

**The Jewish Middle Class in Vienna
in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries**

Erika Weinzierl

Emeritus Professor of History

University of Vienna

Working Paper 01-1

October 2003

*©2003 by the **Center for Austrian Studies (CAS)**. Permission to reproduce must generally be obtained from CAS. Copying is permitted in accordance with the fair use guidelines of the U.S. Copyright Act of 1976. CAS permits the following additional educational uses without permission or payment of fees: academic libraries may place copies of CAS Working Papers on reserve (in multiple photocopied or electronically retrievable form) for students enrolled in specific courses; teachers may reproduce or have reproduced multiple copies (in photocopied or electronic form) for students in their courses. Those wishing to reproduce CAS Working Papers for any other purpose (general distribution, advertising or promotion, creating new collective works, resale, etc.) must obtain permission from the Center for Austrian Studies, University of Minnesota, 314 Social Sciences Building, 267 19th Avenue S., Minneapolis MN 55455. Tel: 612-624-9811; fax: 612-626-9004; e-mail: casahy@tc.umn.edu*

Introduction: The Rise of the Viennese Jewish Middle Class

The rapid burgeoning and advancement of the Jewish middle class in Vienna commenced with the achievement of fully equal civil and legal rights in the Fundamental Laws of December 1867 and the inter-confessional Settlement (*Ausgleich*) of 1868. It was the victory of liberalism and the constitutional state, a victory which had immediate and phenomenal demographic and social consequences. In 1857, Vienna had a total population of 287,824, of which 6,217 (2.16 per cent) were Jews. In 1923, the percentage of Jews reached its zenith with 10.8 per cent, i.e., 201,513 of 1,865,780 inhabitants, including the large influx of war refugees from Galicia and elsewhere.¹ In addition to the boom in publications (from Johnston to Schorske to Wistrich) on nineteenth-century and fin-de-siècle Vienna and the part played by Jews therein, Marsha L. Rozenblit and Steven Beller have, within the past couple of decades, written extensive, modern, statistically based accounts on the Vienna Jews in that period. They along with John and Lichtblau's *Schmelztiegel Wien* form the basis of the following reflections.²

In the last decades of the nineteenth century, liberalism, secularism, capitalism, urbanization, nationalism, socialism, the Christian-Social movement and anti-Semitism were the predominant, in part mutually conflicting developments. That the Jews, after centuries of exclusion from Christian society, could succeed now, in this tumultuous time, in developing their own bourgeoisie and cultural ascendancy in Vienna is one of the most fascinating phenomena in all of Jewish history. The *Hofjuden* (court Jews) of previous centuries, the few aristocrats of wealth such as Rothschild, Eskeles, Arnstein or Wertheimstein, who had been present already since the early nineteenth century—these were exceptional. The *Toleranzpatent* (Edict of Toleration) issued by Emperor Joseph II in 1782 had, indeed, delivered Jews from the ghetto “to be of better use to the state,” Germanized their names and language and given them access to army and university. Jews had made use of these reforms. The great breakthrough, however, did not come with emancipation in the late eighteenth century but with the granting of equal rights in the mid-nineteenth century.

Vienna attracted Jewish immigrants from the other Habsburg provinces. A partial evaluation of the census of 1857 shows that 25 percent of the Vienna Jews had been born in Hungary, 20 percent in Vienna, 15 percent in Moravia, 10 percent in Galicia, 4 percent in Bohemia, 2 percent in other parts of the Habsburg monarchy and 5 percent outside its boundaries. By the 1880 census, the percentage of Vienna's Jews born in Vienna had risen to 30 percent, while those born in Hungary were now the second-largest group with 28 percent; the number of those born in Bohemia had risen slightly, while that of the Moravian Jews had declined.

From the census of 1900, which indicated the religious affiliation of non-naturalized residents, we see that 45,055 of the 49,784 non-naturalized Vienna residents of Judaic faith had come from the Hungarian half of the Dual Monarchy—a number now representing 30.6 percent of all Jews (regardless of legal status) then found in Vienna. The influx of Jews from Galicia and Bukovina,

meanwhile, did not assume substantial proportions until the last decades of the 19th century, and during World War I a great number of Jews fled from Galicia and Bukovina to Vienna.³ Overall, while Vienna attracted a broad spectrum of migrants from the Habsburg lands and the city's total population between 1869 and 1910 had increased by 234 percent, its Jewish population had grown by some 336 percent.⁴

The Jewish emigrants usually came with their entire families, thus also including women of childbearing age, which was usually not the case among non-Jewish immigrants. This also meant that the Jewish women in Vienna came from the same parts of the monarchy as the Jewish men.⁵ The Jews of the early immigration waves from Bohemia, Moravia and Hungary were relatively prosperous. Some of them already belonged to the middle class on arrival or quickly ascended to its ranks. The richest immigrant Jews came from Bohemia, followed by the Hungarian Jews of the second wave of immigration in the sixties and seventies of the nineteenth century. The Galician Jews, who immigrated between 1870 and 1910, were generally the poorest and represented also a more "eastern," less Germanized culture and were thus largely looked down upon by the other Jews in Vienna. The richest Viennese Jews were the ones who had been born in the city. Jews with right of residence in Vienna are listed twice as often in the tax records of the *Israelitische Kultusgemeinde* (IKG) than would correspond to their total percentage among Viennese Jews.⁶ Since the age of individual immigrants is not considered in the studies of Rozenblit and Beller, the age structure of Jewish society in Vienna must be deduced from the relatively high number of secondary school and university students among the Jews residing in Vienna. Young and middle-aged persons seem to have predominated among the immigrants to Vienna, many of whom then grew old as residents of the city.

Professionally, Jews continued to be active in their traditional occupations—trade and financial transactions—until the middle of the nineteenth century. They quickly became aware of the opportunities that the new age had opened up for them. In 1870, however, 55.6 percent of Jewish grooms still were active in trade, according to the registers of the IKG; after 1910 the figure was only 33.3 percent. The number of white-collar employees had risen, meanwhile, from 2.8 percent to 35.2 percent—the largest change in the professional and social composition of the Jews in Vienna. An increase in the number of self-employed persons became, around 1870, a primary point of attack for anti-Semitic propaganda. The enemies of the Jews did not realize, however, that the most significant transformation in the Jewish segment of society was actually in the rise in the number of the white-collar employees, who formed thereby an essential constituent of bourgeois Jewish society—a society that previously had not existed. In any case, consistent with their previous history, the portion of Jews who were laborers was never above 4 percent. Emerging in the decades of delayed, overheated industrialization, the proletariat of Vienna came from the small farming milieu and from families of small artisans, who had become the victims of

industrialization. Accordingly, even the poorest new Jewish immigrants, first crowded together in the very confined quarters of the Leopoldstadt and Brigittenau, were peddlers, occasional workers or even unemployed, but not proletarians in the Marxist sense of the word.

With regard to religion, 90 percent of observant Jews were Ashkenazim, i.e., Jews from Germany, Central and Eastern Europe. A small minority were Sefardim, descendants of Spanish and Portuguese Jews. In the 18th century, a number of Sephardic families moved to Vienna from the Ottoman Empire and contributed to trade with the Orient, followed by more in the nineteenth century. In the second half of the century there were more than one hundred Sephardic families, who also erected their own Turkish synagogue. It, along with more than forty other Jewish synagogues and houses of prayer, was burned down in the pogrom of the *Kristallnacht* of 1938. The mystic Hasidism founded by Israel ben Eliezer (known later as Ba'al Shem Tov, or Master of the Good Name) (1700-1760), which included some Sephardic customs also was practiced in Vienna, arriving there relatively late along with the Hasidic immigrants from Galicia and Bukovina.⁷

As mentioned above, the highest official religious institution was the *Israelitische Kultusgemeinde* (IKG), which from 1852 was authorized to administer the religious and philanthropic affairs of the majority Ashkenazic community in Vienna. Prior to 1890, its board consisted of twenty wealthy, renowned men; subsequently, the board had more members. Because the IKG was restricted in the range of its activities, there arose also a large number of other Jewish humanitarian, caritative and social organizations in Vienna. The most renowned one was the fraternal organization B'nai Brith that had been founded in the United States. Sigmund Freud was a member of this prestigious society.⁸ Most assimilated Jews also belonged to such organizations, and Jewish middle-class families contributed in large measure to charitable events.

The demographic statistics regarding the development of the Jewish community in Vienna may be illustrated with specific biographical examples. In 1847, Sigmund Mayer, the son of a Pressburg (Bratislava) textile merchant, traveled with his father up the Danube to study in Vienna. In 1850, he passed the *Matura*, the *Gymnasium* graduation examination. While he wanted to study law and earn a doctorate in legal studies, his mother believed that it would be more promising to continue his father's business. Sigmund had wanted to pursue an academic profession at a time when this wish could hardly yet be fulfilled for a Jew. Accordingly, he followed his mother's advice and became, subsequently, one of the most renowned textile factory owners of the monarchy and a leading member of the Viennese Jewish community.

Mayer was a member of the second or third generation which succeeded indeed in climbing up the professional ladder, but not yet necessarily in the desired career. The fathers of Theodor Herzl and Sigmund Freud had also been tradesmen. Marsha Rozenblit explicitly disagrees with the Jewish journalist Arnold Höllriegl and with Carl Schorske when she argues that the ascent of sons of merchants to intellectual or artistic professions was not yet the typical one

for up-and-coming Jews in the last decades of the nineteenth century. While *Bildung* or education certainly was an important aspiration, and the number of educated Jews—in particular lawyers and doctors—continued to rise, the first big structural change in employment categories was, as already mentioned, the shift toward white-collar work. The pioneers of a new, specifically Jewish employment structure comprising white-collar employees, salesmen, and managers did not, however, have much opportunity for structural assimilation with their non-Jewish confreres. For this reason, several Jewish professional associations emerged toward the end of the last century.⁹

Between 1870 and 1910, an average of two fifths of Viennese Jews were merchants (40.8 percent), one fourth were commercial and trade employees (salesmen) (25.5 percent), 12 percent artisans, 11.3 percent self-employed, 4.3 percent workers, 3.5 percent industrialists and 2.6 percent civil servants.¹⁰ The self-employed included those artists who, together with scientists and scholars, made fin-de-siècle Vienna Europe's cultural capital. While I share this estimation of Vienna's position with Schorske, Steven Beller, by contrast, argues that there was not just one, but rather a number of cultural centers of equal ranking—Paris above all. Further, he asserts that no non-Jewish, liberal bourgeois class existed in Vienna and that in this sense the Jews served as Vienna's "Protestants."¹¹ In any case, although 11 percent of Jews marrying between 1870 and 1910 already were jurists, doctors and journalists, their numbers did not really begin to rise significantly before the twentieth century. In the public sector, there was not yet a single Jewish civil servant in 1880, but by 1910 already 4 percent of those marrying belonged to this category. Among them, the highest ranking were university professors, while the majority held positions in the postal or railroad services; Jews did not have access to ministerial level positions.¹²

The situation was different with the university professors in the Medical Faculty, and it is here that Jews made some of the earliest advances to full or nearly full equality and recognition, even if they encountered more difficulties than their non-Jewish colleagues. Sigmund Freud, for instance, became *Privatdozent* for neuropathology in 1885, in 1890 the Medical Faculty asked the Ministry of Education to appoint him *tit. außerordentlicher Professor*, and in 1902 he finally received this title. However, he himself never sought this appointment from the faculty.¹³

I will name but a few of the early Jewish professors of the First Vienna School of Medicine: the dermatologists Isidor Neumann (1832-1906)¹⁴ and Moritz Kaposi (1837-1902),¹⁵ the pathologist Salomon Stricker (1834-1898),¹⁶ the ear specialist Adam Politzer (1835 -1920),¹⁷ the anatomist Emil Zuckerkandl (1849 -1910),¹⁸ the physiologist Ernst Fleischl v. Marxow (1846 -1891),¹⁹ and the ophthalmologist Ludwig Mauthner (1840 -1894).²⁰ The second Vienna School of Medicine (after 1848)²¹ included two Nobel laureates: Karl Landsteiner (1868-1943), the serologist and discoverer of the blood groups²² and the physiologist Barany (1876-1936).²³ Some of them were born in Vienna.

It is not the task of this lecture to deal with the internationally known leading figures of fin-de-siècle Vienna. Instead, I will devote part of my lecture to the illustrative life story of physiologist Josef Breuer (1842-1925). As his biographer Albrecht Hirschmüller has correctly noted, Breuer certainly has remained among the less famous men of this period.²⁴ Despite his important contribution to the beginnings of psychoanalysis as a collaborator of Freud and co-author of the *Studies on Hysteria* published in 1895, he has been overshadowed almost entirely by the latter. He was also a leading physiologist as well as the father-in-law of Professor Kann, whom we are honoring here today. Breuer's family history and career reflect many aspects of the upward mobility experienced by Jews in Vienna during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Josef Breuer, Physiologist: An Individual Example

Josef Breuer's father Leopold Breuer was born in Karlsburg in Hungary on January 8, 1791. Leopold's father had been an impoverished village surgeon and had died at an early age, while the mother was alive still in the 1830s. Leopold attended the rabbinical school in Mattersburg near Pressburg. From here he accompanied his famous teacher, the rabbi Moshe Sofer, to Pressburg where the largest rabbinical school of the monarchy was located. Here, students were trained to become orthodox rabbis. From Pressburg, Leopold Breuer continued to Prague at the age of fifteen to acquaint himself with additional branches of learning. He then became a tutor for Leon Pollak in Pest while concurrently busying himself with issues in pedagogy, Bible exegesis, and history of religion; he also learned Latin and Greek.

In 1836, he obtained a position as instructor of religion at the Vienna *Kultusgemeinde*, presumably through the helpful intervention of his friend, the Viennese rabbi Mannheim. He taught there for twenty-two years, meanwhile building up the school library and writing a number of books, which were recommended by the ministry of education to be used as textbooks. As an instructor in religion Breuer was not uncontroversial, especially after 1848, "when Vienna was inundated by relatively uneducated and impoverished *Ostjuden*."²⁵ Being rigidly orthodox, these "eastern Jews" wanted to see parochial schooling limited to religious instruction and the learning of the Hebrew language, whereas Breuer, along with other enlightened and assimilated Jews wanted to prepare modern Jewish children for a scholarly or bourgeois life and its demands even in the context of religious training. When, in 1849, a second instructor in religion was hired, Breuer of his own accord resigned from his position because of these differences.

In 1840 Leopold Breuer had married the 22-year old Bertha Semler who came from an old, long resident "tolerated" Viennese Jewish family. Bertha's father was a merchant of silk goods, and her brother, Salomon, was a merchant of spirits. The latter belonged to the so-called *Ludlamshöhle*, "an organization, in which a number of members of the educated bourgeoisie—in particular, however, writers, musicians and actors—came together and indulged in harmless, often

child-like high spirited pastimes.”²⁶ The marriage of Leopold and Bertha produced two sons: Josef, born on January 15, 1842 and Adolf, after whose birth in 1844 the mother died. The maternal grandmother assumed the responsibility of raising the children. Leopold Breuer never married again. When Josef set up house, Leopold moved in with him. He died on August 24, 1872. Adolf died in 1874 at the age of thirty.²⁷

Because his father taught him at home, Josef Breuer did not attend any primary school. At the age of four he was able to read. In 1850, he began attending the *Akademisches Gymnasium*, one of Vienna’s most traditional and prestigious secondary schools. His favorite subjects were German and the natural sciences. He was an excellent student and passed his final exams with honors on July 22, 1858. He had decided already at an early age to become a doctor. In the winter semester of 1858/59, since his father recommended that he begin with one year of general studies, he enrolled at the University in the liberal arts curriculum. It was the heyday of the Second Vienna School of Medicine, whose point of departure was Rokitansky’s new school of pathology. In the winter semester of 1859/60, Josef Breuer started studying medicine under Rokitansky as well as others such as Skoda, Brücke, Oppolzer and Hebra. The psychologist Ernst Brücke (1819-1892) and the internal specialist Johann Oppolzer (1808-1871) exerted the strongest influence on Breuer. After the prescribed minimum ten semesters of study, Breuer completed his final examination in the summer semester of 1864 and became Dr. Med. on July 1st of that year.²⁸ In 1877, he also obtained a doctorate in surgery, which at that time still existed as a separate field and which, along with a master’s degree in obstetrics, was required for public positions.²⁹

On January 26, 1867 Oppolzer proposed Breuer to the faculty as a candidate for the position of assistant, since his predecessor, Dr. Johann Schnitzler, the father of Dr. Arthur Schnitzler, had resigned from the position. Breuer became Oppolzer’s best collaborator, but did not plan, initially, to seek a *Venia legendi*.³⁰ After Oppolzer’s unexpected death from typhus, Breuer might have become his successor, since he had the best qualifications, but preference was given to an otherwise weaker candidate who, however, was a *Dozent*. Breuer subsequently left the clinic in 1871 and settled in Vienna’s First District as a general practitioner.³¹

In 1873/74 he published his findings on a sensational discovery, namely, the function of the semicircular canals in the inner ear and their relation to positional sense or balance. At this juncture he did apply for his *Venia legendi*, which was approved by the ministry on March 20, 1874. From the winter semester of 1875/76 to the summer semester of 1885, Breuer lectured on various topics in internal medicine, sometimes with accompanying demonstrations. Unlike the *Ordinari*, *Privatdozenten* could only with great difficulty obtain the few patients needed for live demonstrations. Therefore, Breuer gave up his *Dozent* position in 1885—a move which was then unprecedented; subsequently, a *Dozent* position was to be rejected also by the surgeon Moritz Schuster (1855-1920) in the 1890s, in this case in order to change professions altogether. Also in

1885, an initiative undertaken on Breuer's behalf to secure for him a position as head of the Third Medical Department of the General Hospital failed. Breuer then devoted himself exclusively to his thriving private practice and studies in which he achieved the significant physiological discoveries that are named after him.³²

Josef Breuer had a large circle of patients and friends. He had known Sigmund Freud since 1878. In 1882, he introduced Freud to the case of Anna O. (Bertha Pappenheim), whom Breuer had treated by himself between 1880 and 1882. For many years subsequently, Breuer and Freud worked together on developing psychoanalytic theory. The article "On the Psychic Mechanisms of Hysterical Phenomena: A Preliminary Report" (1893) was developed by the two of them, and they appeared as coauthors of the 1895 *Studies in Hysteria*. However, because Breuer did not fully accept Freud's strong emphasis on the role of sexuality in the development of neuroses and for other reasons, their previously close and friendly relations were broken afterwards.³³ Another of Breuer's particularly good friends was the already cited pathologist Ernst Fleischl von Marxov. Moreover, his circle included, among others, Sigmund Exner, Anton von Frisch, and Carl Bettelheim. His teachers Brücke, Dumreicher, Billroth, Kaposi and others were his patients. Breuer acted as friend and for many decades as family doctor in the Wertheimstein and Gomperz families, who were the leading Viennese Jewish families after the "unreachable" Rothschilds. He had contacts with the young Hugo Wolf for several years. His friendship with his patient Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach was particularly close; their rich and steady correspondence—which spanned a period of almost twenty-seven years—was later published by Robert A. Kann.³⁴

In 1868, Josef Breuer had married Mathilde Altmann, four years his junior and the youngest daughter of the wealthy spirits merchant Salomon Altmann; Mathilde's brother Leopold supported penniless artists. The happy marriage of Joseph and Mathilde produced five children: two sons and three daughters. The oldest son, Robert Breuer (1869-1936), followed in his father's footsteps to become a doctor. He was Professor Nothnagel's assistant in 1898, obtained his *venia legendi* in 1902, and in 1904 became head of the clinic at the IKG hospital—a position that he held until his death. He was a great music aficionado and held the final vigil at Johannes Brahms' deathbed. In 1906, Robert Breuer married Johanna (1883-1965), the daughter of the pianist and composer Ignaz Brüll.³⁵ The oldest child of this marriage was the daughter Marie born on August 30, 1907. Her nickname was Mariedl. Her younger and only brother Josef, born in 1913, became a doctor like his father and grandfather before him. Marie married Robert A. Kann in 1937, and their children Peter and Marilyn were born in 1942 and 1948, respectively—already in America. Marie's mother and brother also came to the United States; they died in New York in 1965 and 1999, respectively.

Robert Kann, Historian: The Jewish Middle Class Diaspora of the Twentieth Century

With the story of Robert and Mariedl Kann and their family, we have come to the fateful break in the history of Vienna's Jewish community, which, after experiencing more than half a century of remarkable progress and productivity significant not only for Vienna and Austria but for European culture in general, was abruptly dispersed or annihilated. The flight of many members of the Jewish middle class from Vienna after 1938 became, in effect, a new diaspora. While this diaspora transferred its talents and energies to the enrichment of their newfound homelands, it has left in the city of its source a gap both demographic and cultural.

Like his parents, Robert A. Kann was born in Vienna, on February 11, 1906.³⁶ However, the earlier generations on both sides illustrate, once again, the patterns of migration that had brought so many Jewish people to Vienna during the nineteenth century. The paternal family tree can be followed back to Frankfurt am Main and the house "Zur Kanne" in the 16th century.³⁷ Robert Kann's paternal grandfather had been born in Pressburg (Bratislava), but was already in Vienna when he married in 1828. He was a merchant and his wife, a Bohemian by birth, had come to Vienna via Nikolsburg in Moravia. The maternal grandfather, Univ. Doz. Dr. Ignaz Eisenschütz, was a pediatrician and had been born in Pressburg, but attended the *Akademisches Gymnasium* in Vienna; one of his secondary school friends and colleagues at the university was Josef Breuer. The maternal grandmother, née Koritschoner, was from a family that had already resided in Vienna under Emperor Francis I.

Robert Kann's father, Leo Kann, had become a *Privatbeamter*, a non-governmental white collar employee, instead of a merchant, and was very interested in art and literature. Robert, like his maternal grandfather, graduated from the *Akademisches Gymnasium*. He then went on to study law at the University of Vienna. He might have found history and German studies more interesting, but the only professional prospects he associated with these studies were those of a secondary school teacher. The law professors who impressed him most included, in particular, Hans Kelsen, Alfred Verdroß and Hans von Voltolini. Yet, as he himself has said, the greatest benefit of his law studies was the fact that already in the first semester he had met fellow student Marie Breuer, with whom he was wed in 1937 and lived harmoniously until his death. In 1930, he became Dr. Jur. From 1930 to 1938, he worked for the Austrian courts and as a lawyer, a profession he did not hold in very high esteem. The so-called *Anschluss* of Austria to Hitler's *Reich* in March of 1938 made it impossible for Kann to continue his professional activities in Austria. In July 1938, he emigrated with his wife to England where they waited for the entry visa to America. In January of 1939, they arrived in New York, where they remained initially.

Since this is not intended to be an obituary and since his student Stanley B. Winters—one of nine who received their doctorates under Kann in the United States—has already paid tribute to his American career from 1939 to 1976,³⁸ I would like to name only the most important stations

and works of this great historian. Until 1941, in New York, he worked as a librarian. He did not seek to continue in the legal profession here in America. As he said, “Anyone who witnesses a legal order built up over centuries of cultural life suddenly sink does not so easily embark on the arduous task of studying a new one.”³⁹ Instead, he studied history at Columbia and received his PhD in 1946. Concurrently, from 1941 to 1945 he was, for the first year as an assistant and then as a member, at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton where he completed much of the research and writing for his dissertation. In 1946-47 he worked as associate professor at the Associated Colleges of Upper New York at Sampson, after which he took a position, again as associate professor, in modern European history at Rutgers University. In 1956, he was promoted to full professorship. During his time at Rutgers, he also served as visiting professor at Princeton, Columbia, the University of Vienna and at Vienna’s Diplomatic Academy. He retired from Rutgers in 1976.

Robert Kann received numerous honors and played an important part in furthering the study of Austrian history. In 1972, the Philosophy Faculty at the University of Salzburg awarded him an honorary doctorate. In 1981, he was named honorary professor for life at the University of Vienna. He was a corresponding member of the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Vienna and honorary functionary of a number of American historical societies. He was also co-editor of the *Austrian History Yearbook*, *Central European History* and the *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism*. He received a number of honors and prizes, including the Great Golden Medal of the Republic of Austria.

Kann’s scholarly oeuvre is so extensive that only his most important works can be listed here. Inspired by the ideas of Professor Carlton J. H. Hayes at Columbia University, he decided to do a comprehensive study of the various attempts made by Austria in the past to solve its nationalities problems, in order to see how these might relate to the issues involved in the post-World War Two settlement in Europe.⁴⁰ This resulted in his dissertation and the first volume of his monumental two-volume standard book, *The Multinational Empire*, that was originally published by Columbia University in 1950. In 1964, the German edition, *Das Nationalitätenproblem der Habsburgermonarchie* appeared.⁴¹ Kann did not stop with this great book. Particularly enlightening are his cultural historical studies of Abraham a Sancta Clara and Joseph Sonnenfels contained in his book, *A Study in Austrian Intellectual History* published in 1960.⁴² His studies in the Vienna archives enabled him to make discoveries that provided new insights into the Sixtus affair and the secret peace negotiations of Austria-Hungary during World War One.⁴³

Robert Kann brought to his historical research and writing an Austrian perspective and an insider’s expertise—assets which doubtless enhanced his ability to further the study of Austrian history and culture in the United States. Since the early fifties, Kann had studied the role and influence of Franz Ferdinand, the successor to the Habsburg throne who was assassinated in 1914.

This resulted in the *Franz Ferdinand Studies*.⁴⁴ Since the early sixties, Kann had been publishing articles on the subject of restoration, which appeared as a collection in 1974.⁴⁵ One of his last major works was *A History of the Habsburg Empire, 1526-1918*.⁴⁶ In 1980 he published, together with the Bavarian historian Friedrich Prinz, a “bilateral history book” for Germany and Austria.⁴⁷

In addition to writing, Kann also reedited the letters and notes of Professor Theodor Gomperz (first edited by the latter’s son Heinrich in 1936), adding biographical material (1974).⁴⁸ In this book on the great classical philologist and philosopher Gomperz, who was born in Brno in 1832, one finds an animated account of the topic of this lecture: the life of the Jewish middle class in the last decades of the 19th century. In contrast with two of his brothers, Theodor Gomperz did not seek nobility; his family was related by marriage with the Wertheimstein family and in constant contact with them. The Gomperz family also were close friends with the poet Eduard von Bauernfeld (1802-1890). The author of the present work, who in her thoughts has been living almost exclusively in this bygone society over the past few months, herself lives on Bauernfeldgasse—a street in Vienna’s Döbling neighborhood named after this poet. This street is located right next to the lovely Wertheimsteinpark that Franziska von Wertheimstein (1844-1907) endowed for the City of Vienna.⁴⁹ On Gomperz, I would like to add that he viewed anti-Semitism as a trend of the times, “that members of the Jewish faith community could evade through complete assimilation and conversion to a Christian church.”⁵⁰ Tragically, this advice would not save even those who followed it.

Further Contributions of the Viennese Jewish Middle Class

We have seen from the biographies of Josef Breuer and Robert Kann examples of the contributions made by Viennese Jews in the fields of medicine and scholarship first in Vienna itself and then also in the broader world. Jews also made a significant contribution to legal studies and figured relatively early as professors in the Faculty of law. One of the most important figures for our period was Julius Glaser (died 1884), born in Postelberg, Bohemia in 1831 and author of the manual of criminal procedure. In 1860 he was appointed professor at the University of Vienna, and from 1871 to 1879 he served as Austria’s Minister of Justice.⁵¹ Another leading figure was Viennese-born Joseph Unger (1828-1913), the reformer of Austrian civil law, 1871-79 minister without portfolio and 1881-1913 the president of the *Reichsgericht*.⁵² Both were baptized as children, but it would not be fair to not include them among the Jewish community. The leading social law experts were not active at the university but rather as politicians. Such were the Viennese Emil Steinbach (1846-1907), Minister of Finance 1891-1893, and Julius Ofner, born in a small northern Bavarian town in 1845 and died in Vienna in 1924, who from 1901 to 1918 was a middle class-democratic parliamentarian.⁵³ Steinbach had himself baptized as an adult, while

Ofner remained a Jew. It may be noted that the careers of these men confirm that unconverted Jews were not to be found in ministerial positions under the Habsburgs.

According to an anti-Semitic memorandum of 1894, there were two *ordentliche* and fourteen *ausserordentliche* Jewish professors and thirty-seven Jewish *Privatdozenten* (both of the latter categories were unpaid at the time) in the Vienna University.⁵⁴ Regarding the proportion of Jewish students, between 1880 and 1926 high figures were found in law (22.0 – 25.81 percent) and especially in medicine (33.84 – 48 percent); overall, the percentage of Jewish students was 33 percent between 1881 and 1891, 29.2 percent in 1891-1896, 24.8 percent in 1896- 1901, and 23.7 percent in 1901-1904. In absolute numbers, also, there was a fall in the 1891-1901 period.⁵⁵ In 1882, a small group of Viennese Jewish students founded the academic organization known as “Kadimah”, the first Jewish-national student movement in Western Europe.⁵⁶ The number of Jewish doctors was high already in 1880, with 1,016 out of 2,140 (47.43%; or 61% in 1881 according to a different source). In 1890, 394 out of 681 lawyers (57.92%) were Jewish.⁵⁷

A lot has been said about the meaning of the *Gymnasium* for the social ascent of the liberal, educated bourgeoisie, but little data has been cited in this connection. Between 1870 and 1910, there were eleven schools in the central districts of Vienna that led up to the *Matura*, two of which were so-called *Realgymnasien*, the Sperlgynasium and the Mariahilfer Gymnasium. At the end of the century, 10 percent of the total population of Vienna were Jews, while approximately 30 percent of the *Gymnasium* students were Jewish. In the downtown districts (1st –9th districts) the proportion was even higher (1870-1883, an average of 26.8 percent; 1884-1897, 32.5 percent; and 1898-1910, 35.3 percent).⁵⁸

Women in Vienna as elsewhere in the nineteenth century had restricted access to education and employment opportunities. There were no female university professors, judges, or civil servants with an academic background and there were no female university students until the end of the nineteenth century. Between 1871 and 1891, the Wiener Frauenerwerbsverein (Viennese Women’s Professional Association) founded “Bildungsschulen,” six-grade girls’ secondary schools with a curriculum based on belles lettres – schools that were attended also by Jewish girls. When Marianne Hainisch wanted to found a girls’ secondary school in 1870, she did not succeed. In 1878, the Ministry of Culture and Education permitted women to take the school-leaving examination, but did not allow the marks of this examination to be entered in their report card which was mandatory for access to the universities. In 1896, the ministry allowed girls at the age of eighteen to take their final examination at certain boys’ secondary schools, but retained the restrictions on the posting of grades.

A Jewish woman, Dr. Eugenie Schwarzwald, founded one of the first girls’ *Realgymnasium*, on Wallnerstrasse in 1911/12—an exemplarily modern school—⁵⁹ before a *lycée* was opened on Albertgasse in 1912/13 and on Sperlasse in 1914. The only humanistic Gymnasium for girls in

Vienna until 1938, the one on Rahlgasse, was established in 1892 by Marianne Hainisch. Initially it had only six grades, but as of 1902/04 there were eight grades. From the beginning it had excellent teachers as, for instance, the outstanding classical philologist Dr. Gertrud Herzog-Hauser who was also director of the school before 1933. Since she was Jewish, she had to leave the school after March 13, 1938

Even though education did not help Jewish girls to pursue professional careers, wealthy and educated Jews nevertheless set great store by providing their daughters also with a good education, above all in modern languages, music and literature—that is to say, the foundation for educated social conduct. Some of the wealthiest Jews also had private tutors for their daughters, but the *lycée* was the school of choice. In 1895/96, 57 percent of all Viennese *lycée* students were Jewish, and their number continued to rise especially after the turn of the century. Two thirds of the students of the Schwarzwald-Schule and every student at the Dr. Amalie Sobel-Lyzeum and at the Dr. Olga Ehrenhaft-Steindler-Lyzeum was Jewish. At the Rahlgasse school, Jewish girls accounted for 43.3 percent of the students. This number remained constant until 1938. When I entered the Rahlgasse school in the mid-thirties, thirteen of the twenty-six girls in my class were Jewish. The professions of the fathers of the girls at the Schwarzwald Girls Lyzeum also are indicative: in 1890/91, 53.5 percent were merchants or salesmen (Kaufleute), 18.6 percent factory owners, 14 percent self-employed and 3.5 percent artisans.⁶⁰

Until the end of the nineteenth century Jewish students, like all other girls, were permitted only to audit lectures at the university level. Thanks to the efforts of the Viennese “Association for Expanded Women’s Training” that existed since 1888 and the reports of the medical faculties, women were accepted as regular and irregular students at the philosophical faculties of the universities of the monarchy beginning with the winter semester of 1897/98. Women were allowed to study medicine as of fall 1900. Before then a doctorate in medicine could only be acquired at foreign universities, for instance in Zurich. The longest path was the one leading to *Habilitation* or *venia legendi*. Dr. Elise Richter, who had acquired her *venia legendi* in 1907 in the Department of Romance Languages and Literature, which was part of the Faculty of Philosophy in the Vienna University, perished at Theresienstadt in 1942.

Though not quite as scintillating as the Jewish salons at the beginning of the nineteenth century, such as that of Fanny von Arnstein, the salons of Jewish women—primarily the wealthier ones—were important focal points of bourgeois social life in the *fin de siècle*. Josephine von Wertheimstein was one of the first mentors and confidants of the young Hugo von Hoffmannsthal.⁶¹ The salon of the young woman Bertha Zuckerkandl-Szeps (1864-1945)⁶² was also a significant cultural and political center of society. This daughter of the newspaper czar Moritz Szeps (1835-1902) was married to the famous anatomist Emil Zuckerkandl (1849-1910). Her sister Sophia was married in 1886 to the brother of Georges Clemenceau, the future prime minister of France. Bertha

had been a confidant of the crown prince Rudolf and tried, albeit futilely, to mediate peace during World War I.

The lives of most bourgeois Jewish women were, of course, very different than those of Wertheimstein and Zuckerkandl-Szeps. If their husbands ran medium-sized or small businesses, the women usually helped out in the shop. Their main task was to be a good mother and wife, to cook kosher meals, to make all the different preparations for the Sabbath and the religious festivals and to promote their children's education and career. Sigmund Freud's mother was, for instance, the driving force behind his studies. Marion A. Kaplan has written an excellent book on the role of women in Jewish bourgeois society in imperial Germany.⁶³ However, the necessary groundwork for an Austrian equivalent is still lacking. It is possible only to make a very general comparison between Germany and Austria with regard to women's access to academic education and Jewish women's organizations, which appeared earlier in the German Empire than in the Habsburg monarchy.

The real domain of Jewish women was, as already said, the home—the one-room-and-kitchen apartment in the Leopoldstadt, often occupied by up to eight persons, **or** the upper bourgeois apartment with its many rooms, the villas, and a few *palais*. The Wertheimstein home in Döbling that I already mentioned consisted of a dignified *Biedermeier* house and a large Jugendstil villa. Leopoldstadt and Döbling marked the poor and rich poles of Jewish residence. The impoverished immigrants, mainly from Eastern Europe, settled in the Leopoldstadt. In 1880, 48.3 percent of the Viennese Jews lived there, a third of the total population of the Leopoldstadt; Brigittenau—today Vienna's twentieth district—belonged to Leopoldstadt until 1900. When Jews began moving up both socially and economically, they moved to the first district. The area around Salzbrunn was certainly Vienna's Textile Quarter and still remains so in part today, even if there are only a few isolated Jewish shops to be found there any longer. In 1880, 17.1 percent of Viennese Jews lived in the first district, accounting for 17.9 percent of the total population of this district. In 1910 this figure was only 6.2 percent. The ninth district, known as Alsergrund, ranked third in terms of Jewish inhabitants. Mainly doctors settled in the vicinity of the General Hospital. In 1880, 9.5 percent of Viennese Jews lived here, accounting for 10.1 percent of the inhabitants of this district; in 1910, these figures were 12.2 percent and 20.5 percent, respectively. Here, the assimilated Jews sought community. Not only did Sigmund Freud live at Berggasse 19, but also Dr. Victor Adler, the unifying force behind Austria's Social Democrats and erstwhile doctor for the poor. The third district, known as Landstrasse, had a Jewish population of 7.5 percent; in the sixth district (Mariahilf) it was 4 percent; and the seventh district (Neubau) had 4.2 percent. In all of the other districts the Jewish percentage of the population was less than 3 percent, as was also the case in Döbling with 1.1 percent in 1880 and 2.2 percent in 1910.⁶⁴

Today, Jewish life is only visible in the Leopoldstadt with its orthodox Jews, congregating on the Sabbath in the vicinity of the smaller synagogues there. The loss that the Shoah has inflicted not only on European Judaism in general but specifically on Viennese Judaism and thus all of Viennese culture is irretrievable. Yet, it is in Vienna where the traces of the great contributions made by Jewish citizens in the few decades of their full emancipation in the period between 1867 and 1938 are still visible and tangible in a number of areas. This became especially clear to me while I was formulating the reflections that I have just presented to you.*

Notes:

- ¹ Leo Goldhammer, *Die Juden Wiens. Eine statistische Studie* (Vienna: R. Löwit Verlag, 1927), 9.
- ² Marsha L. Rozenblit, *Die Juden Wiens, 1867-1914. Assimilation und Identität* (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 1988); Steven Beller, *Wien und die Juden 1867-1938*, trans. Marie Therese Pitner (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 1993); and Michael John and Albert Lichtblau, *Schmelztiegel Wien-einst und jetzt. Zur Geschichte und Gegenwart von Zuwanderung und Minderheiten. Aufsätze, Quellen, Kommentare* (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 1990).
- ³ John and Lichtblau, *Schmelztiegel Wien*, 33. "Hungary" here includes the city of Pressburg (Bratislava) now in Slovakia and the Burgenland, today one of the states of Austria.
- ⁴ Rozenblit, *Die Juden Wiens*, 22, 24 table 2.1.
- ⁵ Rozenblit, *Die Juden Wiens*, 31.
- ⁶ Rozenblit, *Die Juden Wiens*, 43-54. The *Israelitische Kultusgemeinde* or IKG was the officially recognized representative organ of the Judaic religious community. From 1794 to 1938, the IKG kept the official records of Jewish births, marriages, deaths, and conversions. From 1855 to 1931, it kept also the tax records of those who paid at least 20 Kronen annually (Rozenblit, *Die Juden Wiens*, 11, 197).
- ⁷ John and Lichtblau, *Schmelztiegel Wien*, 34-5.
- ⁸ Sigmund Mayer, *Die Wiener Juden: Kommerz, Kultur, Politik, 1700-1900* (Vienna: R. Löwit Verlag, 1918), 459; Rozenblit, *Die Juden Wiens*, 152-7.
- ⁹ Rozenblit, *Die Juden Wiens*, 56-7.
- ¹⁰ Rozenblit, *Die Juden Wiens*, 58.
- ¹¹ Beller, *Wien und die Juden*, 264.
- ¹² Rozenblit, *Die Juden Wiens*, 59-61.
- ¹³ Cf. for example Kurt Robert Eissler, *Sigmund Freud und die Wiener Universität: Über die Pseudo-Wissenschaftlichkeit der jüngeren Wiener Freud-Biographik* (Bern: Hans Huber, 1966), 13, 16, 25.
- ¹⁴ Erna Lesky, *Die Wiener Medizinische Schule im 19. Jahrhundert* (Graz: Böhlau, 1965), 351-4.
- ¹⁵ Lesky, *Wiener Medizinische Schule*, 345-9.
- ¹⁶ Lesky, *Wiener Medizinische Schule*, 549-58.
- ¹⁷ Lesky, *Wiener Medizinische Schule*, 423-32.
- ¹⁸ Lesky, *Wiener Medizinische Schule*, 509-12.
- ¹⁹ Lesky, *Wiener Medizinische Schule*, 538-40.
- ²⁰ Lesky, *Wiener Medizinische Schule*, 479-82.
- ²¹ Lesky, *Wiener Medizinische Schule*, 124-9.
- ²² Österreich-lexikon I, 676.
- ²³ Österreich-lexikon I, 84.
- ²⁴ Albrecht Hirschmüller, *Physiologie und Psychoanalyse im Leben und Werk Josef Breuers* (Berne: Huber, 1978).
- ²⁵ Hirschmüller, *Physiologie und Psychoanalyse*, 21.
- ²⁶ Hirschmüller, *Physiologie und Psychoanalyse*, 21, quoting from the writings of Gomperz.
- ²⁷ Hirschmüller, *Physiologie und Psychoanalyse*, 21-2.
- ²⁸ Hirschmüller, *Physiologie und Psychoanalyse*, 25-33.
- ²⁹ Hirschmüller, *Physiologie und Psychoanalyse*, 43.
- ³⁰ This term is equivalent to the nowadays more commonly used *Habilitation*.
- ³¹ Hirschmüller, *Physiologie und Psychoanalyse*, 34-8.
- ³² Hirschmüller, *Physiologie und Psychoanalyse*, 38-46; 39, n. 129 has the data on Schuster.

³³ Hirschmüller, *Physiologie und Psychoanalyse*, 202-56 discusses the intellectual and personal relationship of Breuer and Freud in great detail. The break between the two men might date more exactly to October 1895, when Breuer reacted to Freud's further presentation of his theories "Über Hysterie" in a way that Freud found disappointing (pp. 231-2).

³⁴ Robert A. Kann, ed., *Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach – Dr. Josef Breuer. Ein Briefwechsel, 1889-1916* (Vienna: Bergland Verlag, 1969).

³⁵ Hermine Brüll Schwarz, *Ignaz Brüll und sein Freundeskreis: Erinnerungen an Brüll, Goldmark und Brahms* (Vienna: Rikola Verlag, 1922).

³⁶ The author would like to thank Mrs. Marie Kann, Princeton, for providing a *curriculum vitae* written by R. A. Kann and additional important information.

³⁷ R. Kann, C.V., 1.

³⁸ Stanley B. Winters, "Das Werden eines Historikers: Robert A. Kann in Amerika 1939-1976," *Österreich in Geschichte und Literatur* 29, no. 1 (1985): 1-19.

³⁹ Winters, "Das Werden eines Historikers," 2. R. Kann, C.V., 5.

⁴⁰ Robert Kann, C.V., 7.

⁴¹ Winters, "Das Werden eines Historikers," 12, n. 40 has the publishing history of this work.

⁴² Robert A. Kann, *A Study in Austrian Intellectual History: From Late Baroque to Romanticism* (New York: Praeger, 1960). German edition: *Kanzel und Katheder*, Vienna-Freiburg 1962.

⁴³ Robert A. Kann, *Die Sixtusaffäre und die geheimen Friedensverhandlungen Österreich-Ungarns im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Vienna: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 1966).

⁴⁴ Robert A. Kann, *Franz Ferdinand Studien* (München: R. Oldenbourg, 1976), published on the occasion of his seventieth birthday.

⁴⁵ Robert A. Kann, *The Problem of Restoration: A Study in Comparative Political History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968); *Die Restauration als Phänomen in der Geschichte* (Graz: Böhlau, 1974).

⁴⁶ Robert A. Kann, *A History of the Habsburg Empire, 1526-1918* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974).

⁴⁷ Robert A. Kann und Friedrich Prinz, *Deutschland und Österreich: Ein bilaterales Geschichtsbuch* (Vienna and Munich: Jugend und Volk, 1980).

⁴⁸ Theodor Gomperz, *Ein Gelehrtenleben im Bürgertum der Franz-Josefs-Zeit, Auswahl seiner Briefe und Aufzeichnungen 1869-1912*, explained and joined together as an account of his life by Heinrich Gompertz, reedited by Robert A. Kann (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1974).

⁴⁹ The author would like to share with the readers one of Robert Kann's letters to her, which illustrates not only the ongoing scholarly work in which he was engaged but also reveals a glimpse of his sense of humor and irony:

13 December 1967

Liebe Erika,

Ich glaube mich zu erinnern, daß ich Dir vor Weihnachten mitteilen wollte, ob ich eine Arbeit für den nächsten Band der MÖSTA nämlich die Korrespondenz Berchtold – Franz Ferdinand (Wiener und Prager Archiv) schreiben sole. Hantsch hat das keineswegs ausgeschöpft. Da ich inzwischen Mikrofilme aus dem Prager Archiv bekommen habe, würde ich das ganze—falls zeitlich nur irgend möglich—gern machen. Lasse mich bitte wissen, wann Du die Arbeit spätestens haben müßtest. Sobald Du die Schriftleitung niederlegst, kommt ja eine Mitarbeit für mich wohl kaum mehr in Frage.

In einem der mir von der Botschaft in Washington übermittelten Presseauszügen las ich die Ernennung Deines Paters zum Ordinarius an der Universität. Das ist noch schöner als die frühere Stellung u. ich gratuliere Dir u. ihm aufrichtig.

Mit sehr guten u. aufrichtigen Wünschen

Dein alter

R[obert]

Sah heute in der Furche über einem schönen Artikel Dein Bild. Ganz so heilig schaust Du in Wirklichkeit nicht aus!

⁵⁰ Kann, *Gomperz*, 21.

⁵¹ Josef Fraenkel, ed., *The Jews of Austria: Essays on Their Life, History and Destruction* (London: Valentine, Mitchell and Co., 1967), 29-30.

⁵² Fraenkel, *Jews of Austria*, 30-1.

⁵³ Fraenkel, *Jews of Austria*, 31-4.

⁵⁴ Hans Tietze, *Die Juden Wiens: Geschichte, Wissenschaft, Kultur*, reprint, Vienna 1987, 232.

⁵⁵ Beller, *Wien und die Juden*, 43.

⁵⁶ Robert S. Wistrich, Marie-Therese Pitner and Susanne Grabmayr, *Die Juden Wiens im Zeitaltern Kaiser Franz Josephs* (Vienna: Böhlau, 1999), 288.

⁵⁷ Beller, *Wien und die Juden*, 47.

⁵⁸ Beller, *Wien und die Juden*, 62.

⁵⁹ Robert Streibel, *Eugenie Schwarzwald und ihr Kreis* (Vienna: Picus, 1996).

⁶⁰ Rozenblit, *Die Juden Wiens*, 128-9.

⁶¹ Fraenkel, *The Jews of Austria*, 104-5.

⁶² Lucian O. Meysels, *In meinem Salon ist Österreich: Bertha Zuckerkandl und ihre Zeit* (Vienna: Herold, 1984). See also Bertha Zuckerkandl, *Österreich intim: Erinnerungen 1892-1942*, ed. Reinhard Federmann (Frankfurt/M.: Ullstein/Propyläen, 1970).

⁶³ Marion A. Kaplan, *The Making of the Jewish Middle Class: Women, Family and Identity in Imperial Germany* (New York : Oxford University Press, 1991).

⁶⁴ Rozenblit, *Die Juden Wiens*, 83-101.

* The author would like to thank Dr. Peter Malina and Rudolf Singer, Institute of Contemporary History, Robert Stumpf, Institute of History for bibliographic references, Claudia Rapp, Institute of Contemporary History for technical assistance and Camilla R. Nielsen for translating this text.