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Empire, Nationalism and the Jewish Question: Victor Adler and Otto Bauer

Wolfgang Maderthaner

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The Austrian State Archives, Nottendorfer Gasse 2, A-1030 Vienna, Austria; gdpost@oesta.gv.at;

Tel.: +43-1-7954-0100

Abstract: This paper uses the life and thought of two important figures in the history of Austrian socialism—Victor Adler and Otto Bauer—as a prism through which to examine the complex relationship between German nationalism, the Jewish Question and pro-Habsburgism among the early leadership of the Austrian Social Democratic Party.

Keywords: Victor Adler; Otto Bauer; Austria; Vienna; empire; socialism; Jews; Jewish Question; nationalism

1. Introduction

The predominance of intellectuals of Jewish origin in the leadership of Austrian Socialism is old news to historians, but only recently have they begun perusing the meaning of Jewishness for intellectuals who wanted above all to leave Judaism behind and be recognized as German. The relationship between German nationalism and socialist internationalism among the Austrian Socialists presents historians with a further challenge: How are Jewishness, German nationalism and internationalism to be reconciled? This article tackles the question through the biographies and writings of the two most prominent Austrian Socialist leaders: Victor Adler (1852–1918) and Otto Bauer (1881–1938). Focusing on the pre-WWI period and the Socialists in Austria-Hungary, the article explores yet another, altogether novel question: How did Empire, Socialism and Jews interact to generate Socialist support for the multinational Empire and to create the innovative Socialist program for federalist imperial reform, and how did the imperial project fit Socialist internationalism and German nationalism?

2. Victor Adler and the Imperial Question

The writer Manès Sperber, who came from a relatively prosperous Chassidic family in Austrian Galicia, recalls the 1916 assassination of the Austrian Minister-President Count Stürgkh, which took place when he was less than eleven years old:

Soon I myself was involved in the debate, which, although triggered by the assassination, was thoroughly unpolitical. Even Count Stürgkh was mentioned only peripherally, not without regret that he hadn't died peacefully in his bed. The conversation, ending only toward midnight, centered mainly on the Adler family. There was old Dr. Victor Adler, Comrade Doctor (as he was called by the Socialist workers throughout the country), a great man. Even the Kaiser, it was said, always treated him with respect. Such a man had certainly done everything to provide the best upbringing for his son Friedrich, who was also a doctor, perhaps even a professor. And now, suddenly, the almost inconceivable horror: he had learned from an extra edition that he, the venerable Dr. Victor Adler, was the father of a murderer. And everyone kept repeating the word *nebbikh*, Yiddish for *alas*,

and “The Good Lord, the Almighty, should preserve us from such a calamity!” No one neglected to recall the Kaiser from time to time, that poor suffering man: his wife had been assassinated, his son had died in the prime of life, his nephew, the pretender to the throne, had been gunned down at Sarajevo, and now he had to endure this misfortune with the count. The debaters didn’t refuse to show him sympathy, but they were deeply moved only by Victor Adler’s situation. What could, what would, what must this unhappy father do now? This question agitated them vehemently, as if each person had to make a fateful decision before dawn [1].

There is something peculiar about this retrospective rendition of a debate pursued with such emotion by the members of a rabbi family who had just escaped from Galicia to Vienna: It is the equation, implicitly communicated in the subtext and yet so obvious, of two personages, both of them sacrosanct, withdrawn, remote, elusive. Two absolute authorities onto whom one’s own wishes and desires could be projected, just as the fatal ordeals undergone by them seemed to even more forcefully reflect the anguish experienced by oneself. One is the Emperor, the first “bureaucrat of his countries”, chief protector of the Jews, a “demon of mediocrity” as Karl Kraus was to call him. The other: a neurologist, revolutionary, founder of a mass party, which was constituted in 1888–89 and was soon to become the most efficient and complex organization of the Austrian opposition.

The liberal intellectual Victor Adler, a figure paradigmatic for the history of both the labor movement and the Empire, may be best characterized as the creative embodiment of some of the more significant contradictions of his time and his milieu. Born in Prague, Adler was the wealthy son of a Jewish merchant family who had settled in Vienna and enjoyed commercial success. In his youth, a German nationalist, anti-Habsburg and committed to the republican ideals of the revolution of 1848, he converted to Protestantism in order, as he put it, to acquire for himself and his children an “entrance ticket” to German culture (*Entréebillet zur europäischen Kultur*), echoing the words of German Jewish poet Heinrich Heine nearly a century before. A fanatical admirer of Wagner and Nietzsche, he surrounded himself with a hand-picked group of young artists and intellectuals, including Hermann Bahr, Gustav Mahler, Hugo Wolf, and the historian Heinrich Friedjung. He was a medical doctor who like Sigmund Freud after him became an assistant to Theodor Meynert, the leading expert on the physiology of the brain, and studied in Paris with hypnotist Jean-Martin Charcot. His practice in Berggasse 19 (later the site of Freud’s famous apartment) served the poor, and he came into daily contact with the unspeakably wretched conditions of the proletariat. He was a newspaper editor whose reports on social conditions stirred people into thinking about the miserable fate of bricklayers and tram-drivers, giving direct insight into a social divide that had been considered unthinkable but existed only a short distance away from the splendor of the Ringstraße-boulevard. He was the founder and organizational genius behind a new style of democratic mass party that under his leadership attained a level of effectiveness and mobilisational capacity that had never previously been seen within the Empire. A rationalist in the tradition of the Enlightenment, he achieved, in an historic unspoken compromise with the crown against parliamentary privilege, universal male suffrage. He was also a dandy, a socialite, a regular guest at literary salons and an occasional visitor to the casinos of Monaco. Finally, he was an elder statesman, who as Foreign Minister transformed the leftovers of the Monarchy into a democratic republic and died on the day before the Republic was proclaimed [2].

An enlightenment figure and staunch rationalist, Victor Adler evolved a concept of modernization and civilization of the masses, while at the same time—as a passionate Wagnerian—always trying to stage-manage the populace as a *Gesamtkunstwerk*. A professed socialist and “privy councilor of the revolution” (“Hofrat der Revolution”), as he once ironically said to Friedrich Engels, Adler embodied and represented much of the social quality and cultural significance that distinguished the acculturated, upper-class Jewish society of Vienna.

It was a hypersensitive, highly nervous milieu, its identity and self-perception constantly under threat, which made it even more productive and creative; it was—to quote Malachi Hacohen—the

milieu of the *non-Jewish* Viennese Jews [3]. Modern, urban, secularized, it was affected more than any other milieu by the *crisis of liberalism*, which became virulent with the speculation crisis of 1873, and by the subsequent protest of a whole generation against the economic pragmatism of their liberal fathers. The year 1873 saw the onset of a long period of economic depression. Social stagnation and a severe decline of liberalism, which had come to political power only in 1867, created special conflicts and problems of identity for the sons of the Jewish immigrants—migrants who for their part had accomplished social advancement to middle- and upper-class levels only by hard work and renouncing cultural aspirations. The *young ones* (apart from Adler, among others, Sigmund Freud or Gustav Mahler) through their rebellion found their way to aestheticism, embracing art as a form of life—a revolt which was to culminate in the creation of a unique intellectual and elitist culture, offering a matrix for self-expression to the assimilated Viennese Jewish society [4].

A comprehensive process of social and economic transformation towards industrial, capitalist modernity had emancipated the Jews, who in turn formed an integral constituent of that modernity. The phenomenon of assimilation, its profile and its direction, are immediate products of this transformation process. It inspired a dream of complete acculturation into a nation that epitomized progress and cultural development, into an imagined ideal of *Deutschtum* [Germanness]. *Germanness* embodied the pure values and principles of the Enlightenment, of emancipation, progress, equal rights and freedom, in a word: of *culture*. According to this way of thinking, enlightenment, emancipation, culture, and German identity were fused into one indistinguishable entity [5]. Karl Kautsky, who lived in Vienna at the beginning of the 1880s, became at that time acquainted with Victor Adler and his social-liberal circle of friends:

A corona of intellectuals gathered around him—physicians, lawyers, musicians, journalists...All those belonging to this circle were interested in socialism, several were almost socialists. There was only one thing in which they differed from me, and this was their avowed, intense German nationalism. (...) The Austrian Jews at that time were the most fervent adherents of the idea of the Anschluss [6].

Nevertheless, this collective imagination, this common phantasma had no counterpart in reality; so into what (social and cultural) entity exactly were Vienna's Jews supposed to assimilate then? The aim of assimilating into an idealized German culture embodying the principles of the Enlightenment, emancipation, progress and equality, was in actual fact nothing but a "shared fantasy". For at the same time, substantial sectors of the German nationalist movement were making racist anti-Semitism the basis of their political and cultural program. Vienna's secular Jews were therefore seeking to integrate into an imaginary community, into their own projections of a population in which race, ethnicity, and "Jewishness" did not matter. Given their high level of visibility in society and their strong will to assimilate, they produced a distinct, separate culture far beyond any mere *hybrid*. Rather, theirs was an independent socio-cultural formation, which created its own variant of Jewish-German culture and played a vital role in the eruptive clustering of intellectual creativity in Vienna from 1900 through the interwar [7].

Within the realm of the multinational Austro-Hungarian Empire, with its eleven different constituent nationalities and wide variety of religious affiliations, most Austrian Jews had felt comfortable self-identifying as both loyal citizens of the Empire and its Emperor Franz-Joseph, and proud members of the German *Kulturnation*. The cultures of origin of the "Western" Jews in Vienna (those who had come from Bohemia and Moravia) were characterized by a ready reception of the reforms of Joseph II aiming at secularization and modernization. This went hand in hand with a genuinely Jewish enlightenment (*Haskalah*). They had gradually left behind their (religious-orthodox) traditions and allegiances. Supranational, cosmopolitan, and unswervingly loyal to the Habsburg dynasty—Viennese Jews are often referred to as having been the most loyal citizens of the monarchy, and they shared these characteristics with the majority of Jews throughout the empire ([3], p. 48). In fact, they were the only ethnic group which enthusiastically adopted the official state concept—which was and had to be a transnational one. Now, as we have seen, this basically

supranational outlook fused with the dream of acculturation and integration in an unconventional way, leading to an encompassing incorporation of what was “German”, the most advanced of European cultures. Cosmopolitanism, internationalism and the turn to *Germanness* were not at all contradictions, because the latter was understood as a cultural concept, as the adoption of the values and creations of the German Enlightenment.

Additionally, it is exactly this aspect which dominates the way in which Adler understood politics—all the more as the chairman and intellectual head of an internationalist Social Democracy which acted within an empire organized along pluralist and transnational principles. It was precisely *because* nationality to him was primarily the “expression of an intellectual outlook on life”, and *because* he identified with the social question, hence with social struggle, central aspects of the “preservation” of a nation’s “individuality”, that he did not identify an insoluble dichotomy in the problem of nationalism *vs.* internationalism. He said that he had never doubted

... that in this sense one could be a good nationalist and an international Social Democrat at the same time. Even more so, I may say that one who is seriously national must consequently become a communist [8].

Whereas the industrial and capitalist bourgeoisie would constitute an International of exploitation, Social Democracy should support a “truly national” policy. It should represent the whole of the nation and liberate the workers from social destitution by providing them with access to the national cultural heritage. The great agenda of the modern era—education, equality, progress, prosperity, culture—was not to be reserved for a small elite, but rather was to be turned into the “genuine universalism” of the entire nation. “Revolutionizing the minds”, would, according to Adler, be the immediate task, the actual goal of Social Democracy—a project designed to impart in the here and now a concrete notion of something better to come, a project aimed at civilizing and “culturalizing” the masses, *i.e.*, at the improvement of their living conditions, their social and, above all, cultural standards. Adler, thus, conceived of an egalitarian utopia the realization of which would call for mastership in empirical politics, with the prime target of winning, for the time being, the struggle for universal equal suffrage [9].

In this fight for the right to vote, which he led from the early 1890s on, Adler’s outstanding tactical capacities were to fully unfold. The mid-1880s had seen the initiation of an extremely dynamic drive towards industrialization in the manufacturing eras and enclaves of the Habsburg Monarchy, and particularly in the capital city, which made the free wage-laborer into the dominant type of worker. Above all, the “respectable”, skilled strata of the workforce, with stabilized social relations and an evolving capacity to develop long-term political strategies, took on an increasingly hegemonic role and became the principal social basis for a labor movement that was beginning to take shape. At the same time, a new leadership cadre around Adler entered the scene, with new political conceptions: mass organizations and a mass party, democratic constitutional strategies and social modernization. At a *Unifying Party Conference* (Einigungsparteitag) held in Hainfeld at the turn of 1888–89, the (extremely loose) organizational framework and the central tenets that had emerged in the previous years were made more concrete and accepted by a substantial majority of the “party”. There were no binding statutes and no executive; organizational centers and informal party leadership were provided by the editors of the recognized local party newspapers; workers’ educational bodies and specialist trades unions formed the “mass basis”—in 1890 it came to some 20,000 male workers and a few hundred women who were politically organized in this manner. However, drawing together grass-roots organizations at the national level, formulating a statute designed to act as a kind of constitutional framework, and electing an official Party Committee were all, technically speaking, illegal; the whole Party structure thus came into being in a slim *grey zone*. Yet, after only a few years Victor Adler was able to give highly positive reports on the situation in letters to Engels and Bebel. According to Adler, they had developed from being a “sect” or a “horde of rowdies” into a political party that had achieved proper recognition for itself [10]. He regarded their success as quite astonishing, not least because all their opponents, the authorities as well as

capitalists, were putting up no opposition to “quite incredible things such as the expansion of our organization” (ganz unmögliche Dinge wie den Ausbau unserer Organisation) [10].

Nonetheless, the only area of practical politics in which the still somewhat weak, provisionally organized party had so far had any significant effect was in exploiting the apparatus of street politics: marches, demonstrations and rallies. When in October 1893, after an election victory of the petit bourgeois, democratic movement of the “Young Czechs”, the majority government—clerical and feudal—of Prime-Minister Count Taaffe was deeply shaken, it submitted a draft for an election reform, which was to introduce universal manhood suffrage in the electoral curiae of cities and rural communities. This would be a crucial blow against upper-class liberalism while at the same time paralyzing lower-class nationalism by an upward swing of Social Democracy. The workers’ movement, as yet hardly perceived as a political force, acclaimed the draft as a direct success of their great street demonstrations; the labor unions as well as the “old radicals” gathered around Franz Schumeier and Wilhelm Ellenbogen vehemently pressed for a general strike in order to enforce the implementation of the reform. Exerting all his prestige, Adler, however, opposed a political strike (in close accord with Friedrich Engels). He was firmly convinced that a provocation of the stalwart military powers of the Empire would end disastrously for the nascent, as yet hardly consolidated movement—a movement which, as he argued at the Party Convention of 1894, could count no more than 137 gulden in the party funds. He stopped the agitation for universal suffrage, put the strike off to lengthy discussions at the Party Convention and was congratulated by Engels for “the manner in which you have lulled to sleep the general strike” (zu der Art, wie Du den Generalstreik in Schlummer gewiegt hast) ([10], p. 69).

When the outstanding economic boom of the years 1904–07 made the membership level of the unions rise from 190,000 to more than 500,000, and that of the party from 20,000 to more than 110,000, and when the Emperor at the same time intimidated the rebellious Magyar nobles by announcing universal suffrage for Hungary, the struggle for the right to vote was reopened at full volume. Adler now no longer ruled out the general strike as an ultimate means of political action, simultaneously changing over to that line of Lassalleian policy which he had rejected in 1893: The alliance with the dynasty and bureaucracy against the *Privilegienparlament*—an *unspoken historic compromise* between the Habsburgs and the working class. It was the Emperor who—out of the pragmatic consideration that only universal suffrage could give to the state that urgently needed social bracket against the centrifugal national tendencies—urged his Minister-President Gautsch to submit a franchise reform; and it was Adler who in the respective Parliamentary committee had to fight the case of reform against the tenacious opposition of the Imperial Council’s “historic parties”. He acquitted himself of this task with tactical brilliance. The Social Democrats had been organized as a *Minor International* (Kleine Internationale) in the form of a federation of national party fractions; in their Brno *nationalities program* of 1899 they had supported a reconfiguration of the Empire in the form of a federal state. Now, in an almost ironic turn, Social Democracy undertook the first step towards becoming a veritable state party. When in December 1906 universal and equal male suffrage became a reality, the Austrian workers’ party achieved its greatest victory up to that point and at the same time, not undeservedly, won the reputation of a *privileged imperial-royal Social Democracy* (*k. k. priv. Sozialdemokratie*) [11].

3. Otto Bauer and the Nationality Question

At about this time there had emerged from the left-wing Viennese student movement a new Marxist school, whose best known representatives include Max Adler, Karl Renner and Rudolf Hilferding. Somewhat later they were joined by Gustav Eckstein, Fritz Adler and Otto Bauer. During his seven years of exile in Vienna Leon Trotsky occasionally joined in the discussions that took place in the legendary Cafe Central; as he wrote in his memoirs:

These were very well-educated people who in many respects knew more than I did. I listened to their first discussion in the Cafe Central with lively, even respectful interest.

But very early on I was struck by something quite astonishing: these people were not revolutionaries [12].

Additionally, Trotsky was right: The *Austro-Marxist* school was definitely not a kind of recruiting pool for subversive operations. It rather stood in permanent tension with the literary avant-garde, the Austrian school of national economics (Emil Lederer, Eugen Böhm-Bawerk), the scientific epistemology of Ernst Mach, known as empiriocriticism, the refounding of psychology (Sigmund Freud and Alfred Adler) and the theory of positivist law developed by Hans Kelsen. As Otto Bauer wrote in a tribute to Max Adler, the Austro-Marxists were thus from the outset “rooted in academic soil, in debate with the intellectual currents of the academic world of that time” (verankert in akademischem Boden, in der Auseinandersetzung mit den Geistesströmungen der akademischen Welt dieser Jahre) [13]. They aimed overtly at linking the outcomes of Marxist thinking to the whole of modern intellectual life, *i.e.*, to the insights of contemporary philosophy and sociology; for them, Marxism was less a *Weltanschauung* than a fact-based science. In the tradition of Neo-Kantianism they were primarily concerned with developing an epistemology or a theory of scientific inquiry that saw Marxism as a positive social science and was open to new empirical insights. The rejection of one-sided economic determinism (or of the exclusive derivation of everything social and cultural from economic laws) took the Austro-Marxists in various directions, but initially it represented the attempt to explain social processes in their totality, explicitly employing the so-called “superstructure phenomena” (Überbauphänomene). However dominant the economic component remained, a central role in the historical process was attributed to human subjectivity and intentionality [14].

Without a doubt, Otto Bauer crystallized as the intellectual head of the circle, primarily because of a stunning study on the *Nationalities Question* that he had presented as a 24 years old student, establishing him as one of the leading theorists of the Socialist International. If Karl Renner was the theorist of the state and the law, and Max Adler the philosopher, the economist of Austro-Marxism was a medical doctor, Rudolf Hilferding. Similar to Bauer, he joined the first ranks of international socialist theory with his 1910 book *Das Finanzkapital*, which he had completed at the age of 28, and which Karl Kautsky labelled as “volume IV of *Das Kapital*” (der vierte Band des *Kapital*) [15]. Hilferding’s view that within the development of capitalism there were objective tendencies towards an almost quantitative (*vs.* qualitative) merging with Socialism can be found in the political and economic writings of Bauer and Renner, albeit with different political implications, and it became virtually a leitmotif of Austromarxist politics in the inter-war years [16]. However, whatever their specific political interests and respective theoretical accomplishments might have been, they had one thing in common: With the exception of Karl Renner (who was the fourteenth child of an impoverished winegrowing family from the bilingual German-Czech borderlands), the Austromarxists belonged to the milieu of the *non-Jewish Jews*.

Vienna had become a magnet for Jews from all areas of the Habsburg monarchy from 1848 onwards, when new professions and places of residence were opened to them and they were granted rights and duties equal to other Austrian citizens (although full Jewish emancipation was not made official until 1867). Bohemian and Moravian Jews were the first to begin moving to the imperial capital, followed by Hungarian Jews; from the late 1860s, a stream of Galician Jews also headed toward Vienna. By 1900, Vienna had become the city with the third-largest Jewish population in Europe after Warsaw and Budapest, although 80 percent of the Jews living in Vienna had not been born there [17]. By 1910, over 175,000 Jews lived in the city. Since the 1860s, therefore, the Jewish population had increased by twenty-eight times its size, compared to a mere fourfold increase in the overall population over the same period. Despite their relatively small percentage of the population, Vienna’s Jews made up a third of grammar school pupils and university students in the city and half of the medical students. Disproportionately represented in the press, the free professions, in salon, and coffeehouse culture, as well as in the upper middle classes, their influence on the economic and intellectual life of the city was considerable and undeniable. In certain areas, such as the patronage

of arts and sciences, Jews also began to take on the functions and positions of the established aristocracy [18].

All in all, over 90% of German-Austrian, that is Western-Austrian Jewry lived in the capital, they made up nearly 10% of the Viennese electorate, and constituted the largest religious minority among an 80% Catholic population [19]. Though most Jewish migrants gradually left their religious and orthodox traditions behind, they nevertheless retained the knowledge that others identified them as Jews; thus maintaining an awareness of their position as outsiders in the wider society. A position even further to be specified in the course of World War I, which in itself resulted in the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Jews from Eastern Europe, who came to Vienna in search of shelter [20]. Many Jews already residing here were themselves immigrants or the children of immigrants from other, particularly Eastern areas of the Empire. But now they resented the high visibility of the less acculturated and impoverished refugees streaming into the city, increasing the awareness of and anxieties about their own place in Viennese society. And their fears were not unfounded, since incidents of violent, racist anti-Semitism became more prevalent and acceptable after the end of the War.

The case of *Dora*—one of Freud's first big cases—allows a unique insight into the intellectual, emotional and material world of upper middle class Viennese Jews of the *Fin de Siècle* [21]. "Dora" was Freud's pseudonym for Ida Bauer, the eighteen-year-old daughter of the textile manufacturer Philipp Bauer, whose family Freud also treated as a general practitioner. Philipp Bauer, who persuaded Freud to analyze his daughter for suspected adolescent hysteria, came from a poor family from Iglau, Bohemia, before becoming a wealthy businessman and moving to Vienna, where he was Freud's neighbor. Bauer belonged to the first generation of canny Jewish entrepreneurs in Vienna, ambitious and full of initiative, sparing neither his workers nor his family with his work ethos. As a classic liberal of the second half of the nineteenth century, he supported the constitutional state, freedom of speech and of the press, the separation of church and state, and wider electoral suffrage, albeit with the exclusion of women and the lower classes. To his way of thinking, the state should avoid all forms of regulation and intervention unless these served business interests. Intellectually active and demanding, charming in private, self-confident and articulate, he represented new, progressive ideals and concepts of *Bürgerlichkeit* (bourgeois civic mindedness)—not least as a member of a Masonic lodge, whose charity section he led. His appearance and ways were often compared to those of the non-Jewish intellectuals who made up the higher ranks of civil servants [22]. It is significant that Bauer's strivings mirrored the processes of Jewish acculturation and assimilation.

In contrast to the Bauer family's dynamic public presence, their private matters and internal family relationships were managed in a rigid, constricting manner, subject to strict moral codes as well as to hierarchies of generation and gender—that is, very much in accordance with the norms and customs of the times. The private scenario into which Freud shone his analytical torch was one of positively Victorian repression, under which all concerned suffered without exception ([21], pp. 41–42). Ida/Dora rebelled against this atmosphere individually and psychologically; her brother Otto, who was to become Austromarxism's leading theoretician and *de facto* Party leader during the interwar years, sublimated his frustration in a more outward manner. He blazed a trail through the Party ranks under the wing of his mentor Victor Adler, and became part of the theoretical vanguard of the international Socialist movement. All three family members were reacting in no small part to conceptions of Jewishness as they functioned in *fin de siècle* (and interwar) Vienna.

The Bauers were thus almost paradigmatically representative of their specific milieu: upper middle-class, assimilated, highly sensitive, extremely self-aware, productive, effective and yet constantly under threat in terms of minority status and self-perception. Otto Bauer revealed how and why those who belonged to this milieu were convinced of the historical necessity of assimilation in his 1907 study, republished in 1924, *Die Nationalitätenfrage und die Sozialdemokratie* (*The Nationalities Question and Social Democracy*). This 600-page tour de force of political theory was one of the most important contributions to the nationalities debate that was so central to early twentieth century

Austrian and Viennese culture [23–25]. It was capitalist modernization that, according to Bauer, had enabled “nations without history”—such as the Czechs, for example—to develop into *historical nations*, thanks to the emergence of indigenous national middle classes, with their own corresponding industrial *and* cultural production. In addition, that held true for *de facto* all of the traditionally pre-modern, non-historical nations of the empire. The Jews though were the only exception in that context. In their case, the various stages of modernization entailed assimilation as a causal necessity. Bauer argued that Jewish emancipation required comprehensive processes of social and economic transformation that not only led to industrial, capitalist modernism, but also made Jews into essential social agents of this modernism. The phenomenon of assimilation, he concluded, was a direct product of this process of transformation.

The Jewish nation, according to Bauer, belonged to the pre-modern era, when the Jews were representatives of a money economy in a world whose primary mode of exchange was barter. When capitalist modernism destroyed the barter economy and, through the manufacture of factory goods, made the money economy the dominant mode of exchange, the Christians took on the role of the Jews, and the Jews those of the Christians. As soon as Jews and Christians had become agents, or, if you like, “organs” of one and the same economic order, this shared position created an extremely close “community of exchange” (Verkehrsgemeinschaft), making it impossible to maintain “cultural anomalies” (kulturelle Sonderart):

It is self-evident that the long-assimilated Jews of Western Austria, or those who are already being born along by the current of the assimilation process, will not want to pass up the opportunity to live in cultural community with the nations in whose midst they reside. What is Jewish has long been a foreign language to them, and the customs and beliefs of the Eastern Jews a foreign culture in which they play no part ([23], p. 377).

To Bauer, this “foreign culture” of the Eastern Jews was that of a nation without history, a culture outside the canon of European civilization, which depended on an anachronistic tradition of “long dead thoughts, desires, customs” (längst erstorbener Gedanken, Wünsche, Sitten), the “psychology of dead economic modes and forms” (Psychologie einer toten Wirtschaftsverfassung), and the habits of the “Jewish schnaps seller, who lived in the midst of farmers used only to bartering” (jüdischen Branntweinschenkers, der mitten zwischen naturalwirtschaftlichen Bauern lebte). According to Bauer, fragments of the Jewish nation only really survived in places where the process of modernization had not yet begun, or had only just begun, such as the provinces of Galicia and the Bukovina.

In his analysis of the so-called *Jewish question* Bauer followed his mentor Victor Adler, who saw national assimilation as a precondition of social emancipation, and the disappearance of the Jews’ (historical) identity as a precondition for their liberation as individuals ([5], pp. 295–96). Yet, when viewed within the broader context of Vienna’s Jewish bourgeoisie, it becomes clear how Bauer theorized the social and cultural positions of his own family backgrounds as well as his own outlook as a socialist intellectual. (As such, he was paradigmatic of large numbers of the upper middle-class second- and third generation Viennese Jews who became loyal Social Democrats, members of the only political movement in the city at the time that programmatically rejected every form of racism). While articulating on the one hand the prospect for inclusion in a new, Austrian, “non-Jewish” identity, more adequate to a revolutionized, modern way of life, Bauer was expressing at the same time a desire for liberation from a collective Jewish identity—an identity seen as backward, pre-modern, and reactionary.

There is yet another aspect vital to our argument. Bauer’s positions were almost paradigmatic of large numbers of middle class second and third generation Viennese Jews who became loyal Social Democrats. The coding of interwar Vienna’s Social Democratic government—*Red Vienna*—as “Jewish” by anti-Semites renders it difficult to ask whether the fact that so many of its leaders were Jews made a difference in the kinds of policies they pursued.

After the failure of Liberalism as a political ideology, its humanitarian objectives and agenda were appropriated by the Social Democrats, who developed these into a *utopia of equality*: Red Vienna's project of municipal modernization, one of the most unusual and creative communal experiments in modern European history. Essentially a pedagogical experiment, the project aimed to sanitize, civilize and educate the masses through a general improvement of their living conditions, their social status, and above all, their cultural standards (cf. [14,26,27]). It was precisely because of its cultural-political dimension that the appeal of this experiment extended far beyond its originally pragmatic nature, inspired by notions of the welfare state. As a kind of *Late Enlightenment* venture with exemplary force, municipal developments in Red Vienna could be seen as a parallel to psychoanalysis, since both ideologies sought to transform mass objects into self-aware individuals and subjects, proletarian as well as middle class [28]. It is exactly in this sense that Red Vienna's Jewish leaders can be seen as engaging with *Jewishness*.

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