Madeira, and thus I was able to recuperate for twenty-four hours. I was positive I could not survive another ten days of continuous seasickness and flirted publicly with the idea of settling permanently in some isolated spot on Madeira. The problem was solved when I visited the grave of Kaiser Karl, the last Hapsburg monarch, who is buried in Madeira. Undoubtedly instigated by my mother, the Captain of our ship, with whom we had become very friendly, appeared with a few of his burly sailors, and they literally carried me back on board ship.

Arrival in New York

In the latter part of May 1941, we landed in New York on one of the last ships that had left Lisbon. I wrote articles and lectured extensively on Morocco and North Africa, which had become more and more newsworthy at that point of the war.

In March 1943, I took a job with the newly formed Office of War Information (OWI). Proudly I informed Herbert Goold, that I too had started working for "our" government. I promptly received an answer with his good wishes and a promise that he would see me in the not-too-distant future.

I was working on the overnight shift in New York in the old Argonaut Building at 224 West 57th Street, which had been taken over by the OWI. One night unannounced, a gentleman casually entered—Herbert Goold. He had just returned from Casablanca and wanted to say hello to—as he said—an "old colleague."

I never left government service. I served during the war with OWI in New York and London and SHAEF (Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces) in Luxembourg, and Berlin. Right after the war, I entered the Foreign Service in the information field, and in addition to Washington, I spent the

next thirty years in Munich, Bonn, Rome, La Paz, and Caracas. It was a long and fascinating career, and I was deeply appreciative of this unique opportunity.

I also never lost contact with Herbert Goold. Our friendship and my gratitude have spanned many decades. He retired and settled in Washington. The last time my wife and I saw him for lunch was in 1968 at his favorite place, the Army and Navy Club, when we were on home leave from our post in Caracas. It never ceased to be a source of great satisfaction to him that, after he had made it possible for me to get to the United States, I followed in his footsteps and joined the Foreign Service he had loved so much. For me, he and his wife, Cora, have always been, and will forever remain, the incarnation of the "wonderful" Americans.

1945 Victory—Return to Vienna

In August 1945, I returned to Vienna in American uniform. I was by then stationed in Luxembourg, the seat of Radio Luxembourg, SHAEF's main radio station. My job was to supervise all multilanguage broadcasts directed to the foreign workers forcibly brought to Germany as slaves for Hitler's war machine and, after the liberation, to the millions of displaced persons.

The war was over, the Nazis beaten. I was fortunate also to have been in Paris in May on that unforgettably joyful day of Germany's unconditional surrender. Five years earlier, in 1940, I had escaped the Nazis a second time by getting out of France to Morocco.

The Russians had entered Vienna already in the spring of 1945. Like Germany, Austria was divided into four zones—Russian, American, British, and French. The American Zone included Salzburg and Upper Austria with Linz. There, American troops were poised for the drive into Vienna, awaiting the moment the political signal would be given. The negotiations with the Russians, however, dragged on for months, and Vienna continued to be under exclusive Russian occupation.

From Luxembourg, I followed all these developments tensely. It was my greatest desire to participate in the American move into Vienna. Along with another German-speaking associate also stationed in Luxembourg, I devised a scheme that we believed would succeed—and it did. We convinced our commanding officer, a colonel from Philadelphia, to issue us orders to Linz to report on displaced persons' camps in the American

Zone. We had, earlier, already visited Innsbruck and Ebensee, a liberated concentration camp in the Salzburg area and had also traveled to and reported on displaced persons' repatriation activities in Germany. These reports were then broadcast over Radio Luxembourg in different language programs.

Our impressive SHAEF orders and the relaxed and jubilant mood of the moment helped to induce the brigadier general in charge in Linz to issue us another set of orders with the magic stamp "cleared for Vienna."

We were among the first vehicles in a convoy slowly moving toward Vienna. Coming from the West, we passed St. Poelten and finally got to Mauer, at the outskirts of Vienna. The officers and soldiers in our column seemed very impressed and pleased by the friendly welcome received in the small towns we passed. I was less overwhelmed—seven years ago I had witnessed in Salzburg the frenetic and almost hysterical enthusiasm of the Austrians when Hitler's cohorts marched in and sealed Austria's fate for what seemed then "a thousand years."

I frankly admit that, when we reached Mariahilf, my *Bezirk* (district), I was in a state of deep emotion. Scenes and events, memories of my parents, friends, and relatives, the most conflicting feelings of pain and triumph—flashed as if on a screen before my eyes. On an impulse, I told our driver to get out of our line of vehicles and to drive in the direction of the Garbergasse, where I had lived with my parents. He thought that I had lost my senses and that we should never find our way back to the convoy. I tried nervously to explain the situation to him—but I did not quite succeed.

Vienna was deserted. The deadness and stillness of the city was a shocking first impression. We stopped at the very center of town—Ringstrasse and Kaerntnerstrasse—and for minutes not a single human being could be seen. The reasons for this phenomenon were manifold. Before the arrival of the Russians, a considerable number of Viennese had fled into the other zones of Austria and hesitated to return. Also, there was hardly any

transportation available. Many Viennese soldiers of the German army taken prisoners by the Allied armies, though already demobilized, were equally reluctant to repatriate to Vienna. And—except for food shops, operating a couple of hours a day, few others were open. . . . They had nothing to sell.

The city was much less destroyed that we had been led to believe. Of course, this was a highly relative judgment and correct only if Vienna was compared to other devastated German cities like Mainz, Nueremberg or Pforzheim. Some Viennese areas, like the Franz Josephs Kai and the Prater, Vienna's popular amusement center, were completely in ruins but in others the damage was fairly restricted. A visual reason why the destruction did not appear as shattering as in the bombed-out cities of Germany was that many buildings, like the Opera, had been burned out from the inside, and their facades were still standing.

Vienna was divided, like Berlin, into American, British, French, and Russian sectors. It was ironical that the Leopoldstadt and Brigittenau, the two districts that used to contain the heaviest concentration of Jews, should have come under Russian jurisdiction. It did not make much difference; there were hardly any Jews left.

The central district of Vienna, the *Innere Stadt*, was supposed to be an "International Sector." Since, however, the Russians had been in Vienna first, they were practically masters there and continued to occupy most of the famous hotels. The tradition-minded Viennese seemed to take it very much to heart that the world-famous Hotel Imperial, with its memories of Hapsburg glory, was now a Russian headquarters building. It was only later that the Americans got the Hotel Bristol as their officers' billet, and a long time had to pass till the Russians freed the Imperial.

There was no demarcation line between the different sectors in Vienna, and people could walk freely from one district to another without ever being stopped. Nevertheless, quite a few Viennese avoided visiting the parts of the city "belonging" to the Russians.

Vienna seemed to have become a Babel of languages. There

were few Viennese in the city, but innumerable "occupiers" or "liberators." English, French, and Russian could be heard everywhere. In addition, all Allied nations had their missions or representatives already in place.

After a few hours of hesitation, Viennese started to talk to us. They were quick to tell their stories of damage from the Allied air raids and mistreatment during the months of Russian occupation. I told them that I was Jewish and that, whatever they had suffered, at least they were very much alive and able to report it. I, however, was looking for family and friends and could find none. The answers were smug and almost uniform: *"Ein einfacher Mann wie ich hat damit nichts zu tun gehabt,"* or a more bold *"Ich war schon immer dagegen gewesen."* ("A simple man like myself had nothing to do with it." Or, "I had always been against it" meaning the Nazi system).

Many Viennese also seemed suddenly to discover a Jewish grandmother, hoping that this mythical ancestor would bring them as much luck as a real Jewish grandmother would have brought misfortune just a short time earlier.

During our jeep rides all over the city, we were stopped almost continuously by young and old people who inquired whether we would be willing to pass on messages to the outside world, since communications were non-existent. More often, however, people wanted to trade their possessions—meager or opulent—for food, coffee, tea, and cigarettes. A black market of considerable proportions flourished quite openly in front of the Karlskirche in the very heart of town. Viennese from all walks of life could be seen there mingling with Russian soldiers and civilians who had brought food to Vienna from Russian-occupied lower Austria. Watches seemed to exert a particular fascination and assumed an almost official currency status.

The food scarcity was undoubtedly very stringent and worse than in German cities. On the other hand, the housing situation was of less pressing urgency than in the occupied cities of Germany, since, in Vienna, there was less destruction and less population.

One of the requests for passing on a message was particularly touching. A girl who had overheard us speaking German told us her story. She was a *Mischling,* which meant, in the Nazi parlance, half-Jewish and half-Gentile. She was trying desperately to send a letter to her Jewish father, who had managed to get to Australia in 1938. She had remained with her mother in Vienna. We met her mother later in the evening and heard all the tales of humiliation she and her daughter had had to suffer for being *versippt* (related) to a Jew. A week later I was able to send a message to Australia and thus to establish the contact that eventually led to family reunification in Australia.

A number of newspapers were again available in Vienna. They represented the three authorized political parties: the Social-Democrats, the Christian Socialists, and the Communists. The Red Army published a paper, and a few weeks later the American forces came out with the *Wiener Kurier.* It became so popular that it eventually was transferred to Austrian ownership. It remains even today one of the most widely read Austrian dailies.

The university had functioned without interruption since the Russians, after their entry, had authorized the continuation of university activities after a rather cursory "denazification" process.

Many theaters were performing though very much on a makeshift basis. The Opera and the Burg Theater, because of the heavy damage to their buildings had had to move to provisional quarters, but the Volkstheater and the theater in the Josephstadt were playing in their old but rather shabby-looking homes.

Many of the coffeehouses were still closed, which added to the strange stillness of Vienna. However, some of the more famous ones, with their pretty sidewalks, had reopened and were serving an almost undrinkable brew, which they called *Ersatz Kaffee.* Newspapers, however, were available at no charge for the customers to read, though they too gave very much the impression of *Ersatz.*

There had been 200,000 Jews in Vienna on March 11, 1938, the day of the Anschluss. A rough estimate counted 5,000 by the end of August 1945, when I got to Vienna.

Two to three thousand were Jews who were married to gentile partners and had been able to stay on under very precarious conditions. Some survivors had trickled back from Theresienstadt and a few more from other camps.

It was also thought that about 800 Jews had succeeded in hiding from the Nazis and living through the long years of Nazi rule. They were called "U-boats," because they had managed somehow to submerge themselves within the city. Some of their stories sounded almost incredible—but were true. One woman, for instance, related that she had been hidden throughout the entire period by a Nazi family. They were typically Viennese Nazis who did not mind the persecution of all Jews—except the one they happened to like. After a few months, however, the situation became too dangerous, and they wanted to get rid of the poor Jewish woman. In her despair, she started to "blackmail" her Nazi "friends." She told them that, if they delivered her to the Gestapo, not only she would be put into a concentration camp but so would her Nazi "protectors," since it was a crime to aid and hide Jews. Thus the Nazi family had no choice but to continue hiding her till the downfall of the Nazi regime.

The acute food shortage in Vienna made the situation very perilous for the few Jewish survivors with their diminished resistance. Because of the administrative and transportation difficulties, the Jewish welfare agencies had hardly begun their activities. A few weeks later, there were dramatic improvements when the Jewish-American aid organizations were finally able to operate in Vienna.

One of the many moving stories I was told was that the few Jews who found themselves already in Vienna at the beginning of July assembled for the once-traditional visit to the grave of Theodor Herzl. This in itself was testimony to the almost unanimous desire of the surviving Jews to leave Vienna as quickly as possible. Though the "official" entry into Palestine remained

closed, this last pitiful remnant of Viennese Jewry departed Vienna within the next couple of years—by unorthodox methods to Palestine or by receiving visas to the United States or other Western countries. The present small Jewish community was then formed by waves of new refugees from neighboring Communist countries.

I had left the United States early in 1944, on an assignment from the Office of War Information, to London. The tide of the war had changed and hopes were high that victory would be won sooner or later. Before leaving New York, many of my old friends gave me instructions whom to look for—if I ever made it to Vienna.

I made it to Vienna and I looked—and how I looked. I went to every place for which an address had been given me. I went to every house in which my uncles, aunts, cousins, and friends had lived. I visited all the old landmarks, the cafes, the university, the *Realgymnasium* I went to for eight years, the park I used to play in.

The only thing that was to be learned was the location to which people had been deported. The Gestapo in its cruelty, but with German precision, had carefully noted the "changes of address" at its central register at police headquarters. With diabolical irony they put it this way: *"Herr oder Frau . . . abgemeldet nach Minsk oder Theresienstadt."* *"Abgemeldet"* means "changed residence to. . . ."

Of all the innumerable people I searched for, I was fortunate to find the mother of a fraternity brother who had survived by luck and incredible courage. She had lived as one of the "U-Boats," as an "Aryan" with an assumed identity. The only other person I could locate was the gentile girl friend of another of my fraternity associates—she had helped many in our group in their darkest hour.

I stayed about a week in Vienna. We were housed in a requisitioned hotel in the Josephstaedterstrasse, near the Reinhardt Theatre. I walked through the streets of Vienna as if in a

fog. Faces looked familiar to me—they were Viennese faces. But not once did I run into anyone I had ever known.

Many excellent books, essays and articles have been written about "homecomings" to Vienna or Berlin, to Bruenn or Prague, or a little *Shtetl* in Poland. Everybody's reaction to his individual "homecoming" was highly personal, different one from the other—but all equally respectable.

It was heady stuff for me to return to Vienna with the American army as a "victor," after having left seven years earlier as a persecuted refugee without a country, a *Schilling*, or a dollar to his name. But I had to discover very soon that for me there was no "homecoming" possible to this city that had driven out all its Jews.

In the course of my Foreign Service career I traveled through Vienna, as I do now on my way to or from Israel. I can admire the beauty of Vienna and its surroundings. I love to visit all the places that have played such a role in my life—but I could not call Vienna "home" anymore.

Part V

Encounters with and around Viennese

In London . . .

In the spring of 1943, I was at the beginning of my U.S. Government career, working for the Office of War Information (OWI), under Elmer Davis.

The OWI was a typical wartime agency, quickly organized to answer the urgent need for an American outlet that would inform the world and particularly captive Europe and the enemy nations, about America's war effort and war aims. The term "propaganda" had always had a bad connotation in American political terminology and was, therefore, avoided.

The OWI included press and publishing operations, but its main arm was radio broadcasting in many languages. The organization grew by leaps and bounds and quickly had to absorb major staff increases. There was no sufficient pool of qualified language personnel available among American citizens, and this opened the way for large-scale employment of wartime Hitler refugees. The sudden mixture of native Americans from all corners of the continent with recently arrived Germans, Austrians, Czechs, French, and dozens of other nationalities provided for a unique blend of colorful personalities, contrasting temperaments, differing political opinions, and continuous explosions of enthusiasm, anger and sometimes intrigues. This true Babel of languages caused occasional confusions of gigantic proportions. It will be to the credit of Elmer Davis, a great radio and newspaperman, and his talented assistants, to have welded such divergent groups and individuals into an efficient organization.

The Voice of America and the United States Information Agency (USIA) are successors of OWI. For years many of the OWI staffers played leading roles in these peacetime organizations, as they did in the military government operations in Europe and the Far East.

I started out with a minor job, which was also reflected in a very minor salary. Still, I was more than happy, since it permitted, though on a small and limited scale, participation in the war effort. In addition, I was hopeful that I would not stay for too long in my lowly assignment.

This first job consisted of monitoring our own OWI multilanguage broadcasts for accuracy and non-deviation from the basic English-language model. Since OWI was broadcasting twenty-four hours a day, the monitors were working in three shifts and were assigned to their jobs according to their language ability. Occasionally, we would also be required to listen to BBC broadcasts to inform our superiors whether the information approaches of the British and American governments were parallel or required better coordination.

My midnight-to-8:00 A.M. schedule was a bit tiring, but lightened by innumerable cups of coffee, good camaraderie, and, above all, by looking forward to a fabulous breakfast in the nearby 57th Street cafeteria where, after a long night, vast amounts of delicious french toast and scrambled eggs were served at ridiculous prices.

As OWI expanded, new languages were added to its programs. Thus, eventually we also had a Chinese on our staff. He was very isolated, simply by the fact that he spoke only broken English, and the rest of us were ignorant of his classical Chinese.

After a few months, OWI moved to a building around the corner, and we noticed that "our" Chinese was missing. We searched everywhere—in vain. The man had disappeared. A nice, juicy spy story seemed in the offing. The police were notified, but, a day later, the matter was clarified. A caller from a General Motors agency, which had taken over our previous space, inquired, whether by any chance we were missing "a Chinese." The caller said that such a person had been sitting in

their offices, and they could not make him leave the premises. The General Motors man added that the Chinese might belong to us, since he had seen many "strange characters" in our "group." We immediately sent a "platoon" to liberate our Chinese from his General Motors captivity, and, for the first time, we saw a smile brighten the old man's face.

Among the BBC broadcasts that I was looking forward to monitoring was a general political commentary by a George Weiden. It was well composed, soundly reasoned, and presented by the author himself in the King's English. As I had hoped, I soon left the ranks of the monitors and thus lost contact with Mr. Weiden's broadcasts.

In the spring of 1944, our administrative officer called me into his office and showed me a request from our office in London asking for my assignment there as Deputy Chief of ABSIE (American Broadcasting Station in Europe). ABSIE had been created a few months earlier to provide an American station that could broadcast from a base much nearer to the war and to our target areas. Mr. Templeton Peck, a former and later editor of the *San Francisco Chronicle,* had been put in charge of that office. He knew me—it seemed to me only slightly—by having been my boss in my post-monitoring job at OWI. I could not believe that this offer, coming out of the blue, was really serious. However, the telegram did specifically request me, and no alternate was mentioned.

The fact that I was not as yet an American citizen did not seem to perturb our admistrative officer unduly. For him, anyone working in an American outfit was by definition an American. In any event, I promised a reply by the next morning.

I discussed the offer with my mother, who agreed with me that this was wartime, and an American request for service in London in a responsible position had to be accepted. For my mother, it meant, however, that she would have to remain alone in New York for an as-yet-undertermined length of time.

The next morning, the telegram went out that Schechter

would appear in London within two weeks. No sooner was the decision made, when difficulties started to present themselves. Legally, I was a man without a country and, above all, without a passport. I needed a travel document, official orders, and, most important, a British visa. Well, this was America, and these were exceptional times. Within a few days, I received a makeshift document that identified me as a former Austrian citizen, a British visa, and travel orders assigning me for duty to ABSIE in London. I was flown to Prestwick, in Scotland, in a bomber adapted with highly unconventional seating arrangements for the transportation of personnel. I doubt, however, whether the flight was any more uncomfortable than a fully filled jumbo jet of today.

The real trouble started upon my arriving on British soil. All American travelers on our plane left immediately by train for London, but I was delayed by British immigration authorities as an "enemy alien." Because of Austria's absorption into Germany, Austrians during the war were considered "enemy aliens" in England. Fortunately, the military airport authorities contacted the American Embassy for verification, and, in the morning, an Embassy official appeared, having gotten approval by the British home office in a hurry, and took me to London.

A few weeks later, at a coordinating meeting with BBC officials, I was introduced to a gentleman by the name of George Weiden. I immediately remembered him as my favorite BBC commentator from my monitoring days in New York and told him so. A few minutes of chatting was sufficient for him to detect my accent. He switched languages and, in pure Viennese, said: *"Wir sind doch aus der gleichen Stadt. Mein richtiger Name ist Georg Weidenfeld, Weiden klingt nur besser am Radio."* (We are from the same city. My real name is Georg Weidenfeld; Weiden just sounds better on the radio.)

It was unbelievable—Weiden had no trace of an accent after having lived in England just a few short years. We had a long conversation and discovered a somewhat similar background. He too had been, in Vienna, a member of a Zionist student fraternity.

Broadcaster George Weiden made an admirable career in England, and England was by no means open to foreigners as was the United States. After the war, he became Weidenfeld again, and partner in Nicholsen and Weidenfeld, one of the leading British publishing houses. Today, he is Sir George and a highly respected figure in public life.

It is generally agreed that the persecuted and haunted Hitler refugees were rather successful in building a new life in their respective new countries. The United States, an open society and a traditional haven for newcomers, offered particular opportunities. But these refugees, and so many Viennese among them, have done equally well in the pioneering environment of Israel, the more structured society of Great Britain, in Australia, in Canada, and in Latin American countries. They have advanced in the professions like medicine and law; they have become university professors, scientists, writers, publishers, and businessmen. They have made extraordinary contributions to the arts and to music. These people, cruelly evicted from their countries, had to start from scratch again and, more often than not, readapt and readjust to a completely new career—all this in strange cultures and languages and under depressing financial and economic conditions. Their wives deserve special admiration and gratitude, since they were often the first to earn some money for basic needs.

This story of the European, mostly Jewish, refugees is a unique example in the history of forced migrations. These people reached their future homelands battered and beaten and, nevertheless, were able to redirect their lives, not just for their children, the traditional "second generation," but for themselves as well.

It is a saga of overcoming implacable enemies and adversities with the old Jewish weapon of believing in the future. And the adversities included, above everything else, the ever-present memory of parents, brothers, sisters, children, families, and friends lost in the catastrophe that engulfed a whole generation of Jews.

London in 1944 was the time of the German V1 and V2 rockets, and their explosions were a highly unpleasant experience. However, people took it with a great deal of courage and relative indifference, because the end of the war seemed in sight. There was a feeling that victory's ultimate triumph and the doom of Nazism were inevitable. Though none knew where and when it would happen, the big invasion of the continent was on everyone's mind. It was a time of extraordinary expectations, and, therefore, it was easier to sustain momentary hardships and suffer through the nightly destruction.

At the end of 1944 I was transferred from London to Radio Luxembourg, and, after the German unconditional surrender, I moved on to Berlin, the city of a temporary and highly fragile "coexistence" with the Russians. I was given the task of setting up an American-controlled radio station and thus came into operation RIAS (Radio in the American Sector), which continues its broadcasts until this very day.

In Munich . . .

One of the main tasks of the military government in Germany in the immediate postwar years was the cleansing of press and radio from the Nazi past, thus enabling them to develop into integral parts of the hoped-for new democratic system in Germany.

I was put in charge of Radio München (Munich), the main radio station for Bavaria. I had three American assistants—the remaining staff were Germans, who had to be recruited among the few surviving veterans of the pre-Nazi period, young amateurs who had to be trained overnight, and some people who had returned from exile.

Our working methods progressed from strict pre-broadcast censorship at the very beginning, to post-broadcast scrutiny and ultimate transfer of the radio stations into German hands, after a basic law was passed, assuring freedom of broadcasting and guaranteeing independence from government interference.

Munich, like all other major cities in Germany, was half-destroyed. Walking today through the beautiful inner city with its elegant streets and shops, it is hard to imagine the ruins and rubble of those days.

I had seen Munich for the first time in 1945 when I entered Dachau—a few kilometers outside Munich—shortly after its liberation. After close to forty years, those horror scenes are still indelibly imprinted on my memory. I talked to people who tried to whisper something to me, and, when I asked them to repeat what they had said, they died. These haunting pictures of Dachau accompanied me to my assignment in Munich in the spring of 1947.

I stayed in Germany almost six years, three of these years in Munich, and, when our embassy was established in Bonn, I was transferred there. My mother joined me the moment housing was available and dependents could be accommodated.

It is impossible to portray today the working methods of that wild and unprecedented period. All depended on initiative and intuition. Instructions and orders were issued in the most general terms, such as "Replace all Nazis with democratic elements. . . ." It sounded good, but how to implement it in a country which had been, for twelve years, under the most dictatorial regime of all times? Every employee, even the most minor one, at a newspaper, publishing house, or radio station had to be a party member, and "democratic elements," even non-Jewish, had ended up in gas chambers, concentration camps, or, at best, in exile and banishment.

We did find some older people untainted by Nazism for the top positions, and slowly built up a good staff of younger men and women eager to fit into the new times. Occasionally, a Nazi managed to infiltrate, despite rigorous screening processes, just as we detected Russian agents who posed as refugees from the Russian occupied zone. Sooner or later, they were usually caught.

Today, the media, radio stations, their television offspring,

and the newspapers, have become a mainstay of democratic Germany. It was a great American success story, unfortunately not sufficiently known and certainly not sufficiently appreciated.

As part of the "democratization" process, we tried to acquaint listeners of Radio Munich with the literary and artistic developments in the free world during the long night of the Nazi regime. Part of this effort was to facilitate the reappearance of writers and intellectuals who had had to flee Germany. They were invited to lecture or give readings from their works. Musicians and composers were asked to perform at special concerts of the Radio Munich Orchestra.

One of my particular interests was also to invite Austrian writers and musicians. Thus, we were able to assist some of those artists who, after the war, had decided to return to Vienna. They had emigrated at an age where adaptation to a different artistic climate, or writing in a foreign language proved impossible, and they were eager to gain a larger German audience.

When I heard that Robert Stolz, the greatest living Austrian operetta composer, had returned to Vienna from New York, I wrote him, suggesting he direct the Radio Munich orchestra in a series of concerts of his compositions. He accepted with pleasure, and we arranged the date and all the details.

I had never met Robert Stolz before, but, like every Viennese, I had been brought up with his music and admired his Lieder and operettas. His art seemed inseparable from Austria, and it was hard to believe that Robert Stolz, non-Jewish, had left Vienna almost immediately after the Nazis took over. Just like Marlene Dietrich, he refused to return, despite all enticements by Dr. Goebbels. He went to New York, lived on Central Park West, and continued to be the great Robert Stolz, but he was never able to transplant the Austrian musical atmosphere to New York. He loved the United States, the country that had given him hospitality—but, when the war ended, he felt he had to return to Vienna.

When my mother and I met with Robert Stolz and his wife at the Munich railroad station, he looked exactly as I remembered him from photographs taken years earlier—tall, erect, hand-

some, charming. Einzi, his wife, whom he had met and married in Paris on his way to New York, was much younger—pretty, vivacious, and obviously in command of the details of the "expedition." Robert Stolz broke the ice immediately, and, when we had a drink later in the evening in our house, it seemed as if we had known each other for many years.

Stolz's concerts were a huge success. He seemed to incorporate in his person and his music the qualities—without the shortcomings—of the mythical Vienna, its glitter, its elegance, and lightheadedness. I began to appreciate equally Einzi and what she meant to Robert Stolz. We talked about his past and the days of old Vienna. I realized only then that his roots went back deep into the last century.

One evening, after he had offered me the familiar "*Du*" of friendship, I asked him why he had left his Vienna and with it, all the glory, the fame, and the good life that only this city could give him. He answered with disarming simplicity that it was certainly not an easy decision, but that he truly hated the Nazis and all they stood for and could not visualize remaining under their "*fuchtel*" (whip). He added with a wry smile that he wished only that all his Jewish friends—and for that matter, all Viennese Jews—had had the same foreboding about Hitler as he had. With a typical Stolz gesture, in an attempt not to look heroic or grave, he leaned toward Einzi and said, "The main reason, of course, was that, had I not left Vienna, I would not have found her. . . ."

I always suspected that Stolz's friendship for me was nothing but a byproduct of his sympathy for my mother. They got along famously from the very first moment, and Stolz was gracious and gallant toward her. They literally could outcharm each other.

During my stay in Germany, I visited Vienna from time to time. My mother, whenever Munich and, later, Bonn became a little too depressing, used to join the remnants of our family in easily reachable Paris or Nice and occasionally in Israel. On the way to or from Israel, she would stay over for a few days in Vienna.

One day, we were both together in Vienna and we went with Robert, who in the meantime had been elevated to a professor, and Einzi to a *Heurigen* in Grinzing. His entry could have been a scene out of one of his operettas. The music stopped for a moment of greeting and changed immediately into one of his popular tunes. People at the crowded tables stood up and applauded enthusiastically. Stolz acknowledged the reverence with a friendly gesture and asked everybody to sit down and have a good time. He was the king of Viennese music; he knew it and so did his "subjects."

I have been a collector of mementos, letters, and odds and ends all my life. Twice, in the course of my wanderings, I lost all of them, but I have always started collecting again. Thus, I do have some letters from Robert Stolz in my possession. I cherish particularly a handwritten note he left at my mother's hotel during one of her visits to Vienna. In his meticulous, clear writing and somewhat old-fashioned style, he invited the *"hochverehrte gnadige Frau"* (deeply revered lady) to "give him the honor" and come to the Stolz home for coffee and *"einen gemuetlichen Plausch"* (a relaxed chat). His was the courtesy of a time long past.

Another, much later, letter, dated January 10, 1970, and addressed to Caracas, where I was stationed at that time, informed me about his activities such as an impending departure for Berlin for a number of recordings. He added casually that he would celebrate his ninetieth birthday on August 25!

Stolz had a wonderful apartment in the heart of Vienna in the Elisabethstrasse. He found it unharmed after returning from New York. A Nazi official had lived there but—unbelievably—had not touched its contents. During the first few months of Russian occupation after the war, a high Russian officer had had the apartment assigned to him. Apparently, he was a music lover, and he too had kept it in meticulous shape and order. In the last years of his life, Einzi and Robert moved to their new home in Grinzing on the Himmelstrasse.

Robert Stolz died shortly before his ninety-fifth birthday in 1975. He was born in 1880, at a time when the old monarchy and its lifestyle seemed destined to live on forever.

After his death, Vienna honored him lavishly. There is a Robert Stolz square and a statue in Vienna's center. Beautiful memorial stamps were issued in his honor by the Austrian post office. He surely deserved all these tributes. However, it cannot be forgotten that Vienna, which received Hitler's entry with such enthusiasm, thus also became the city that caused a man like Stolz to leave it voluntarily.

I still have the pleasure of seeing Einzi Stolz when I am in Vienna. She has devoted her life to maintaining her husband's memory and artistic heritage. A walk with her through Vienna's inner city is a typical Viennese spectacle. Waiters, newspaper vendors, flower girls, and taxi drivers greet her with a friendly *"Guten Abend Kuees die Hand, Frau Professor, wie geht's immer. . . ."* (Good evening, kiss your hand, Mrs. Professor. How are you these days. . . .)

Thus, Robert Stolz, truly the last representative of the Kaiser's old empire, lives on in today's Vienna.

In Rome . . .

In May 1958, I was assigned to Rome, and we stayed there for almost six years.

We loved Rome, and we were happy in Italy, not only because of the beauty of the city and its very likable people, not only because I had an excellent and interesting job, but also because my wife and I went there a month after getting married. A year later, our son was born and lived his first five years as a real *"Romano di Roma"* (a Roman born in the city).

Prior to going to Rome, I had spent four years in Washington. These had been good years, but, in April 1957, I lost my beloved mother. When I stood at her grave and recited the Kaddish (prayer for the dead), I knew that my friends all over the world mourned her with me. It will be to my everlasting sorrow that my mother never knew my wife and never held her grandson in her arms.

I had met my future wife in the fall of 1957 in New York,

at the United Nations, where she worked for many years. We were sitting, by chance, together, listening to one of Abba Eban's brilliant speeches to the General Assembly. It is my belief that my wife has always felt a bit uneasy that even this happy coincidence, which after all led to our marriage, did not diminish the wide political gap that separated me from Abba Eban.

Eventually I was informed that my transfer to Rome was to become a reality. I was an old bachelor, and most people had decided that I would retain that status for the rest of my life. I confounded this prognosis by asking Gerda to marry me. I "warned" her, however, that, soon after our wedding, we would have to move to Rome. Gerda said yes and agreed to Rome with surprising alacrity.

A few days later, I revealed the coming changes in my life to some of my friends at a dinner party, where my boss and his wife were also present. She was a woman experienced in the ways of Washington, and, instead of congratulating me joyfully as I expected, she said, "Ed, Viennese and particularly Viennese bachelors have the reputation of being men of the world—but you behaved like a real country hick. What woman in her right mind would not accept a marriage offer, if it is accompanied by the proviso that she live as the wife of an American diplomat in the most beautiful and attractive city of the world! You will never know whether Gerda married you or Rome. . . . Therefore," continued the lady, "If you have an ounce of intelligence in you, take the next flight to New York, rush over to Gerda, play desperate, and tell her that the Rome assignment was changed to Kabul, in Afghanistan. If she answers 'Darling, I could not care less; wherever you go, I go,' only then will you know that you have made the right decision. . . ."

I did not rush to New York. Apparently I was not in a risk-taking mood. I had by then firmly decided to do both—marry Gerda and go to Rome.

Throughout the years, innumerable friends and acquaintances showed up in Rome, particularly in spring and summer.

Our guest room was permanently occupied, and there was often hardly time to change the sheets between departures and arrivals. Since I had confessed the "Kabul story" to my wife, she put up a sign in the guest room with the following inscription: "We thank you for your visit. We are about to be transferred to Kabul, Afghanistan, and we can only hope that you will remain just as loyal and steady visitors there, as you have been in Rome. . . ."

Fortunately for us and our visitors, we stayed in Rome for quite a while, but then we were transferred to La Paz, Bolivia, a place that in terms of being a tourist attraction, can compete successfully with Kabul. We were there a full tour—two years. Not a soul showed up.

The number of private visitors in Rome, however, could not begin to compare with the continuous crush and rush of "official" guests. The Department of State and every conceivable agency of the federal government sent its emissaries. The House and the Senate, representatives, senators, and staff members had unending investigative missions to accomplish and consultants and private persons recommended by illustrious federal officials all converged on Rome in a steady stream.

Each morning at the Ambassador's staff meeting, the Administrative Counselor would start the session with a visual display of the latest six- to eight-inch high batch of official arrival notifications received overnight from Washington. He would then read the names of the expected arrivals and the purposes of their visit for the Ambassador's or the Deputy Chief of Mission's decision, which Embassy section—political, economic, and so forth—would have to assign a "control officer," whose job would be to manage the visitor and keep him happy. Volunteers were not in abundance, but everybody's turn came anyway.

One day a cable was read routinely, informing the Embassy of the arrival of Hans Kelsen, Professor at Berkeley University, who was scheduled to be honored with a high Italian decoration as a reward for important contributions to the Italian Republic in the field of constitutional law. The Embassy was asked to

assist Professor Kelsen in any way possible. I immediately raised my hand and requested to be named Professor Kelsen's "control officer." The Ambassador remarked that this particular assignment would have gone to me anyway, but he still wanted to know the reason for this outbreak of unaccustomed volunteerism.

I explained that Professor Kelsen had been my teacher at the University of Vienna when I studied at the Faculty of Law and that he had been my examiner—a very tough one I might add—at the third and final examination. I added that it would be a great honor and personal satisfaction for me to take care of Professor Kelsen during his stay in Rome. Professor Kelsen was a refugee from the Nazis as I was, and we both had built a new life and new careers in America.

The Ambassador and the staff were quite touched by the "human interest" angle of the story, and I was instructed to report back all the details of the visit and the decoration ceremony.

I phoned Professor Kelsen and talked to his wife. I introduced myself as an official of the Embassy, assigned by the Ambassador to the task of facilitating Professor Kelsen's visit. I asked for permission to call on the Professor in his hotel and to discuss with him all the necessary liaison steps to be taken in connection with his visit generally and with the forthcoming decoration ceremony. I did not mention over the phone any connection with Vienna.

I recognized Professor Kelsen immediately when I entered the hotel room. After a few minutes of polite chit-chat, I addressed him in good Viennese-accented German and told him that I had been his student in Vienna some twenty-five years ago.

Professor Kelsen had tears in his eyes and embraced me spontaneously. He called his wife and exclaimed excitedly: *"Schau her, dieser Amerikanische Diplomat ist ein Student von mir aus Wien. . . ."* (This American diplomat is a student of mine from Vienna. . . .)

A couple of days later, Professor Kelsen in a beautiful cer-

emony received his decoration from the hands of the Italian President.

I was happy and proud to represent the American Embassy. A quarter of a century earlier, both the honored and decorated Professor Kelsen and the American official attending the occasion had had to flee Vienna to save their lives.

In Bolivia . . .

After Rome, we were sent to La Paz, the capital of Bolivia. There are hardly two places as dissimilar as these two cities. Rome is at sea level; La Paz is located on a plateau 13,000 feet high, boasting the highest airport on earth. Rome is one of the great sophisticated centers of the Western world; La Paz is the capital of one of the poorest countries of Latin America, with a high rate of illiteracy and isolated by the forbidding Andes Mountains.

We decided shortly after our arrival that reminiscing about the attractions of Rome was useless and that the only sensible approach to La Paz was to enjoy it as much as possible and to become immersed in what Bolivia, a unique country in many ways, had to offer.

The altitude had its effect on some people and bothered others very little. It was unpredictable and seemed to depend on unknown factors rather than on age or sex. We saw young and vigorous Peace Corps volunteers collapse after a few minutes of the "fresh" La Paz air, and older men or women look astonished when offered oxygen as was customary with new arrivals at the airport.

Some doctors believed that the fear of the altitude was largely psychological, but the Schechter family seemed to contradict this theory. For one reason or another, I was convinced that I would not be able to take the "mountain air," but I firmly decided to collapse in dignity if that had to be the case. My wife did not even read the official reports put out by the health division of the State Department regarding the altitude and the

precautions to be taken. She could not possibly be bothered by such "nonsense." My five-year-old son sided with his mother out of principle.

I was sitting ramrod straight in the plane from Lima, Peru, to La Paz, expecting the "collapse" immediately upon deplaning. Members of my future staff were at the airport to welcome us. We started chatting, and I discovered that I was feeling great and that nothing was going to happen to me. I turned to my wife to tell her that my forebodings had been all wrong—but she and Peter looked ashen and had to sit down. They had a typical attack of *Soroche,* the altitude headache of the Andes Mountains. They recuperated quickly, and none of us had any further serious problems. We adjusted well. La Paz turned out to be a difficult but fascinating assignment, and we shall always keep a soft spot in our hearts for that complex country.

Bolivia is the classic land of extreme contrasts—in climate, nature, and people. It is hot when the sun is shining, and icy cold when the sun disappears. A stroll on the main street of La Paz could, therefore, be either a pleasant summer walk in slacks and short sleeves, or a hurried errand in almost Siberian cold, with a winter coat an absolute must.

A visit to a soccer game or any other outdoor event meant taking along two entirely different outfits. The first half-time, still played under the sun, would require an open shirt, and the second, a couple of heavy wool sweaters, blankets, and a fur hat.

Another characteristic of Bolivian soccer was that, despite the rather mediocre skill of its players, no foreign team, as high class as it might have been, could ever win in La Paz. The murderous altitude would rob the guest players of their breathing faculties, and, after a while, they could hardly move. I recall one of the top Spanish teams playing an exhibition game. In the first half-hour, it looked like a complete Bolivian debacle. As time wore on, the picture changed dramatically. The Spaniards got slower and slower till they came to a virtual standstill. The Bolivians won by a wide margin, to the great jubilation of the public. In a return engagement, in Barcelona a few months later, Boliva was beaten by an unmentionable score.

The 14,000-feet and higher *Altiplano* (high plateau) of La Paz and the mining town of Oruro give way to the milder climate of Cochabamba, which is proud of its "low" altitude, identical to that of Mexico City. Travelers to Mexico City are warned to take precautions against altitude sickness, but Cochabamba serves as a relief and rest center from the harshness of La Paz. Then there are the lowlands of Santa Cruz near the Brazilian and Paraguayan borders, and their landscape is almost tropical.

Bolivia, except for the cities, is an Indian country. Traveling by jeep across the *Altiplano,* one hears for days only the guttural sounds of Aymara, an old Indian language predating the Incas, and no Spanish at all. In Cochabamba and other parts of Bolivia, Quechua is spoken, which was the language of the Incas, and, as such, is still today the idiom of the Indians of Peru and Ecuador.

As in many other developing nations, the contrast between the relatively thin layer of educated people and the broad masses of poor and often illiterate people was striking. Undoubtedly considerable progress in the education and status of the indigenous Indian population has been achieved—but the long march to equality has hardly begun.

To experience one of the great wonders of nature and to enjoy a truly unusual travel adventure, one has to take the train from La Paz to Arica, a Chilean port on the Pacific. This mountain train, built by a British company decades ago, climbs at first a few hundred feet into the inaccessible Andes. Then, in about six hours of incredible zig-zag descent, through a landscape that must come as close to a moonscape as anything on earth, it finally reaches Arica and its semitropical location on the sea. Though this trip is really unforgettable, it is advisable only for people with a good heart and very normal blood pressure. The stewardess on the old-fashioned but very comfortable little train will serve a meal and put automatically a pill on the tray. She expects everybody to take it—it is a heart medication supposed to sustain the traveler on this unique trip.

No Bolivian on the train, or for that matter anywhere, will ever let you forget that Bolivia was robbed of its access to the

sea in the great Pacific War won by Chile at the end of the last century. Relations with Chile have been permanently strained since Chile annexed Antafagosta, Bolivia's port on the beloved Pacific Ocean. Nothing unites Bolivians, who, throughout their turbulent history and innumerable violent changes of government, have been an almost proverbially divided people, as much as their "Navy Day" when they swear never to forget Antafagosta, their *Salida al Mar* (exit to the sea).

I had mentioned earlier that all my innumerable friends and acquaintances who used to visit us regularly in Rome skipped La Paz—it just seemed not to fit into their schedules. Strangely enough, the visits—even if not at the Roman scale—were resumed at our next post in Caracas. The climate there was ideal.

The story was even more striking with official visitors; Washington delegations traditionally travel to Latin American countries, and the embassies are advised by cable of their itineraries and specific interests in order to prepare the visits. Invariably, Bolivia was included in the travel plans. In most cases, we did nothing in advance because we knew that eventually a telegram would arrive from one of the stopping-off places in Latin America, informing us that the congressman or senator in question regretted terribly to have to cancel his visit to Bolivia, but "pressure of time" or some other reason, made the visit impossible. At "the next opportunity," however. . . . The "next opportunity" rarely materialized.

A few months after our arrival in La Paz, in the summer of 1964, the relatively quiet period of a left-of-center civilian regime was broken. Rumors about preparations for a military coup started to spread and were taken very seriously by the old Bolivian hands in the Embassy. I was less concerned, since I was not as yet fully aware that a rumor about an impending military *golpe* (coup) in Bolivia was almost always already a fact.

One early November day in mid-morning, I was sitting in my office and preparing a speech I was supposed to give in the evening, when all of a sudden scattered gunfire could be heard

in the streets. The "scattered" changed to "sustained" very quickly, and through the windows one could see people running for cover.

The USIA (United States Information Agency) office I was heading was located a few blocks from the chancery. The telephone rang, and Douglas Henderson, the Ambassador, was on the phone. He had long experience in Bolivian affairs, since this was his second tour of duty in the country. Very calmly he instructed me to lock all papers in the safe, evacuate all American and Bolivian staff members, and send them in their own or Embassy cars as quickly as possible to their homes. They should stay there till further notice. I was to shut the offices tight and also to retire to the "safety" of my house.

I proceeded as told, and everything went off smoothly and without panic. The most concerned were the Bolivian employees, since they knew only too well that the sporadic revolutions were definitely more dangerous than they looked.

The cars dispersed in different directions, depending on the neighborhood our staff members lived in. Two of our Bolivian drivers must have taken a wrong turn somewhere, since suddenly we found ourselves in a *cul de sac,* facing dozens of soldiers aiming their rifles menacingly at us. As the senior officer in the "convoy," but not as yet fully conditioned to the subleties of the region, I ordered our frightened drivers to move on, so the soldiers in front of us could see that our cars bore the "CD" insignia (diplomatic tags). These traditionally protective signs would then restrain the armed men and put us beyond danger.

My Bolivian assistant, sitting near me, almost choked and politely, but with unmistakable urgency in his tone, observed: "Mr. Schechter, your orders would have been absolutely correct under other circumstances. . . . The trouble here is that these uniformed men do not know how to read, but they do know how to shoot quickly and very accurately. . . ."

We made some of the fastest U-turns ever and reached the completely deserted main street unharmed. Heavy gunfire could be heard constantly, but it was impossible to detect who was shooting at whom. We were driving very fast when I saw, at a

corner in front of us, a gentleman in a stylish coat and Homburg, waving at our approaching cars. We slowed down, and I recognized the Austrian Honorary Consul in La Paz, whom I had met earlier on a number of social occasions. He was a Viennese-Jewish refugee who had managed to get to Bolivia with his family and exchange his lawyer profession for business activities and an Austrian Honorary Consul title. There he was standing completely forlorn at a corner of La Paz's main street, in the middle of crossfire of different military factions, and waving down two diplomatic vehicles in the hope that they would give him a ride to safety. It was a spectacle that kept my colleagues breathless when we stopped and he recognized me. He lifted his hat, bowed slightly and unperturbedly, and, with an elegance which could not have been different on the Kaerntnerstrasse in Vienna, stated: *"Herr Doktor, Guten Morgen, haetten Sie noch ein Platzerl für mich, mein Wagen hat grad heute eine kleine Panne. . . ."* (Doctor, good morning, would you by any chance still have a little space for me? My car just did not work today. . . .)

I found a little *"Platzerl"* for him and brought him and all of us safely home. Thus, in the midst of a high Andean town, surrounded by an Indian-Bolivian revolution and gunfire, a strictly Viennese ceremonial approach was maintained, complete with hat-tipping and full use of appropriate titles all around.

For the celebration of the Jewish High Holidays, the Jewish refugees in La Paz assembled in a makeshift hall for worship. There was a goodly number of German Jews, but the majority presented a veritable cross section of the old Austro-Hungarian monarchy. They had been driven from their homes and by luck or accident had found at least a temporary haven in this strange and harsh land, inhabited by equally harsh but good people.

Services were improvised but very moving. Some knowledgeable members of the refugee community served as rabbis and cantors. All Jewish officers of the American Embassy were present, as were all members of the Israeli diplomatic mission.

Through the windows one could see the Ilimani, the majestic mountain peak near La Paz, covered with its eternal snow. From outside, one could hear the slow, monotonous songs of the Indians in the street. Inside, a few hundred European Jewish refugees prayed in the ancient Hebrew tongue, thanking God for their rescue and the creation of the State of Israel and tearfully lamenting the fate of their loved ones. It was an eerie, almost surrealistic and at the same time heartrending spectacle.

The Jewish community in La Paz and the small one in Cochabamba slowly disappeared. People died or moved away—mostly to Israel and the United States. But all will remember that, in those grave times, there was a small and poor corner of the world called Bolivia, which accepted a few of the persecuted.

All of us who served on the staff of the American Embassy in La Paz and others of the diplomatic community who were stationed there at the same time continue to maintain a close relationship, considering our service in La Paz as a sort of "badge of honor."

Vienna Today . . .

To the east and the north, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, two Communist countries, almost touch Vienna's city limits. "Quasi"-Communist Yugoslavia and sometimes turbulent Italy are to the south, and divided and restless Germany is nearby to the west. Only Switzerland, among Austria's neighbors, maintains its traditional posture of quiet and "normalcy."

Newspapers, radio, television, tourists, and refugees present an increasingly troublesome and restive world. But Vienna gives the visitor who understands the city, its language, and its "feel," the impression of being completely caught up in itself, hardly connected with the rest of the world.

Politically, economically, socially, and administratively Vienna, like Austria in general, has performed extraordinarily well since the chaos and near-starvation surrounding the collapse of the Nazi Reich in 1945. The force and the pace of its recovery compare favorably with the "miracles" of the rest of the free world.

In this atmosphere of general prosperity, the permanent economic crisis and the bitter civil strife of the First Republic between 1918 and 1938 have long been forgotten.

Unemployment and inflation are low. The word "strike" can be found only in a dictionary. Unrest and demonstrations are almost unknown.

Public transportation works. Buses, tramways, and subways are modern and reliable. Schwechat, Vienna's airport is probably the only international airport where passport control

takes five seconds, and the luggage is ready to be picked up when you get to the luggage carousel. But—the airport is quiet, as if flying had been discovered only recently.

Lunch and dinner are excellent and quite affordable if one does not visit the few deluxe establishments that cater to the ignorant tourist trade.

The banks function faultlessly, and the tellers might greet their customers by name. The bank personnel are even able to add and subtract when the computers are out of order. Mail service is prompt, and a reply from Vienna can be received faster than from any other place overseas.

The streets are clean, and not a piece of paper or a cigarette butt can be detected. The parks are lovingly maintained, and the flowers are fresh and radiant. Everything appears orderly, measured, unhurried, and unruffled.

But, around this seemingly idyllic, and at the same time highly competent, atmosphere hangs a feeling of unreality. The Viennese are well informed—the news coming over the media is the same as anywhere else—but it sounds different in Vienna. It has a distant and unconcerned character, like stories about happenings on another planet. Viennese reaction to unrest, turbulence, war threats, revolutions, terror, and crime is as detached as if all these nasty events were much too far removed to be taken seriously.

Some people call Vienna an "oasis," some the *Insel der Seligen* (island of the blessed, or happy, ones). My definition is rather that Vienna has, at least for the time being, chosen to resign its membership in the "club" of the contemporary world.

The price to be paid for all this relative peacefulness is not small. Life is quiet—but also unexciting. At 10:00 P.M., not only the streets, but also restaurants and cafes, are empty, except for an hour or so when people returning from the theater or the opera visit some of the popular cafes in the center of town. Nightlife is provincial and frequented mostly by visitors from the Iron Curtain countries.

The *Heurigen,* always crowded, are certainly fun, but the mood is not exuberant—nothing seems really exuberant in Vienna.

Crime and violence have not been eradicated in Vienna. They do exist, and terror has not spared the city. There was an attack on OPEC; there was a kidnapping case; and there was a cowardly assault on the old synagogue in the Seitenstettengasse. There were even incidents of wanton vandalism, such as when the restaurants and cafes on the Kobenzl and Kahlenberg were destroyed. They had been dear to generations of Viennese who had loved to make excursions there to enjoy the fresh air of the Wienerwald and the incomparable panorama of the city.

But, whatever these and other happenings indicate, violence is less endemic, crime is less a fixture of daily life than in the big cities of the United States or Western Europe. Rape is not part of Vienna's daily scenario, and people actually walk home at night from a theater, movie, or coffeehouse, and the chances are excellent that nothing will happen to them. Even the criminals prefer to sit at home at night and watch television.

The unique Austrian cultural tradition is certainly alive. The Kunsthistorische Museum (gallery of art) stands in all its glory protected by Empress Maria Theresa's monument and proudly presents its Breughels and other treasures. The opera and the philharmonic orchestra are still first class, but not the world's best as once upon a time. The theater scene, though solid and good, is not as vibrant and innovative as in London, Paris, or New York. There are critics who state that even in the German *Sprachraum* (territories where German is spoken), theatres in Munich, Berlin, or Zuerich might today outrank Vienna's famous ensembles.

The university, in its exterior appearance and its basic curriculum, has hardly changed since 1938. The famous Viennese medical school never recovered from the loss of its many talented and famous Jewish practitioners.

There is a truly striking difference between the Vienna between the two world wars—with its poverty and chronic unemployment, but extraordinary cultural vitality and innovative intellectual spirit—and the present-day solid economic well-being sprinkled with a good dose of provincialism.

The inner city continues to be beautiful, even imperial, but

the people look somewhat unsophisticated in their dress and attitude, and the once-proverbial Viennese chic and easy elegance is hard to find. The shop windows are decent but not original—except the *Delikatessengeschaefte* and *Konditoreien* (delis and bakeries), which are sensational and apt to break the resistance of the most confirmed dieter.

The newly created pedestrian zones in Vienna are admirable in many ways. They give people the run of the center of town, rather than encouraging an ever-increasing and strangling traffic. As usual, however, there is another side to the story. People come in droves from the outer districts to stroll and to shop. As a consequence, the level of the customary elegance of the shops on the Kaerntnerstrasse and the Graben has changed considerably and not for the better. But there can be no question that, in the balance, these innovative approaches to modern urbanism have been highly successful.

Many other Viennese features have not changed. A "doctor" title is still held in high respect. The *Herr Ober* still charges you for the rolls you consumed with your lunch or dinner. And people still speak with their ingratiating Viennese accent that invariably makes them appear more polite and friendly than they mean to be.

Even at a non deluxe hotel, the breakfast room will be open at six-thirty in the morning, the coffee will be hot and strong, the *Mohnweckerln* (poppyseed rolls) inviting, and the *Guten Morgen* greeting of the assembled waiters will be heard all through the dining room. At most of the hotels, the beds are still made for the night, and in many places shoes are shined if left outside the room. And the shoe-shiner is still called *"Lohndiener,"* as in the time of the old Kaiser.

In summer of 1981, a number of my old Viennese fraternity brothers living in different parts of the United States planned to travel through Europe. Prior to departure, we decided in a number of quick conference calls, to converge eventually on Vienna and to spend a few days together.

All of us had been back in Vienna before—but not as a group. Our mood was continuously alternating between enjoying the present and reliving the bitter memories of the past.

We visited our old hunting grounds, but did also a lot of "touring" since my wife—as the only non-Viennese among us—did not know the city very well.

We went to the museums, strolled through the parks, admired the grand old buildings, which were beautifully illuminated at night, and took a tramway ride around the Ring and the Kai, which proved to be still the best and cheapest sightseeing trip anywhere.

In the afternoons, coffeehouses and *Konditoreien* were jammed with people who had their customary *Jause* (afternoon coffee), eating incredible amounts of fantastic cake with *Schlag* (whipped cream), and enjoying a friendly get-together.

We went to our favorite restaurants, saw a Nestroy play in the old Reinhardt theater, visited a *Heurigen* and made an excursion to the cloister in Klosterneuburg and its *Stiftskeller*.

There can be no doubt that life in Vienna is still easier and less strenuous that most anywhere else. Vienna is well off and self-content. But it often seems smug and lacks "salt and pepper." It has wisely and admirably given up on the political extremism of the First Republic, but it has lost its cosmopolitan charm, its intellectual excitement, and the search for the new and original.

Vienna was *die Stadt ohne Juden* (the city without Jews) at the end of the war in 1945. Today there are again about six thousand Jews residing in Vienna. I use the word "residing" rather than "living" purposely, since, though they are active in different lines of business, the present-day Jews of Vienna play no role in the life of the city. They are mostly Hungarian, Czech and Polish Jews who miraculously survived the Holocaust and then fled the new Communist regimes. They settled in Vienna, but, contrary to the times of the monarchy or the first Austrian Republic, there was no striving and influential Jewish community to facilitate their integration into the cultural and social fabric of the city, an integration that had been almost automatic for previous generations of waves of newcomers from the east.

Few Viennese Jews returned at the end of the war in 1945 and Vienna never made any effort to attract them back and hardly any Jews live today in Austria's provincial towns. The Jews from the East who arrived after the Nazi years were full of distrust of the Viennese, so many of whom had been in such a hurry to embrace the Nazi creed. They did not press for social and cultural contacts, and the Viennese were not desirous of starting them either. Thus, the small number of Jews in Vienna remains quite separated and isolated, their visibility restricted.

Chancellor Kreisky is still popular in Vienna—some say because the Jews despise him for his viciously anti-Israel attitude. Bruno Kreisky is a typical product of the Social-Democratic environment of Vienna between the two wars. Born a Jew, it can be assumed that he became *Konfessionslos* in his youth. Austria recognized religious groups such as Catholics, Protestants, Jews, as legal entities, which were authorized to levy taxes on their members. Payment of these taxes could be enforced by the state. These religious groups were exclusively responsible for the most important civic acts such as the official certification of births, marriages, and deaths.

The Social-Democratic party in Austria during the First Republic was still closely following Marxist dogmas and slogans, thus considering religion "Opiate of the masses." A number of convinced Marxists therefore left their churches and some like-minded Jews declared themselves as no longer belonging to the *Kultusgemeinde* (Jewish community) and assumed the status of *konfessionslos*.

Of course, being *konfessionslos* and hiding one's Jewishness did not make a difference when the Nazis came to power. Kreisky had to flee for his life, just like others who had left the Jewish community had to share concentration camps and gas chambers with their fellow Jews. Many who had abandoned their Jewish ties became Jews again after the horrible experiences of the Hitler years. Others married non-Jewish partners, became Christians themselves, or brought up their children as Catholics or Protestants. But nobody developed such a degree of individual and collective self-hatred as Bruno Kreisky. It is the ultimate

tragic irony that Austria eliminated totally one of the finest and most talented Jewish communities ever existing, and then elected to its highest position a man who, born a Jew, became a hater of Israel and a front-line activist against the Jewish state.

Vienna is today the only transit center for Jews arriving from the Soviet Union with official exit permits, but their number decreased drastically in the last few years. The Russian Jewish arrivals are kept for only a minimal period of time. Those who go on to Israel are transported very quickly by El Al to Tel Aviv. Those who opt for the United States or other Western countries are moved to waystations such as Rome, for processing and the necessary waiting period. The hospitality offered by the authorities to the Jewish refugees of Soviet oppression is thus of fairly short duration. Still, the fact remains that Austria does provide these important transit services and deserves credit for doing so.

There are some other positive contacts between Austria and Israel, as I was to find out on one of my flights to Ben Gurion Airport. Before boarding the plane in Vienna, I noticed a large group of obviously non-Jewish Austrian passengers. I was interested and started a conversation with them. I was told that this was one of regular groups sent by the Austrian Krankenkasse (official health insurance), fully paid, to the curative places at the Dead Sea, in Israel, for treatment of psoriasis, one of the most medication-resistant skin diseases. The Dead Sea, because of its high content of certain chemicals, is supposed to be extremely effective. The arrangements in Israel are handled by the Israeli *Kupath Cholim* (Israeli health insurance)—a fine cooperative endeavor beneficial to all concerned.

One of the participants in the group who was now going for the third time since the cure should be repeated, thought, on the basis of my interested questions, that I was about to embark on my first visit to Israel. At that stage of the conversation, we had introduced each other, and he was ready to offer some friendly advice. "*Herr Doktor,*" he said, "you have to see

Jerusalem—it is a terrific city." I had no trouble agreeing with him.

Austria has considerable additional refugee-management difficulties. Because of its location and traditional ties, dissenters and refugees from Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland will, if successful in their escape, first arrive in Austria. Therefore, camps have had to be established and service and support activities provided. All this undoubtedly put some stress on the economic and social fabric of Austrian society. Many American and European TV viewers have seen with sorrow the dramatic scenes of the last trains from Poland arriving at the Viennese railway station before martial law closed the Polish borders.

In the case of the non-Jewish refugees, Austria must keep these unfortunate people for a much longer period of time. The whole problem is a topic that Austrian authorities and the general public prefer not to discuss in too much detail. It is an unpleasant subject and does not fit into the Austrian mood of moving away from trouble. But, in fact, it is a sensitive problem because of Austria's neutrality status and its consequently highly delicate relations with the nations of the Soviet bloc. Austrians have never forgotten that theirs was the only occupied country from which Russia ever agreed to withdraw her armies.

Whenever I am in Vienna on a Saturday morning, I like to attend services at the old main synagogue. On one of those occasions I was fortunate to witness a Bar Mitzvah celebration. For a fleeting moment, life appeared to have stood still. Everything seemed to be as it had been before 1938. But the illusion was of short duration. Though I felt privileged to participate in this ceremony that under these circumstances symbolized for me the continuity of the Jewish people, I realized at the same time that the Viennese Jewish community with its extraordinary tradition and creativity was gone forever, its members dead or dispersed to the four corners of the earth.

The next morning I left Vienna. A few hours later the artificial "oasis" feeling of Vienna had evaporated into thin air. I

was back to the reality of today's world with all its problems, worries, menaces, and dangers—but also with its dynamism, vitality, and continuous changes.

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