

# Mein Kampf

**Adolf Hitler**

Translated by Ralph Manheim

Introduction by Abraham Foxman



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## DEDICATION \*

ON NOVEMBER 9, 1923, at 12.30 in the afternoon, in front of the Feldherrnhalle as well as in the courtyard of the former War Ministry, the following men fell, with loyal faith in the resurrection of their people:

ALFARTH, FELIX, *businessman*, b. July 5, 1901  
BAURIEDL, ANDREAS, *hatter*, b. May 4, 1879  
CASELLA, THEODOR, *bank clerk*, b. August 8, 1900  
EHRlich, WILHELM, *bank clerk*, b. August 19, 1894  
FAUST, MARTIN, *bank clerk*, b. January 27, 1901  
HECHENBERGER, ANTON, *locksmith*, b. September 28, 1902  
KÖRNER, OSKAR, *businessman*, b. January 4, 1875  
KUHN, KARL, *headwaiter*, b. July 26, 1897  
LAFORCE, KARL, *student of engineering*, b. October 28, 1904  
NEUBAUER, KURT, *valet*, b. March 27, 1899  
PAPE, CLAUS VON, *businessman*, b. August 16, 1904  
PFORDTEN, THEODOR VON DER, *County Court Councillor*, b. May 14, 1873  
RICKMERS, JOHANN, *retired Cavalry Captain*, b. May 7, 1881  
SCHEUBNER-RICHTER, MAX ERWIN VON, *Doctor of Engineering*, b. January 9, 1884  
STRANSKY, LORENZ, RITTER VON, *engineer*, b. March 14, 1889  
WOLF, WILHELM, *businessman*, b. October 19, 1898

So-called national authorities denied these dead heroes a common grave.

Therefore I dedicate to them, for common memory, the first volume of this work. As its blood witnesses, may they shine forever, a glowing example to the followers of our movement.

*Adolf Hitler*

LANDSBERG AM LECH  
FORTRESS PRISON  
October 16, 1924

\* To the men who  
died in the putsch

## P R E F A C E

ON APRIL 1, 1924, I entered upon my prison term in the fortress of Landsberg am Lech, as sentenced by the People's Court in Munich on that day.

Thus, after years of uninterrupted work, an opportunity was for the first time offered me to embark upon a task which many had demanded and which I myself felt to be worth while for the movement. I decided to set forth, in two volumes, the aims of our movement, and also to draw a picture of its development. From this it will be possible to learn more than from any purely doctrinaire treatise.

At the same time I have had occasion to give an account of my own development, in so far as this is necessary for the understanding of the first as well as the second volume, and in so far as it may serve to destroy the foul legends about my person dished up in the Jewish press.

I do not address this work to strangers, but to those adherents of the movement who belong to it with their hearts, and whose intelligence is eager for a more penetrating enlightenment. I know that men are won over less by the written than by the spoken word, that every great movement on this earth owes its growth to great orators and not to great writers.

Nevertheless, for a doctrine to be disseminated uniformly and coherently, its basic elements must be set down for all time. To this end I wish to contribute these two volumes as foundation stones in our common edifice.

*The Author*

LANDSBERG AM LECH  
FORTRESS PRISON

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# CHAPTER I

## In the House of My Parents

**T**ODAY it seems to me providential that Fate should have chosen Braunau on the Inn as my birthplace. For this little town lies on the boundary between two German states which we of the younger generation at least have made it our life work to reunite by every means at our disposal.

German-Austria must return to the great German mother country, and not because of any economic considerations. No, and again no: even if such a union were unimportant from an economic point of view; yes, even if it were harmful, it must nevertheless take place. One blood demands one Reich. Never will the German nation possess the moral right to engage in colonial politics until, at least, it embraces its own sons within a single state. Only when the Reich borders include the very last German, but can no longer guarantee his daily bread, will the moral right to acquire foreign soil arise from the distress of our own people. Their sword will become our plow, and from the tears of war the daily bread of future generations will grow. And so this little city on the border seems to me the symbol of a great mission. And in another respect as well, it looms as an admonition to the present day. More than a hundred years ago, this insignificant place had the distinction of being immortalized in the annals at least of German history, for it was the scene of a tragic catastrophe which gripped the entire German nation. At

the time of our fatherland's deepest humiliation, Johannes Palm<sup>1</sup> of Nuremberg, burgher, bookseller, uncompromising nationalist and French hater, died there for the Germany which he loved so passionately even in her misfortune. He had stubbornly refused to denounce his accomplices, who were in fact his superiors. In this he resembled Leo Schlageter.<sup>2</sup> And like him, he was denounced to the French by a representative of his government. An Augsburg police chief won this unenviable fame, thus furnishing an example for our modern German officials in Herr Severing's<sup>3</sup> Reich.

In this little town on the Inn, gilded by the rays of German martyrdom, Bavarian by blood, technically Austrian,<sup>4</sup> lived my parents in the late eighties of the past century; my father a dutiful civil servant, my mother giving all her being to the household, and devoted above all to us children in eternal, loving care. Little remains in my memory of this period, for after a few years my father had to leave the little border city he had learned to love, moving down the Inn to take a new position in Passau, that is, in Germany proper.

In those days constant moving was the lot of an Austrian customs official. A short time later, my father was sent to Linz, and there he was finally pensioned. Yet, indeed, this was not to mean 'rest' for the old gentleman. In his younger days, as the son of a poor cottager, he couldn't bear to stay at home. Before

<sup>1</sup> Johann Philipp Palm was executed in 1806 by the French garrison of Nuremberg for publishing a pamphlet attacking Napoleon.

<sup>2</sup> A free corps leader who performed acts of sabotage against the French occupation authorities in the Ruhr. In the summer of 1923 he was captured by the French authorities, court-martialed and shot.

<sup>3</sup> With brief interruptions the Social Democrat Carl Severing was Prussian Minister of the Interior from 1920 until 1932, when Chancellor Von Papen dissolved the Prussian government. As Minister of the Interior he was in charge of the Prussian police. This, coupled with the fact that he successfully combated the influence of the Rightist secret leagues in the Reichswehr, earned him the special hatred of the Nazis.

<sup>4</sup> Braunau on the Inn, in Upper Austria, directly across from the German (Bavarian) border.

he was even thirteen, the little boy laced his tiny knapsack and ran away from his home in the Waldviertel.<sup>1</sup> Despite the attempts of 'experienced' villagers to dissuade him, he made his way to Vienna, there to learn a trade. This was in the fifties of the past century. A desperate decision, to take to the road with only three gulden for travel money, and plunge into the unknown. By the time the thirteen-year-old grew to be seventeen, he had passed his apprentice's examination, but he was not yet content. On the contrary. The long period of hardship, endless misery, and suffering he had gone through strengthened his determination to give up his trade and become 'something better.' Formerly the poor boy had regarded the priest as the embodiment of all humanly attainable heights; now in the big city, which had so greatly widened his perspective, it was the rank of civil servant. With all the tenacity of a young man whom suffering and care had made 'old' while still half a child, the seventeen-year-old clung to his new decision — he did enter the civil service. And after nearly twenty-three years, I believe, he reached his goal. Thus he seemed to have fulfilled a vow which he had made as a poor boy: that he would not return to his beloved native village until he had made something of himself.

His goal was achieved; but no one in the village could remember the little boy of former days, and to him the village had grown strange.

When finally, at the age of fifty-six, he went into retirement, he could not bear to spend a single day of his leisure in idleness. Near the Upper Austrian market village of Lambach he bought a farm, which he worked himself, and thus, in the circuit of a long and industrious life, returned to the origins of his forefathers.

It was at this time that the first ideals took shape in my breast. All my playing about in the open, the long walk to school, and particularly my association with extremely 'husky' boys, which sometimes caused my mother bitter anguish, made me the very opposite of a stay-at-home. And though at that time I scarcely

<sup>1</sup> Waldviertel, the mountainous section at the extreme west of Lower Austria, north of the Danube.

had any serious ideas as to the profession I should one day pursue my sympathies were in any case not in the direction of my father's career. I believe that even then my oratorical talent was being developed in the form of more or less violent arguments with my schoolmates. I had become a little ringleader; at school I learned easily and at that time very well, but was otherwise rather hard to handle. Since in my free time I received singing lessons in the cloister at Lambach, I had excellent opportunity to intoxicate myself with the solemn splendor of the brilliant church festivals. As was only natural, the abbot seemed to me, as the village priest had once seemed to my father, the highest and most desirable ideal. For a time, at least, this was the case. But since my father, for understandable reasons, proved unable to appreciate the oratorical talents of his pugnacious boy, or to draw from them any favorable conclusions regarding the future of his offspring, he could, it goes without saying, achieve no understanding for such youthful ideas. With concern he observed this conflict of nature.

As it happened, my temporary aspiration for this profession was in any case soon to vanish, making place for hopes more suited to my temperament. Rummaging through my father's library, I had come across various books of a military nature, among them a popular edition of the Franco-German War of 1870-71.<sup>1</sup> It consisted of two issues of an illustrated periodical from those years, which now became my favorite reading matter. It was not long before the great heroic struggle had become my greatest inner experience. From then on I became more and more enthusiastic about everything that was in any way connected with war or, for that matter, with soldiering.

But in another respect as well, this was to assume importance for me. For the first time, though as yet in a confused form, the question was forced upon my consciousness: Was there a difference — and if so what difference — between the Germans who fought these battles and other Germans? Why hadn't Austria taken part in this war; why hadn't my father and all the others fought?

<sup>1</sup> *Eine Volksausgabe des deutsch-französischen Krieges von 1870-71.*

Are we not the same as all other Germans?  
Do we not all belong together? This problem began to gnaw at my little brain for the first time. I asked cautious questions and with secret envy received the answer that not every German was fortunate enough to belong to Bismarck's Reich.  
This was more than I could understand.

\* \* \*

It was decided that I should go to high school.

From my whole nature, and to an even greater degree from my temperament, my father believed he could draw the inference that the humanistic *Gymnasium*<sup>1</sup> would represent a conflict with my talents. A *Realschule* seemed to him more suitable. In this opinion he was especially strengthened by my obvious aptitude for drawing; a subject which in his opinion was neglected in the Austrian *Gymnasiums*. Another factor may have been his own laborious career which made humanistic study seem impractical in his eyes, and therefore less desirable. It was his basic opinion and intention<sup>2</sup> that, like himself, his son would and must become a civil servant. It was only natural that the hardships of his youth should enhance his subsequent achievement in his eyes, particularly since it resulted exclusively from his own energy and iron diligence. It was the pride of the self-made man which made him want his son to rise to the same position in life, or, of course, even higher if possible, especially since, by his own industrious life, he thought he would be able to facilitate his child's development so greatly.

It was simply inconceivable to him that I might reject what

<sup>1</sup> The *Gymnasium* more or less corresponds to our Latin school, the *Realschule* to our technical high school. The former, with its emphasis on the liberal arts, enjoyed greater social prestige than the *Realschule* before the War of 1914.

<sup>2</sup> The German is '*Willensmeinung*,' an extraordinary word, perhaps Hitler's own invention. Literal translation would be 'opinion of the will.'

had become the content of his whole life. Consequently, my father's decision was simple, definite, and clear; in his own eyes I mean, of course. Finally, a whole lifetime spent in the bitter struggle for existence had given him a domineering nature, and it would have seemed intolerable to him to leave the final decision in such matters to an inexperienced boy, having as yet no sense of responsibility. Moreover, this would have seemed a sinful and reprehensible weakness in the exercise of his proper parental authority and responsibility for the future life of his child, and, as such, absolutely incompatible with his concept of duty.

And yet things were to turn out differently.

Then barely eleven years old, I was forced into opposition for the first time in my life. Hard and determined as my father might be in putting through plans and purposes once conceived, his son was just as persistent and recalcitrant in rejecting an idea which appealed to him not at all, or in any case very little.

I did not want to become a civil servant.

Neither persuasion nor 'serious' arguments made any impression on my resistance. I did not want to be a civil servant, no, and again no. All attempts on my father's part to inspire me with love or pleasure in this profession by stories from his own life accomplished the exact opposite. I yawned and grew sick to my stomach at the thought of sitting in an office, deprived of my liberty; ceasing to be master of my own time and being compelled to force the content of a whole life into blanks that had to be filled out.<sup>1</sup>

And what thoughts could this prospect arouse in a boy who in reality was really anything but 'good' in the usual sense of the word? School work was ridiculously easy, leaving me so much free time that the sun saw more of me than my room. When today my political opponents direct their loving attention to the examination of my life, following it back to those childhood days, and discover at last to their relief what intolerable pranks this 'Hitler' played even in his youth, I thank Heaven that a portion

<sup>1</sup> 'sondern in auszufüllende Formulare den Inhalt eines ganzen Lebens zwängen zu müssen.'

of the memories of those happy days still remains with me. Woods and meadows were then the battlefields on which the 'conflicts' which exist everywhere in life were decided.

In this respect my attendance at the *Realschule*, which now commenced, made little difference.

But now, to be sure, there was a new conflict to be fought out.

As long as my father's intention of making me a civil servant encountered only my theoretical distaste for the profession, the conflict was bearable. Thus far, I had to some extent been able to keep my private opinions to myself; I did not always have to contradict him immediately. My own firm determination never to become a civil servant sufficed to give me complete inner peace. And this decision in me was immutable. The problem became more difficult when I developed a plan of my own in opposition to my father's. And this occurred at the early age of twelve. How it happened, I myself do not know, but one day it became clear to me that I would become a painter, an artist. There was no doubt as to my talent for drawing; it had been one of my father's reasons for sending me to the *Realschule*, but never in all the world would it have occurred to him to give me professional training in this direction. On the contrary. When for the first time, after once again rejecting my father's favorite notion, I was asked what I myself wanted to be, and I rather abruptly blurted out the decision I had meanwhile made, my father for the moment was struck speechless.

'Painter? Artist?'

He doubted my sanity, or perhaps he thought he had heard wrong or misunderstood me. But when he was clear on the subject, and particularly after he felt the seriousness of my intention, he opposed it with all the determination of his nature. His decision was extremely simple, for any consideration of what abilities I might really have was simply out of the question.

'Artist, no, never as long as I live!' But since his son, among various other qualities, had apparently inherited his father's stubbornness, the same answer came back at him. Except, of course, that it was in the opposite sense.

And thus the situation remained on both sides. My father did not depart from his 'Never!' And I intensified my 'Oh, yes!'

The consequences, indeed, were none too pleasant. The old man grew embittered, and, much as I loved him, so did I. My father forbade me to nourish the slightest hope of ever being allowed to study art. I went one step further and declared that if that was the case I would stop studying altogether. As a result of such 'pronouncements,' of course, I drew the short end; the old man began the relentless enforcement of his authority. In the future, therefore, I was silent, but transformed my threat into reality. I thought that once my father saw how little progress I was making at the *Realschule*, he would let me devote myself to my dream, whether he liked it or not.

I do not know whether this calculation was correct. For the moment only one thing was certain: my obvious lack of success at school. What gave me pleasure I learned, especially everything which, in my opinion, I should later need as a painter. What seemed to me unimportant in this respect or was otherwise unattractive to me, I sabotaged completely. My report cards at this time, depending on the subject and my estimation of it, showed nothing but extremes. Side by side with 'laudable' and 'excellent,' stood 'adequate' or even 'inadequate.' By far my best accomplishments were in geography and even more so in history. These were my favorite subjects, in which I led the class.

If now, after so many years, I examine the results of this period, I regard two outstanding facts as particularly significant:

First: *I became a nationalist.*<sup>1</sup>

Second: *I learned to understand and grasp the meaning of history.*  
Old Austria was a 'state of nationalities.'

<sup>1</sup> Hitler's early nationalism had, of course, nothing to do with Austrian patriotism, but was the Pan-Germanism of the *Los-von-Rom* (Away-from-Rome) movement founded by Ritter Georg von Schönerer. It stood for union of Germany with the German parts of Austria and must be distinguished from the Pan-German movement of Germany, which was an out-and-out conspiracy for German world domination. Schönerer's movement was strongly anti-Semitic.

By and large, a subject of the German Reich, at that time at least, was absolutely unable to grasp the significance of this fact for the life of the individual in such a state. After the great victorious campaign of the heroic armies in the Franco-German War, people had gradually lost interest in the Germans living abroad; some could not, while others were unable to appreciate their importance.<sup>1</sup> Especially with regard to the German-Austrians, the degenerate dynasty was only too frequently confused with the people, which at the core was robust and healthy.

What they failed to appreciate was that, unless the German in Austria had really been of the best blood, he would never have had the power to set his stamp on a nation of fifty-two million souls to such a degree that, even in Germany, the erroneous opinion could arise that Austria was a German state. This was an absurdity fraught with the direst consequences, and yet a glowing testimonial to the ten million Germans in the *Ostmark*.<sup>2</sup> Only a handful of Germans in the Reich had the slightest conception of the eternal and merciless struggle for the German language, German schools, and a German way of life. Only today, when the same deplorable misery is forced on many millions of Germans from the Reich, who under foreign rule dream of their common fatherland and strive, amid their longing, at least to preserve their holy right to their mother tongue, do wider circles understand what it means to be forced to fight for one's nationality. Today perhaps some can appreciate the greatness of the Germans in the Reich's old *Ostmark*, who, with no one but themselves to depend on, for centuries protected the Reich against incursions from the East, and finally carried on an exhausting guerrilla warfare to maintain the German language frontier, at a

<sup>1</sup> 'zum Teil dieses auch gar nicht mehr zu würdigen vermocht oder wohl auch nicht gekonnt.'

<sup>2</sup> Eastern Mark, established by Charlemagne as a buffer against the Avars. Later called Austria. The name was revived by nineteenth-century nationalists who looked back with longing at the unity and strength of the old empire.

time when the Reich was highly interested in colonies, but not in its own flesh and blood at its very doorstep.

As everywhere and always, in every struggle, there were, in this fight for the language in old Austria, three strata:

*The fighters, the lukewarm, and the traitors.*

This sifting process began at school. For the remarkable fact about the language struggle is that its waves strike hardest perhaps in the school, since it is the seed-bed of the coming generation. It is a struggle for the soul of the child, and to the child its first appeal is addressed:

'German boy, do not forget you are a German,' and, 'Little girl, remember that you are to become a German mother.'

Anyone who knows the soul of youth will be able to understand that it is they who lend ear most joyfully to such a battle-cry. They carry on this struggle in hundreds of forms, in their own way and with their own weapons. They refuse to sing un-German songs. The more anyone tries to alienate them from German heroic grandeur, the wilder becomes their enthusiasm: they go hungry to save pennies for the grown-ups' battle fund; their ears are amazingly sensitive to un-German teachers, and at the same time they are incredibly resistant; they wear the forbidden insignia of their own nationality and are happy to be punished or even beaten for it. Thus, on a small scale they are a faithful reflection of the adults, except that often their convictions are better and more honest.

I, too, while still comparatively young, had an opportunity to take part in the struggle of nationalities in old Austria. Collections were taken for the *Südmark*<sup>1</sup> and the school association; we emphasized our convictions by wearing corn-flowers<sup>2</sup> and red, black, and gold colors; 'Heil' was our greeting, and instead of the

<sup>1</sup> *Südmark*. Another term for Austria. Apparently devised in imitation of the old imperial Marks by the *Verein für Deutschtum im Ausland*, founded in 1881 to defend the endangered nationality of Germans in the border territories.

<sup>2</sup> The corn-flower was the emblem of Germans loyal to the imperial House of Hohenzollern and of the Austrian Pan-Germans.

imperial anthem we sang '*Deutschland über Alles*,' despite warnings and punishments. In this way the child received political training in a period when as a rule the subject of a so-called national state knew little more of his nationality than its language. It goes without saying that even then I was not among the lukewarm. In a short time I had become a fanatical 'German Nationalist,' though the term was not identical with our present party concept.

This development in me made rapid progress; by the time I was fifteen I understood the difference between dynastic '*patriotism*' and folkish '*nationalism*'; and even then I was interested only in the latter.

For anyone who has never taken the trouble to study the inner conditions of the Habsburg monarchy, such a process may not be entirely understandable. In this country the instruction in world history had to provide the germ for this development, since to all intents and purposes there is no such thing as a specifically Austrian history. The destiny of this state is so much bound up with the life and development of all the Germans that a separation of history into German and Austrian does not seem conceivable. Indeed, when at length Germany began to divide into two spheres of power, this division itself became German history.

The insignia of former imperial glory, preserved in Vienna, still seem to cast a magic spell; they stand as a pledge that these twofold destinies are eternally one.

The elemental cry of the German-Austrian people for union with the German mother country, that arose in the days when the Habsburg state was collapsing, was the result of a longing that slumbered in the heart of the entire people — a longing to return to the never-forgotten ancestral home. But this would be in-

<sup>1</sup> *Völkisch*. The word first appeared in nationalist literature about 1875 and is merely a Germanization of 'nationalist.' Where possible the nationalists avoided the use of foreign words. Since 1900 it has been in wide use among nationalist circles, from the Pan-German League down to the National Socialists.

explicable if the historical education of the individual German-Austrian had not given rise to so general a longing. In it lies a well which never grows dry; which, especially in times of forgetfulness, transcends all momentary prosperity and by constant reminders of the past whispers softly of a new future.

Instruction in world history in the so-called high schools is even today in a very sorry condition. Few teachers understand that the aim of studying history can never be to learn historical dates and events by heart and recite them by rote; that what matters is not whether the child knows exactly when this or that battle was fought, when a general was born, or even when a monarch (usually a very insignificant one) came into the crown of his forefathers. No, by the living God, this is very unimportant.

To 'learn' history means to seek and find the forces which are the causes leading to those effects which we subsequently perceive as historical events.

The art of reading as of learning is this: *to retain the essential, to forget the non-essential.*

Perhaps it affected my whole later life that good fortune sent me a history teacher who was one of the few to observe this principle in teaching and examining. Dr. Leopold Pötsch, my professor at the *Realschule* in Linz, embodied this requirement to an ideal degree. This old gentleman's manner was as kind as it was determined, his dazzling eloquence not only held us spell-bound but actually carried us away. Even today I think back with gentle emotion on this gray-haired man who, by the fire of his narratives, sometimes made us forget the present; who, as if by enchantment, carried us into past times and, out of the millennial veils of mist, molded dry historical memories into living reality. On such occasions we sat there, often aflame with enthusiasm, and sometimes even moved to tears.

What made our good fortune all the greater was that this teacher knew how to illuminate the past by examples from the present, and how from the past to draw inferences for the present. As a result he had more understanding than anyone else for all the daily problems which then held us breathless. He used our

budding nationalistic fanaticism as a means of educating us, frequently appealing to our sense of national honor. By this alone he was able to discipline us little ruffians more easily than would have been possible by any other means.

This teacher made history my favorite subject.

And indeed, though he had no such intention, it was then that I became a little revolutionary.

For who could have studied German history under such a teacher without becoming an enemy of the state which, through its ruling house, exerted so disastrous an influence on the destinies of the nation?

And who could retain his loyalty to a dynasty which in past and present betrayed the needs of the German people again and again for shameless private advantage?

Did we not know, even as little boys, that this Austrian state had and could have no love for us Germans?

Our historical knowledge of the works of the House of Habsburg was reinforced by our daily experience. In the north and south the poison of foreign nations gnawed at the body of our nationality, and even Vienna was visibly becoming more and more of an un-German city. The Royal House Czechized wherever possible, and it was the hand of the goddess of eternal justice and inexorable retribution which caused Archduke Francis Ferdinand, the most mortal enemy of Austrian-Germanism, to fall by the bullets which he himself had helped to mold. For had he not been the patron of Austria's Slavization from above!

Immense were the burdens which the German people were expected to bear, inconceivable their sacrifices in taxes and blood, and yet anyone who was not totally blind was bound to recognize that all this would be in vain. What pained us most was the fact that this entire system was morally whitewashed by the alliance with Germany, with the result that the slow extermination of Germanism in the old monarchy was in a certain sense sanctioned by Germany itself. The Habsburg hypocrisy, which enabled the Austrian rulers to create the outward appearance that Austria

was a German state, raised the hatred toward this house to flaming indignation and at the same time — contempt.

Only in the Reich itself, the men who even then were called to power saw nothing of all this. As though stricken with blindness, they lived by the side of a corpse, and in the symptoms of rottenness saw only the signs of 'new' life.

The unholy alliance of the young Reich and the Austrian sham state contained the germ of the subsequent World War and of the collapse as well.

In the course of this book I shall have occasion to take up this problem at length. Here it suffices to state that even in my earliest youth I came to the basic insight which never left me, but only became more profound:

*That Germanism could be safeguarded only by the destruction of Austria, and, furthermore, that national sentiment is in no sense identical with dynastic patriotism; that above all the House of Habsburg was destined to be the misfortune of the German nation.*

Even then I had drawn the consequences from this realization: ardent love for my German-Austrian homeland, deep hatred for the Austrian state.

\* \* \*

The habit of historical thinking which I thus learned in school has never left me in the intervening years. To an ever-increasing extent world history became for me an inexhaustible source of understanding for the historical events of the present; in other words, for politics. I do not want to 'learn' it, I want it to instruct me.

Thus, at an early age, I had become a political 'revolutionary,' and I became an artistic revolutionary at an equally early age.

The provincial capital of Upper Austria had at that time a theater which was, relatively speaking, not bad. Pretty much of everything was produced. At the age of twelve I saw *Wilhelm Tell* for the first time, and a few months later my first opera,

*Lohengrin*. I was captivated at once. My youthful enthusiasm for the master of Bayreuth knew no bounds. Again and again I was drawn to his works, and it still seems to me especially fortunate that the modest provincial performance left me open to an intensified experience later on.

All this, particularly after I had outgrown my adolescence (which in my case was an especially painful process), reinforced my profound distaste for the profession which my father had chosen for me. My conviction grew stronger and stronger that I would never be happy as a civil servant. The fact that by this time my gift for drawing had been recognized at the *Realschule* made my determination all the firmer.

Neither pleas nor threats could change it one bit.

I wanted to become a painter and no power in the world could make me a civil servant.

Yet, strange as it may seem, with the passing years I became more and more interested in architecture.

At that time I regarded this as a natural complement to my gift as a painter, and only rejoiced inwardly at the extension of my artistic scope.

I did not suspect that things would turn out differently.

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The question of my profession was to be decided more quickly than I had previously expected.

In my thirteenth year I suddenly lost my father. A stroke of apoplexy felled the old gentleman who was otherwise so hale, thus painlessly ending his earthly pilgrimage, plunging us all into the depths of grief. His most ardent desire had been to help his son forge his career, thus preserving him from his own bitter experience. In this, to all appearances, he had not succeeded. But, though unwittingly, he had sown the seed for a future which at that time neither he nor I would have comprehended.

For the moment there was no outward change.

My mother, to be sure, felt obliged to continue my education in accordance with my father's wish; in other words, to have me study for the civil servant's career. I, for my part, was more than ever determined absolutely not to undertake this career. In proportion as my schooling departed from my ideal in subject matter and curriculum, I became more indifferent at heart. Then suddenly an illness came to my help and in a few weeks decided my future and the eternal domestic quarrel. As a result of my serious lung ailment, a physician advised my mother in most urgent terms never to send me into an office. My attendance at the *Realschule* had furthermore to be interrupted for at least a year. The goal for which I had so long silently yearned, for which I had always fought, had through this event suddenly become reality almost of its own accord.

Concerned over my illness, my mother finally consented to take me out of the *Realschule* and let me attend the Academy.

These were the happiest days of my life and seemed to me almost a dream; and a mere dream it was to remain. Two years later, the death of my mother put a sudden end to all my high-flown plans.

It was the conclusion of a long and painful illness which from the beginning left little hope of recovery. Yet it was a dreadful blow, particularly for me. I had honored my father, but my mother I had loved.

Poverty and hard reality now compelled me to take a quick decision. What little my father had left had been largely exhausted by my mother's grave illness; the orphan's pension to which I was entitled was not enough for me even to live on, and so I was faced with the problem of somehow making my own living.

In my hand a suitcase full of clothes and underwear; in my heart an indomitable will, I journeyed to Vienna. I, too, hoped to wrest from Fate what my father had accomplished fifty years before; I, too, wanted to become 'something' — but on no account a civil servant.

## CHAPTER II

### Years of Study and Suffering in Vienna

WHEN my mother died, Fate, at least in one respect, had made its decisions.

In the last months of her sickness, I had gone to Vienna to take the entrance examination for the Academy. I had set out with a pile of drawings, convinced that it would be child's play to pass the examination. At the *Realschule* I had been by far the best in my class at drawing, and since then my ability had developed amazingly; my own satisfaction caused me to take a joyful pride in hoping for the best.

Yet sometimes a drop of bitterness put in its appearance: my talent for painting seemed to be excelled by my talent for drawing, especially in almost all fields of architecture. At the same time my interest in architecture as such increased steadily, and this development was accelerated after a two weeks' trip to Vienna which I took when not yet sixteen. The purpose of my trip was to study the picture gallery in the Court Museum, but I had eyes for scarcely anything but the Museum itself. From morning until late at night, I ran from one object of interest to another, but it was always the buildings which held my primary interest. For hours I could stand in front of the Opera, for hours I could gaze at the Parliament; the whole Ring Boulevard seemed to me like an enchantment out of *The Thousand-and-One-Nights*.

Now I was in the fair city for the second time, waiting with burning impatience, but also with confident self-assurance, for

the result of my entrance examination. I was so convinced that I would be successful that when I received my rejection, it struck me as a bolt from the blue. Yet that is what happened. When I presented myself to the rector, requesting an explanation for my non-acceptance at the Academy's school of painting, that gentleman assured me that the drawings I had submitted incontrovertibly showed my unfitness for painting, and that my ability obviously lay in the field of architecture; for me, he said, the Academy's school of painting was out of the question, the place for me was the School of Architecture. It was incomprehensible to him that I had never attended an architectural school or received any other training in architecture. Downcast, I left von Hansen's<sup>1</sup> magnificent building on the Schillerplatz, for the first time in my young life at odds with myself. For what I had just heard about my abilities seemed like a lightning flash, suddenly revealing a conflict with which I had long been afflicted, although until then I had no clear conception of its why and wherefore.

In a few days I myself knew that I should some day become an architect.

To be sure, it was an incredibly hard road; for the studies I had neglected out of spite at the *Realschule* were sorely needed. One could not attend the Academy's architectural school without having attended the building school at the *Technik*, and the latter required a high-school degree. I had none of all this. The fulfillment of my artistic dream seemed physically impossible.

When after the death of my mother I went to Vienna for the third time, to remain for many years, the time which had meanwhile elapsed had restored my calm and determination. My old defiance had come back to me and my goal was now clear and definite before my eyes. I wanted to become an architect, and obstacles do not exist to be surrendered to, but only to be broken. I was determined to overcome these obstacles, keeping before my

<sup>1</sup> Theophil von Hansen (1813-1891), Danish architect, built many of Vienna's best-known buildings, including the Academy of Art, the Stock Exchange, and the Reichsrat (parliament). His work was in the historical, archaeological style of the period.

eyes the image of my father, who had started out as the child of a village shoemaker, and risen by his own efforts to be a government official. I had a better foundation to build on, and hence my possibilities in the struggle were easier, and what then seemed to be the harshness of Fate, I praise today as wisdom and Providence. While the Goddess of Suffering took me in her arms, often threatening to crush me, my will to resistance grew, and in the end this will was victorious.

I owe it to that period that I grew hard and am still capable of being hard. And even more, I exalt it for tearing me away from the hollowness of comfortable life; for drawing the mother's darling out of his soft downy bed and giving him 'Dame Care' for a new mother; for hurling me, despite all resistance, into a world of misery and poverty, thus making me acquainted with those for whom I was later to fight.

\* \* \*

In this period my eyes were opened to two menaces of which I had previously scarcely known the names, and whose terrible importance for the existence of the German people I certainly did not understand: Marxism and Jewry.

To me Vienna, the city which, to so many, is the epitome of innocent pleasure, a festive playground for merrymakers, represents, I am sorry to say, merely the living memory of the saddest period of my life.

Even today this city can arouse in me nothing but the most dismal thoughts. For me the name of this Phaeacian city<sup>1</sup> represents five years of hardship and misery. Five years in which I was forced to earn a living, first as a day laborer, then as a small painter; a truly meager living which never sufficed to appease even my daily hunger. Hunger was then my faithful bodyguard;

<sup>1</sup> Phaeacian city. The allusion to the happy isle of the Phaeacians is more popular in Germany than in English-speaking countries. Hitler's use of it does not mean that he has read the *Odyssey*.

he never left me for a moment and partook of all I had, share and share alike. Every book I acquired aroused his interest; a visit to the Opera prompted his attentions for days at a time; my life was a continuous struggle with this pitiless friend. And yet during this time I studied as never before. Aside from my architecture and my rare visits to the Opera, paid for in hunger, I had but one pleasure: my books.

At that time I read enormously and thoroughly. All the free time my work left me was employed in my studies. In this way I forged in a few years' time the foundations of a knowledge from which I still draw nourishment today.

And even more than this:

In this period there took shape within me a world picture and a philosophy which became the granite foundation of all my acts. In addition to what I then created, I have had to learn little; and I have had to alter nothing.

On the contrary.

Today I am firmly convinced that basically and on the whole all creative ideas appear in our youth, in so far as any such are present. I distinguish between the wisdom of age, consisting solely in greater thoroughness and caution due to the experience of a long life, and the genius of youth, which pours out thoughts and ideas with inexhaustible fertility, but cannot for the moment develop them because of their very abundance. It is this youthful genius which provides the building materials and plans for the future, from which a wiser age takes the stones, carves them and completes the edifice, in so far as the so-called wisdom of age has not stifled the genius of youth.

\* \* \*

The life which I had hitherto led at home differed little or not at all from the life of other people. Carefree, I could await the new day, and there was no social problem for me. The environment of my youth consisted of petty-bourgeois circles, hence of a

world having very little relation to the purely manual worker. For, strange as it may seem at first glance, the cleft between this class, which in an economic sense is by no means so brilliantly situated, and the manual worker is often deeper than we imagine. The reason for this hostility, as we might almost call it, lies in the fear of a social group, which has but recently raised itself above the level of the manual worker, that it will sink back into the old despised class, or at least become identified with it. To this, in many cases, we must add the repugnant memory of the cultural poverty of this lower class, the frequent vulgarity of its social intercourse; the petty bourgeois' own position in society, however insignificant it may be, makes any contact with this outgrown stage of life and culture intolerable.

Consequently, the higher classes feel less constraint in their dealings with the lowest of their fellow men than seems possible to the 'upstart.'

For anyone is an upstart who rises by his own efforts from his previous position in life to a higher one.

Ultimately this struggle, which is often so hard, kills all pity. Our own painful struggle for existence destroys our feeling for the misery of those who have remained behind.

In this respect Fate was kind to me. By forcing me to return to this world of poverty and insecurity, from which my father had risen in the course of his life, it removed the blinders of a narrow petty-bourgeois upbringing from my eyes. Only now did I learn to know humanity, learning to distinguish between empty appearances or brutal externals and the inner being.

\* \* \*

After the turn of the century, Vienna was, socially speaking, one of the most backward cities in Europe.

Dazzling riches and loathsome poverty alternated sharply. In the center and in the inner districts you could really feel the pulse of this realm of fifty-two millions, with all the dubious magic of

the national melting pot. The Court with its dazzling glamour attracted wealth and intelligence from the rest of the country like a magnet. Added to this was the strong centralization of the Habsburg monarchy in itself.

It offered the sole possibility of holding this medley of nations together in any set form. But the consequence was an extraordinary concentration of high authorities in the imperial capital.

Yet not only in the political and intellectual sense was Vienna the center of the old Danube monarchy, but economically as well. The host of high officers, government officials, artists, and scholars was confronted by an even greater army of workers, and side by side with aristocratic and commercial wealth dwelt dire poverty. Outside the palaces on the Ring loitered thousands of unemployed, and beneath this *Via Triumphalis* of old Austria dwelt the homeless in the gloom and mud of the canals.

In hardly any German city could the social question have been studied better than in Vienna. But make no mistake. This 'studying' cannot be done from lofty heights. No one who has not been seized in the jaws of this murderous viper can know its poison fangs. Otherwise nothing results but superficial chatter and false sentimentality. Both are harmful. The former because it can never penetrate to the core of the problem, the latter because it passes it by. I do not know which is more terrible: inattention to social misery such as we see every day among the majority of those who have been favored by fortune or who have risen by their own efforts, or else the snobbish, or at times tactless and obtrusive, condescension of certain women of fashion in skirts or in trousers, who 'feel for the people.' In any event, these gentry sin far more than their minds, devoid of all instinct, are capable of realizing. Consequently, and much to their own amazement, the result of their social 'efforts' is always nil, frequently, in fact, an indignant rebuff; though this, of course, is passed off as a proof of the people's ingratitude.

*Such minds are most reluctant to realize that social endeavor has nothing in common with this sort of thing; that above all it can raise*

*no claim to gratitude, since its function is not to distribute favors but to restore rights.*

I was preserved from studying the social question in such a way. By drawing me within its sphere of suffering, it did not seem to invite me to 'study,' but to experience it in my own skin. It was none of its doing that the guinea pig came through the operation safe and sound.

\* \* \*

An attempt to enumerate the sentiments I experienced in that period could never be even approximately complete; I shall describe here only the most essential impressions, those which often moved me most deeply, and the few lessons which I derived from them at the time.

\* \* \*

The actual business of finding work was, as a rule, not hard for me, since I was not a skilled craftsman, but was obliged to seek my daily bread as a so-called helper and sometimes as a casual laborer.

I adopted the attitude of all those who shake the dust of Europe from their feet with the irrevocable intention of founding a new existence in the New World and conquering a new home. Released from all the old, paralyzing ideas of profession and position, environment and tradition, they snatch at every livelihood that offers itself, grasp at every sort of work, progressing step by step to the realization that honest labor, no matter of what sort, disgraces no one. I, too, was determined to leap into this new world, with both feet, and fight my way through.

I soon learned that there was always some kind of work to be had, but equally soon I found out how easy it was to lose it.

The uncertainty of earning my daily bread soon seemed to me one of the darkest sides of my new life.

The 'skilled' worker does not find himself out on the street as frequently as the unskilled; but he is not entirely immune to this fate either. And in his case the loss of livelihood owing to lack of work is replaced by the lock-out, or by going on strike himself.

In this respect the entire economy suffers bitterly from the individual's insecurity in earning his daily bread.

The peasant boy who goes to the big city, attracted by the easier nature of the work (real or imaginary), by shorter hours, but most of all by the dazzling light emanating from the metropolis, is accustomed to a certain security in the matter of livelihood. He leaves his old job only when there is at least some prospect of a new one. For there is a great lack of agricultural workers, hence the probability of any long period of unemployment is in itself small. It is a mistake to believe that the young fellow who goes to the big city is made of poorer stuff than his brother who continues to make an honest living from the peasant sod. No, on the contrary: experience shows that all those elements which emigrate consist of the healthiest and most energetic natures, rather than conversely. Yet among these 'emigrants' we must count, not only those who go to America, but to an equal degree the young farmhand who resolves to leave his native village for the strange city. He, too, is prepared to face an uncertain fate. As a rule he arrives in the big city with a certain amount of money; he has no need to lose heart on the very first day if he has the ill fortune to find no work for any length of time. But it is worse if, after finding a job, he soon loses it. To find a new one, especially in winter, is often difficult if not impossible. Even so, the first weeks are tolerable. He receives an unemployment benefit from his union funds and manages as well as possible. But when his last cent is gone and the union, due to the long duration of his unemployment, discontinues its payments, great hardships begin. Now he walks the streets, hungry; often he pawns and sells his last possessions; his clothing becomes more and more wretched; and thus he sinks into external surroundings which, on top of his physical misfortune, also poison his soul. If he is evicted and if (as is so often the case) this occurs in winter, his

misery is very great. At length he finds some sort of job again. But the old story is repeated. The same thing happens a second time, the third time perhaps it is even worse, and little by little he learns to bear the eternal insecurity with greater and greater indifference. At last the repetition becomes a habit.

And so this man, who was formerly so hard-working, grows lax in his whole view of life and gradually becomes the instrument of those who use him only for their own base advantage. He has so often been unemployed through no fault of his own that one time more or less ceases to matter, even when the aim is no longer to fight for economic rights, but to destroy political, social, or cultural values in general. He may not be exactly enthusiastic about strikes, but at any rate he has become indifferent.

With open eyes I was able to follow this process in a thousand examples. The more I witnessed it, the greater grew my revulsion for the big city which first avidly sucked men in and then so cruelly crushed them.

When they arrived, they belonged to their people; after remaining for a few years, they were lost to it.

I, too, had been tossed around by life in the metropolis; in my own skin I could feel the effects of this fate and taste them with my soul. One more thing I saw: the rapid change from work to unemployment and vice versa, plus the resultant fluctuation of income, end by destroying in many all feeling for thrift, or any understanding for a prudent ordering of their lives. It would seem that the body gradually becomes accustomed to living on the fat of the land in good times and going hungry in bad times. Indeed, hunger destroys any resolution for reasonable budgeting in better times to come by holding up to the eyes of its tormented victim an eternal mirage of good living and raising this dream to such a pitch of longing that a pathological desire puts an end to all restraint as soon as wages and earnings make it at all possible. The consequence is that once the man obtains work he irresponsibly forgets all ideas of order and discipline, and begins to live luxuriously for the pleasures of the moment. This upsets even the small weekly budget, as even here any intelligent ap-

in reality, everything remained as before, except that the discontent was greater.

Like a menacing storm-cloud, the 'free trade union' hung, even then, over the political horizon and the existence of the individual.

It was one of the most frightful instruments of terror against the security and independence of the national economy, the solidity of the state, and personal freedom.

And chiefly this was what made the concept of democracy a sordid and ridiculous phrase, and held up brotherhood to everlasting scorn in the words: 'And if our comrade you won't be, we'll bash your head in — one, two, three!'

And that was how I became acquainted with this friend of humanity. In the course of the years my view was broadened and deepened, but I have had no need to change it.

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The greater insight I gathered into the external character of Social Democracy, the greater became my longing to comprehend the inner core of this doctrine.

The official party literature was not much use for this purpose. In so far as it deals with economic questions, its assertions and proofs are false; in so far as it treats of political aims, it lies. Moreover, I was inwardly repelled by the new-fangled pettifoggery and the style in which it was written. With an enormous expenditure of words, unclear in content or incomprehensible as to meaning, they stammer an endless hodgepodge of phrases purportedly as witty as in reality they are meaningless. Only our decadent metropolitan bohemians can feel at home in this maze of reasoning and cull an 'inner experience' from this dung-heap of literary dadaism, supported by the proverbial modesty of a section of our people who always detect profound wisdom in what is most incomprehensible to them personally. However, by balancing the theoretical untruth and nonsense of this doctrine with the reality of the phenomenon, I gradually obtained a clear picture of its intrinsic will.

At such times I was overcome by gloomy foreboding and malignant fear. Then I saw before me a doctrine, comprised of egotism and hate, which can lead to victory pursuant to mathematical laws, but in so doing must put an end to humanity.

Meanwhile, I had learned to understand the connection between this doctrine of destruction and the nature of a people of which, up to that time, I had known next to nothing.

*Only a knowledge of the Jews provides the key with which to comprehend the inner, and consequently real, aims of Social Democracy.*

The erroneous conceptions of the aim and meaning of this party fall from our eyes like veils, once we come to know this people, and from the fog and mist of social phrases rises the leering grimace of Marxism.

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Today it is difficult, if not impossible, for me to say when the word 'Jew' first gave me ground for special thoughts. At home I do not remember having heard the word during my father's lifetime. I believe that the old gentleman would have regarded any special emphasis on this term as cultural backwardness. In the course of his life he had arrived at more or less cosmopolitan views which, despite his pronounced national sentiments, not only remained intact, but also affected me to some extent.

Likewise at school I found no occasion which could have led me to change this inherited picture.

At the *Realschule*, to be sure, I did meet one Jewish boy who was treated by all of us with caution, but only because various experiences had led us to doubt his discretion and we did not particularly trust him; but neither I nor the others had any thoughts on the matter.

Not until my fourteenth or fifteenth year did I begin to come across the word 'Jew,' with any frequency, partly in connection with political discussions. This filled me with a mild distaste, and I could not rid myself of an unpleasant feeling that always came

over me whenever religious quarrels occurred in my presence.

At that time I did not think anything else of the question.

There were few Jews in Linz. In the course of the centuries their outward appearance had become Europeanized and had taken on a human look; in fact, I even took them for Germans. The absurdity of this idea did not dawn on me because I saw no distinguishing feature but the strange religion. The fact that they had, as I believed, been persecuted on this account sometimes almost turned my distaste at unfavorable remarks about them into horror.

Thus far I did not so much as suspect the existence of an organized opposition to the Jews.

Then I came to Vienna.

Preoccupied by the abundance of my impressions in the architectural field, oppressed by the hardship of my own lot, I gained at first no insight into the inner stratification of the people in this gigantic city. Notwithstanding that Vienna in those days counted nearly two hundred thousand Jews among its two million inhabitants, I did not see them. In the first few weeks my eyes and my senses were not equal to the flood of values and ideas. Not until calm gradually returned and the agitated picture began to clear did I look around me more carefully in my new world, and then among other things I encountered the Jewish question.

I cannot maintain that the way in which I became acquainted with them struck me as particularly pleasant. For the Jew was still characterized for me by nothing but his religion, and therefore, on grounds of human tolerance, I maintained my rejection of religious attacks in this case as in others. Consequently, the tone, particularly that of the Viennese anti-Semitic press, seemed to me unworthy of the cultural tradition of a great nation. I was oppressed by the memory of certain occurrences in the Middle Ages, which I should not have liked to see repeated. Since the newspapers in question did not enjoy an outstanding reputation (the reason for this, at that time, I myself did not precisely know), I regarded them more as the products of anger and envy than the results of a principled, though perhaps mistaken, point of view.

I was reinforced in this opinion by what seemed to me the far more dignified form in which the really big papers answered all these attacks, or, what seemed to me even more praiseworthy, failed to mention them; in other words, simply killed them with silence.

I zealously read the so-called world press (*Neue Freie Presse*, *Wiener Tageblatt*, etc.) and was amazed at the scope of what they offered their readers and the objectivity of individual articles. I respected the exalted tone, though the flamboyance of the style sometimes caused me inner dissatisfaction, or even struck me unpleasantly. Yet this may have been due to the rhythm of life in the whole metropolis.

Since in those days I saw Vienna in that light, I thought myself justified in accepting this explanation of mine as a valid excuse.

But what sometimes repelled me was the undignified fashion in which this press curried favor with the Court. There was scarcely an event in the Hofburg which was not imparted to the readers either with raptures of enthusiasm or plaintive emotion, and all this to-do, particularly when it dealt with the 'wisest monarch' of all time, almost reminded me of the mating cry of a mountain cock.

To me the whole thing seemed artificial.

In my eyes it was a blemish upon liberal democracy.

To curry favor with this Court and in such indecent forms was to sacrifice the dignity of the nation.

This was the first shadow to darken my intellectual relationship with the 'big' Viennese press.

As I had always done before, I continued in Vienna to follow events in Germany with ardent zeal, quite regardless whether they were political or cultural. With pride and admiration, I compared the rise of the Reich with the wasting away of the Austrian state. If events in the field of foreign politics filled me, by and large, with undivided joy, the less gratifying aspects of internal life often aroused anxiety and gloom. The struggle which at that time was being carried on against William II did

not meet with my approval. I regarded him not only as the German Emperor, but first and foremost as the creator of a German fleet. The restrictions of speech imposed on the Kaiser by the Reichstag angered me greatly because they emanated from a source which in my opinion really hadn't a leg to stand on, since in a single session these parliamentarian imbeciles gabbled more nonsense than a whole dynasty of emperors, including its very weakest numbers, could ever have done in centuries.

I was outraged that in a state where every idiot not only claimed the right to criticize, but was given a seat in the Reichstag and let loose upon the nation as a 'lawgiver,' the man who bore the imperial crown had to take 'reprimands' from the greatest babblers' club of all time.

But I was even more indignant that the same Viennese press which made the most obsequious bows to every rickety horse in the Court, and flew into convulsions of joy if he accidentally swished his tail, should, with supposed concern, yet, as it seemed to me, ill-concealed malice, express its criticisms of the German Kaiser. Of course it had no intention of interfering with conditions within the German Reich — oh, no, God forbid — but by placing its finger on these wounds in the friendliest way, it was fulfilling the duty imposed by the spirit of the mutual alliance, and, conversely, fulfilling the requirements of journalistic truth, etc. And now it was poking this finger around in the wound to its heart's content.

In such cases the blood rose to my head.

It was this which caused me little by little to view the big papers with greater caution.

And on one such occasion I was forced to recognize that one of the anti-Semitic papers, the *Deutsches Volksblatt*, behaved more decently.

Another thing that got on my nerves was the loathsome cult for France which the big press, even then, carried on. A man couldn't help feeling ashamed to be a German when he saw these saccharine hymns of praise to the 'great cultural nation.' This wretched licking of France's boots more than once made me

throw down one of these 'world newspapers.' And on such occasions I sometimes picked up the *Volksblatt*, which, to be sure, seemed to me much smaller, but in these matters somewhat more appetizing. I was not in agreement with the sharp anti-Semitic tone, but from time to time I read arguments which gave me some food for thought.

At all events, these occasions slowly made me acquainted with the man and the movement, which in those days guided Vienna's destinies: Dr. Karl Lueger<sup>1</sup> and the Christian Social Party.

When I arrived in Vienna, I was hostile to both of them.

The man and the movement seemed 'reactionary' in my eyes.

My common sense of justice, however, forced me to change this judgment in proportion as I had occasion to become acquainted with the man and his work; and slowly my fair judgment turned to unconcealed admiration. Today, more than ever, I regard this man as the greatest German mayor of all times.

How many of my basic principles were upset by this change in my attitude toward the Christian Social movement!

My views with regard to anti-Semitism thus succumbed to the passage of time, and this was my greatest transformation of all.

It cost me the greatest inner soul struggles, and only after months of battle between my reason and my sentiments did my reason begin to emerge victorious. Two years later, my sentiment had followed my reason, and from then on became its most loyal guardian and sentinel.

At the time of this bitter struggle between spiritual education and cold reason, the visual instruction of the Vienna streets had performed invaluable services. There came a time when I no longer, as in the first days, wandered blindly through the mighty city; now with open eyes I saw not only the buildings but also the people.

<sup>1</sup> Karl Lueger (1844-1910). In 1897, as a member of the anti-Semitic Christian Social Party, he became mayor of Vienna and kept the post until his death. At first opposed by the Court for his radical nationalism and anti-Semitism, toward the end of his career he became more moderate and was reconciled with the Emperor.

Once, as I was strolling through the Inner City, I suddenly encountered an apparition in a black caftan and black hair locks. Is this a Jew? was my first thought.

For, to be sure, they had not looked like that in Linz. I observed the man furtively and cautiously, but the longer I stared at this foreign face, scrutinizing feature for feature, the more my first question assumed a new form:

Is this a German?

As always in such cases, I now began to try to relieve my doubts by books. For a few hellers I bought the first anti-Semitic pamphlets of my life. Unfortunately, they all proceeded from the supposition that in principle the reader knew or even understood the Jewish question to a certain degree. Besides, the tone for the most part was such that doubts again arose in me, due in part to the dull and amazingly unscientific arguments favoring the thesis.

I relapsed for weeks at a time, once even for months.

The whole thing seemed to me so monstrous, the accusations so boundless, that, tormented by the fear of doing injustice, I again became anxious and uncertain.

Yet I could no longer very well doubt that the objects of my study were not Germans of a special religion, but a people in themselves; for since I had begun to concern myself with this question and to take cognizance of the Jews, Vienna appeared to me in a different light than before. Wherever I went, I began to see Jews, and the more I saw, the more sharply they became distinguished in my eyes from the rest of humanity. Particularly the Inner City and the districts north of the Danube Canal swarmed with a people which even outwardly had lost all resemblance to Germans.

And whatever doubts I may still have nourished were finally dispelled by the attitude of a portion of the Jews themselves.

Among them there was a great movement, quite extensive in Vienna, which came out sharply in confirmation of the national character of the Jews: this was the *Zionists*.

It looked, to be sure, as though only a part of the Jews ap-

proved this viewpoint, while the great majority condemned and inwardly rejected such a formulation. But when examined more closely, this appearance dissolved itself into an unsavory vapor of pretexts advanced for mere reasons of expedience, not to say lies. For the so-called liberal Jews did not reject the Zionists as non-Jews, but only as Jews with an impractical, perhaps even dangerous, way of publicly avowing their Jewishness.

Intrinsically they remained unalterably of one piece.

In a short time this apparent struggle between Zionistic and liberal Jews disgusted me; for it was false through and through, founded on lies and scarcely in keeping with the moral elevation and purity always claimed by this people.

The cleanliness of this people, moral and otherwise, I must say, is a point in itself. By their very exterior you could tell that these were no lovers of water, and, to your distress, you often knew it with your eyes closed. Later I often grew sick to my stomach from the smell of these caftan-wearers. Added to this, there was their unclean dress and their generally unheroic appearance.

All this could scarcely be called very attractive; but it became positively repulsive when, in addition to their physical uncleanness, you discovered the moral stains on this 'chosen people.'

In a short time I was made more thoughtful than ever by my slowly rising insight into the type of activity carried on by the Jews in certain fields.

Was there any form of filth or profligacy, particularly in cultural life, without at least one Jew involved in it?

If you cut even cautiously into such an abscess, you found, like a maggot in a rotting body, often dazzled by the sudden light — a kike!<sup>1</sup>

What had to be reckoned heavily against the Jews in my eyes was when I became acquainted with their activity in the press, art, literature, and the theater. All the unctuous reassurances helped little or nothing. It sufficed to look at a billboard, to study

<sup>1</sup> *Sowie man nur vorsichtig in eine solche Geschwulst hineinschnitt, fand man, wie die Made im faulenden Leibe, oft ganz geblendet vom plötzlichen Lichte, ein Jüdlein.*

the names of the men behind the horrible trash they advertised, to make you hard for a long time to come. This was pestilence, spiritual pestilence, worse than the Black Death of olden times, and the people was being infected with it! It goes without saying that the lower the intellectual level of one of these art manufacturers, the more unlimited his fertility will be, and the scoundrel ends up like a garbage separator, splashing his filth in the face of humanity. And bear in mind that there is no limit to their number; bear in mind that for one Goethe Nature easily can foist on the world ten thousand of these scribblers who poison men's souls like germ-carriers of the worse sort, on their fellow men.

It was terrible, but not to be overlooked, that precisely the Jew, in tremendous numbers, seemed chosen by Nature for this shameful calling.

Is this why the Jews are called the 'chosen people'?

I now began to examine carefully the names of all the creators of unclean products in public artistic life. The result was less and less favorable for my previous attitude toward the Jews. Regardless how my sentiment might resist, my reason was forced to draw its conclusions.

The fact that nine tenths of all literary filth, artistic trash, and theatrical idiocy can be set to the account of a people, constituting hardly one hundredth of all the country's inhabitants, could simply not be talked away; it was the plain truth.

And I now began to examine my beloved 'world press' from this point of view.

And the deeper I probed, the more the object of my former admiration shriveled. The style became more and more unbearable; I could not help rejecting the content as inwardly shallow and banal; the objectivity of exposition now seemed to me more akin to lies than honest truth; and the writers were — Jews.

A thousand things which I had hardly seen before now struck my notice, and others, which had previously given me food for thought, I now learned to grasp and understand.

I now saw the liberal attitude of this press in a different light;

the lofty tone in which it answered attacks and its method of killing them with silence now revealed itself to me as a trick as clever as it was treacherous; the transfigured raptures of their theatrical critics were always directed at Jewish writers, and their disapproval never struck anyone but Germans. The gentle pin-pricks against William II revealed its methods by their persistency, and so did its commendation of French culture and civilization. The trashy content of the short story now appeared to me as outright indecency, and in the language I detected the accents of a foreign people; the sense of the whole thing was so obviously hostile to Germanism that this could only have been intentional.

But who had an interest in this?

Was all this a mere accident?

Gradually I became uncertain.

The development was accelerated by insights which I gained into a number of other matters. I am referring to the general view of ethics and morals which was quite openly exhibited by a large part of the Jews, and the practical application of which could be seen.

Here again the streets provided an object lesson of a sort which was sometimes positively evil.

The relation of the Jews to prostitution and, even more, to the white-slave traffic, could be studied in Vienna as perhaps in no other city of Western Europe, with the possible exception of the southern French ports. If you walked at night through the streets and alleys of Leopoldstadt,<sup>1</sup> at every step you witnessed proceedings which remained concealed from the majority of the German people until the War gave the soldiers on the eastern front occasion to see similar things, or, better expressed, forced them to see them.

When thus for the first time I recognized the Jew as the cold-hearted, shameless, and calculating director of this revolting vice traffic in the scum of the big city, a cold shudder ran down my back.

<sup>1</sup> Second District of Vienna, separated from the main part of the city by the Danube Canal. Formerly the ghetto, it still has a predominantly Jewish population.

But then a flame flared up within me. I no longer avoided discussion of the Jewish question; no, now I sought it. And when I learned to look for the Jew in all branches of cultural and artistic life and its various manifestations, I suddenly encountered him in a place where I would least have expected to find him.

When I recognized the Jew as the leader of the Social Democracy, the scales dropped from my eyes. A long soul struggle had reached its conclusion.

Even in my daily relations with my fellow workers, I observed the amazing adaptability with which they adopted different positions on the same question, sometimes within an interval of a few days, sometimes in only a few hours. It was hard for me to understand how people who, when spoken to alone, possessed some sensible opinions, suddenly lost them as soon as they came under the influence of the masses. It was often enough to make one despair. When, after hours of argument, I was convinced that now at last I had broken the ice or cleared up some absurdity, and was beginning to rejoice at my success, on the next day to my disgust I had to begin all over again; it had all been in vain. Like an eternal pendulum their opinions seemed to swing back again and again to the old madness.

All this I could understand: that they were dissatisfied with their lot and cursed the Fate which often struck them so harshly; that they hated the employers who seemed to them the heartless bailiffs of Fate; that they cursed the authorities who in their eyes were without feeling for their situation; that they demonstrated against food prices and carried their demands into the streets: this much could be understood without recourse to reason. But what inevitably remained incomprehensible was the boundless hatred they heaped upon their own nationality, despising its greatness, besmirching its history, and dragging its great men into the gutter.

This struggle against their own species, their own clan, their own homeland, was as senseless as it was incomprehensible. It was unnatural.

It was possible to cure them temporarily of this vice, but only

for days or at most weeks. If later you met the man you thought you had converted, he was just the same as before.

His old unnatural state had regained full possession of him.

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I gradually became aware that the Social Democratic press was directed predominantly by Jews; yet I did not attribute any special significance to this circumstance, since conditions were exactly the same in the other papers. Yet one fact seemed conspicuous: there was not one paper with Jews working on it which could have been regarded as truly national, according to my education and way of thinking.

I swallowed my disgust and tried to read this type of Marxist press production, but my revulsion became so unlimited in so doing that I endeavored to become more closely acquainted with the men who manufactured these compendiums of knavery.

From the publisher down, they were all Jews.

I took all the Social Democratic pamphlets I could lay hands on and sought the names of their authors: Jews. I noted the names of the leaders; by far the greatest part were likewise members of the 'chosen people,' whether they were representatives in the Reichsrat or trade-union secretaries, the heads of organizations or street agitators. It was always the same gruesome picture. The names of the Austerlitzes, Davids, Adlers, Ellenbogens, etc., will remain forever graven in my memory. One thing had grown clear to me: the party with whose petty representatives I had been carrying on the most violent struggle for months was, as to leadership, almost exclusively in the hands of a foreign people; for, to my deep and joyful satisfaction, I had at last come to the conclusion that the Jew was no German.

Only now did I become thoroughly acquainted with the seducer of our people.

A single year of my sojourn in Vienna had sufficed to imbue me with the conviction that no worker could be so stubborn that

he would not in the end succumb to better knowledge and better explanations. Slowly I had become an expert in their own doctrine and used it as a weapon in the struggle for my own profound conviction.

Success almost always favored my side.

The great masses could be saved, if only with the gravest sacrifice in time and patience.

But a Jew could never be parted from his opinions.

At that time I was still childish enough to try to make the madness of their doctrine clear to them; in my little circle I talked my tongue sore and my throat hoarse, thinking I would inevitably succeed in convincing them how ruinous their Marxist madness was; but what I accomplished was often the opposite. It seemed as though their increased understanding of the destructive effects of Social Democratic theories and their results only reinforced their determination.

The more I argued with them, the better I came to know their dialectic. First they counted on the stupidity of their adversary, and then, when there was no other way out, they themselves simply played stupid. If all this didn't help, they pretended not to understand, or, if challenged, they changed the subject in a hurry, quoted platitudes which, if you accepted them, they immediately related to entirely different matters, and then, if again attacked, gave ground and pretended not to know exactly what you were talking about. Whenever you tried to attack one of these apostles, your hand closed on a jelly-like slime which divided up and poured through your fingers, but in the next moment collected again. But if you really struck one of these fellows so telling a blow that, observed by the audience, he couldn't help but agree, and if you believed that this had taken you at least one step forward, your amazement was great the next day. The Jew had not the slightest recollection of the day before, he rattled off his same old nonsense as though nothing at all had happened, and, if indignantly challenged, affected amazement; he couldn't remember a thing, except that he had proved the correctness of his assertions the previous day.

Sometimes I stood there thunderstruck.

I didn't know what to be more amazed at: the agility of their tongues or their virtuosity at lying.

Gradually I began to hate them.

All this had but one good side: that in proportion as the real leaders or at least the disseminators of Social Democracy came within my vision, my love for my people inevitably grew. For who, in view of the diabolical craftiness of these seducers, could damn the luckless victims? How hard it was, even for me, to get the better of this race of dialectical liars! And how futile was such success in dealing with people who twist the truth in your mouth, who without so much as a blush disavow the word they have just spoken, and in the very next minute take credit for it after all.

No. The better acquainted I became with the Jew, the more forgiving I inevitably became toward the worker.

In my eyes the gravest fault was no longer with him, but with all those who did not regard it as worth the trouble to have mercy on him, with iron righteousness giving the son of the people his just deserts, and standing the seducer and corrupter up against the wall.

Inspired by the experience of daily life, I now began to track down the sources of the Marxist doctrine. Its effects had become clear to me in individual cases; each day its success was apparent to my attentive eyes, and, with some exercise of my imagination, I was able to picture the consequences. The only remaining question was whether the result of their action in its ultimate form had existed in the mind's eye of the creators, or whether they themselves were the victims of an error.

I felt that both were possible.

In the one case it was the duty of every thinking man to force himself to the forefront of the ill-starred movement, thus perhaps averting catastrophe; in the other, however, the original founders of this plague of the nations must have been veritable devils; for only in the brain of a monster — not that of a man — could the plan of an organization assume form and meaning, whose activity