

The Making of Red Vienna: Social Democracy in Opposition 1889 to 1918

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“Vertrauen wird erarbeitet und nicht erzankt”
Dr. Karl Renner

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Preface

There are a great many people whose help has made this paper a reality. While it would be impossible to thank them adequately in such an impersonal way, I would nonetheless like to acknowledge their invaluable assistance. During the extended process I have had the expert help first of Dr Laurence Cole assisted by Dr Steve Cherry, who between them got me started and upgraded. The bulk of the drafting has been done with the counsel and guidance of Professor Thomas Otte.

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They all have my most enthusiastic thanks. Any inaccuracies or omissions in this paper are however all my own doing with no help whatsoever from the above!

For consistency, place names are in German. With regard to institutions, like *Parlament*, English terms will prevail after their initial introduction. For citations of parliamentary records, the German titles will be used, e.g. *Stenographische Protokolle des Abgeordnetenhauses, XVII. Session, 349. Sitzung*.

Dedication

This paper is dedicated to my lovely, patient and understanding wife,

Lori,

who put up with a good few years having a

distracted and pre-occupied husband.

The Making of Red Vienna

By Frederic G. Shearer

Abstract

At the end of the Great War, in contrast to events in Germany, Russia and indeed Hungary, Austria's transition to constitutional democracy was peaceful, led by their Social Democratic Party. The party had been created out of the disparate socialist factions only 30 years before.

This paper examines, beginning with the unification of the party, the leaders themselves, their strategy, their tactics, their programme and their results at the dawn of the First Republic. The context will be furnished by their approach to the 'nationalities question', their campaign for direct and equal suffrage, their attitude to the institutions of the Monarchy, their social programme and finally their handling of the war. It will be evident that the conventional assessment of this process needs to be re-thought extensively.

The Social Democrats offered an intriguing, well explained approach to the 'nationalities question' while the protagonists themselves were merely horse trading. During the period in question, they campaigned tirelessly from the outset for a franchise which recognised all the adults in their society. They chose to participate fully in the governing process, making conscientious use of the opportunities, such as they were, presented by the Habsburg parliamentary structure to further their programme. They conceived and advocated reforms in practical detail which would, and ultimately did, benefit the population as a whole and particularly their constituents. They made good use of the demonstration as a campaign tactic, though that became problematical. Finally, presented with a war they had unequivocally and publicly opposed, they devised an approach which on the one hand caused the least harm and on the other placed them in a position where their erstwhile opponents accepted their lead at a delicate juncture, when the shooting stopped.

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Introduction

As the guns of the Great War fell silent with the armistice of 1918, the Republic of German-Austria was proclaimed. A monument on Vienna's Ringstraße evokes the memory of that day. It displays busts of three leaders who played important roles in making possible the creation of the Republic: Jakob Reumann, Victor Adler and Ferdinand Hanusch. The monument reminds passers-by that the formation of what has since become known as the 'First Republic' was very largely the doing of the *Sozialdemokratische Arbeiterpartei Österreich* (Austrian Social Democratic Workers' Party), of which the three were leading members. The transition from monarchy to republic in Austria was peaceful, in noteworthy contrast to such transitions elsewhere in Europe at the end of the First World War. How and why that was so is the subject of this thesis. The focus will be the part of the Habsburg Empire known as Cisleithania, technically the lands represented in the *Reichsrat* ('Imperial Parliament' discussed more fully below), which will be taken as synonymous with Austria.

The central subject will be the background and origins of that peaceful metamorphosis in terms of the Social Democratic party leadership – the process by which those leaders brought their party into the political establishment, into a position where they were best placed to lead the new country at a particularly delicate and challenging moment in central European history. The focus therefore will not be the Austrian socialists' position in the context of the European or world socialist scene, though the Second International will feature in connection with the build-up to the Great War, but rather the Social Democrats' position in the context of the broader Austrian political scene. The period under discussion will be the last three decades of the Monarchy, from the unification of the Social Democratic party at the beginning of 1889 to the proclamation of the First Republic in November of 1918.

This introduction will provide context and include reviews of a selection of

historians' judgements. Since the body of the thesis will be broadly thematic, theme-specific extant literature will best be treated in the appropriate chapter. For that reason the introductory literature survey will be of material with a general focus and that which deals with the leadership.

Following the revolution in 1848, there were several attempts over a period of twenty years to establish a constitutional framework for the government of the Habsburg realm. During that time, the Monarchy suffered two significant military setbacks, which not only brought about the loss of Lombardy and the Veneto but also forced the bifurcation of the realm. The newly separate Kingdom of Hungary was granted the reinstatement of its constitution of 1848 with important exceptions¹, most notably a shared dynasty and a common foreign policy and defence apparatus, along with the finances for those institutions. This left the remainder of the Habsburg dominions, awkwardly termed '*Cisleithania*', with no equivalent.²

To complicate matters further, the Empire was on the brink of financial collapse; so the pressure for serious re-thinking was overwhelming. Capital markets were making it clear that their support depended on a constitutional resolution.³ The *Reichsrat* (the proper term for the two-chamber Austrian parliament) of the day, under pressure from the Emperor⁴, took the matter up and produced, in good time, a 'new' constitution, which received the imperial sanction on 21 December 1867 and took effect the following day.⁵ Although there were some new limitations on the Emperor's authority, the emergency powers provision (§14) remained,⁶ and the Emperor retained control, with only restricted legislative input, of foreign relations and defence, along with the finances for those, as well

¹ P. Judson, *The Habsburg Empire: A New History* (Cambridge, MA, 2016), p. 259.

² W. Brauneder, 'Die Verfassungsentwicklung in Österreich 1848-1918', H. Rumpler and P. Urbanitsch (eds.), *Die Habsburgermonarchie, 1848-1918*, vol. 7 *Verfassung und Parlamentarismus* (Vienna: 2000), p. 169.

³ Judson, *Habsburg Empire*, p. 220.

⁴ O. Jászi, *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy* (Chicago, 1929), pp. 107-8.

⁵ Brauneder, 'Verfassungsentwicklung', p. 187.

⁶ Used 76 times between 1897 and 1904, according to Jászi, *Dissolution*, p. 1080.

as certain other matters pertaining to relations with Hungary, e.g. railways. These areas, shared with Hungary as mentioned above, were to be dealt with by the *Delegationen* (delegations), constituted from the parliaments of the two halves of the Empire for the purpose of negotiating the decennial *Ausgleich* (adjustment) of the burdens borne by each half.⁷ At the same time, since the Emperor was seen not to be involved in day-to-day politics, he could escape blame for political failures.⁸ This was essentially the constitutional position until the end of the Great War, though there were some changes in the make-up of parliament, which will be examined below.

Nearly half a century later, following the assassination of Franz Ferdinand, heir to the throne, and his wife Sophie at Sarajevo in June of 1914, the Monarchy thought it best to issue to Serbia an ultimatum with which the latter could not possibly comply. War with Serbia would be the (wholly intended) outcome. At the time, the Social Democrats were among the few opponents of the war and a dissenting voice. They were therefore able, despite their co-operation during the conflict, to deny ownership of both the war and its outcome.⁹ Their situation was as much a result of fate as of judgement. Because parliament had been sent home several months before, in March of 1914,¹⁰ not to be reconvened until 1917, representatives were not called upon to vote on any aspect of the war. In any case, foreign relations and defence issues were not within the competence of parliament, but in the event they had not even been in a position to demand a say in the matter. Furthermore, for much of the decade immediately before the outbreak of the war, German Social Democrats, for example, had found themselves forced to proclaim their patriotism repeatedly to answer the allegations, made with great effect in the election

⁷ Brauneder, 'Verfassungsentwicklung', p. 180.

⁸ C. Wolf, 'Representing Constitutional Monarchy in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Britain, Germany and Austria', L. Cole and D. Unowsky (eds.) *The Limits of Loyalty: Imperial symbolism, popular allegiances, and state patriotism in the late Habsburg Monarchy* (New York, NY, 2007), p. 210.

⁹ K. Seitz, 'Vor Zehn Jahren', *Der Kampf*, vol. 21 (1928), pp. 518-519.

¹⁰ W. Ogris, 'Die Rechtsentwicklung in Cisleithanien 1848-1918', A. Wandruszka and P. Urbanitsch (eds.), *Die Habsburgermonarchie, 1848-1918*, vol. 2 *Verwaltung und Rechtswesen* (Vienna, 1975), p. 549.

campaign of 1907, that they were enemies of the Fatherland.¹¹ They had therefore paid a heavy price in the so-called *Hottentottenwahlen* (Hottentot election, since protests about affairs in German West Africa had triggered the vote) in January of that year, because their posture on military and nationalist themes became and remained less oppositional.¹²

During the same time, the Austrian Social Democrats strove to maintain, to the maximum extent possible, an internationalist as distinct from nationalist approach, seeking to dismiss nationalism as a means by which bourgeois politicians diverted attention from socialists' practical, concrete goals. Their dissociation from the start of the war therefore allowed them a luxury their German counterparts were not able to enjoy. For the Austrian socialists, there were no memories of the "4th of August".¹³ They were able to be non-nationalist and anti-war, without being irresponsible.

After more than four years of war, with the Monarchy comprehensively discredited and their supporters in disarray, it was the Social Democrats who were to play the leading role in the establishment of the First Republic. Despite the end of an 800-year dynasty, the distinguishing feature of Cisleithania's response to the end of hostilities was its relative peacefulness. Elsewhere, most notably in Russia and Germany, the changes brought about by the stress of war, whether during, as in Russia, or after, as in Germany, and indeed Hungary, were accompanied by varying levels of violence. In Austria, a republic was proclaimed, and everyday life resumed with a semblance of order.

As important as the issue of support for the war was the success of the Austrian Social Democratic leaders' keeping their party together and maintaining some measure of control over the members' activities, enabling them to assume the leading position when hostilities came to an end. This was difficult from the very outbreak of war, when the

¹¹ C. Schorske, *German Social Democracy 1905-1917: The Development of the Great Schism* (Cambridge, Ma., 1955), chapter 3.

¹² D. Groh and P. Brandt, *Vaterlandslose Gesellen: Sozialdemokratie und Nation 1860-1990* (Munich, 1992), p. 113.

¹³ C. Schorske, *German Social Democracy 1905-1917: The Development of the Great Schism*. (Cambridge, Ma., 1955), p. 285.

position of party leaders ranged from wholehearted support by Friedrich Austerlitz, editor of the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*,¹⁴ to the more sober assessments of Victor Adler, who pointed out to his colleagues that “what is even worse than war is defeat”.¹⁵ Victor’s son Friedrich was to be, for a time at least, one of a small number of strongly anti-war voices.¹⁶ As the war dragged on, news from the front became harder to spin, and conditions at home deteriorated. The anti-war position of Friedrich Adler became ever more appealing, and maintaining party unity, ever more challenging. In the event, the party leaders were able to avoid a split. In his eulogy of Karl Renner, another party leader, the Austrian-American historian Robert Kann expressed this in direct terms: “The construction of a new state out of the misery and confusion of 1918 goes to a very large extent to his credit”.¹⁷

The concept of ‘Red Vienna’, which informs this thesis, has both communal and national significance. At the communal level, the Social Democrats were deprived until 1918 of a voice commensurate with the numbers of their voters and their organisational strength. Following the Great War, on the basis of a more equitable apportionment of mandates, they were able to take over the government of the capital. They have been elected in Vienna without interruption since that time, though their administration was suspended first by the clerical-fascist *Ständestaat* regime in 1934 then by Austria’s new German rulers from 1938 until 1945. In the narrow sense then, ‘Red Vienna’ refers to the capital after 1918 and up to the present. Indeed, to this day, around every corner, one finds tangible evidence of Social Democratic policies in housing and education. Dates featured prominently on the walls of public housing, like the Karl-Marx-Hof, bear witness to Vienna’s having elected socialist leaders since 1918. Others of their reforms, like women’s suffrage, would not in any case be visible in concrete form. However, neither the policies

¹⁴ R. Florence, *Fritz: The Story of a Political Assassin* (New York, NY, 1971), p. 131.

¹⁵ J. Braunthal, *Victor und Friedrich Adler: Zwei Generationen Arbeiterbewegung* (Vienna, 1965), p. 216.

¹⁶ Florence, *Fritz*, p. 134.

¹⁷ R. Kann, ‘Karl Renner December 14, 1870 – December 31, 1950’ *The Journal of Modern History*, vol. 23, 3 (Sept. 1951), p. 246.

nor the backing for those and other achievements sprang instantly and serendipitously from the ashes of the war in 1918. The policies had been worked out, the leaders prepared and the voters' support cultivated by the Social Democratic leadership before 1914 and during the war.

Red Vienna has a much more important meaning, and a more significant one for us, at the national level. First of all, Vienna was not just an isolated metropolis. Although other cities in the Empire, most notably Budapest and Prague, claimed significant roles in the imperial firmament, Vienna was the pre-eminent centre of political life in the empire. It was where most major newspapers were composed and printed, where policy was debated and where decisions were made. Furthermore, as industrialisation progressed, the Social Democrats were naturally best supported in urban settings. From 1907, when direct and equal manhood suffrage (i.e. voting as individuals on the basis of one man, one vote, rather than rather than members of a class) had been established for the national parliamentary, as opposed to local, elections, Social Democrats had strong representation from Vienna and its environs in Lower Austria and Styria as well as from Bohemia, Moravia, Galicia and Trieste. Of course, during the final months of the war, what had been Habsburg Cisleithania became several new nations, while pieces were lost to Italy, Poland and what was eventually to become Soviet Russia. The remaining 'German Austria' consisted largely of today's Alpine republic, that is including Burgenland but shorn of the South Tyrol. The possibly unintended consequence of Wilsonian nation-building in central Europe at the end of the war was that the Social Democrats were deprived of the support they had built in the outlying industrial areas. Although that hampered their progress during the period between the wars, it did not reduce the significance of their role in the creation of the First Republic nor of the impact of their programme at national and international levels.

Therefore, the making of Red Vienna was very clearly both a communal and a

multi-regional, even international process during the final decades of Habsburg rule. After all, during the time in question, the Social Democratic leadership were known, part facetiously but not unfairly, as the ‘Little International’. Their policies produced not only the Viennese landmarks which bear mute but eloquent witness to the success of their project, but also the reforms implemented for all Austria by Ferdinand Hanusch, then State Secretary for Social Welfare, during the initial 15 months of the First Republic.¹⁸ These were for the benefit of the whole country and included women’s suffrage, compulsory social insurance, the right to annual paid leave, the eight-hour day and the banning of child labour.

Moreover, many of the leaders held office at different levels of government, occasionally at the same time; so distinguishing between local, state and national aspects would be difficult if not impossible. For those reasons, the origins of ‘Red Vienna’ can be regarded as more than a local, indeed as a national or even international subject, and the components can be separated only in terms of individual outcomes, not in terms of the preparation or of the protagonists. It was therefore the Social Democrats, not the nationalities, who not only drove the transition from monarchy to republic but also propelled Austrian political discourse into the twentieth century, to make, as it were, Red Vienna. How they did that will be the subject of this thesis.

The making of Red Vienna had its origins in the second half of the nineteenth century and grew as the natural consequence of industrialisation and concomitant urbanisation. These developments brought with them interest in the political process and demands for a say in decisions affecting the community from an ever larger cross section of the population. Studies of Austrian politics toward the end of the nineteenth century describe the disintegration of Liberal hegemony and the building of the Christian Social

¹⁸ P. Pasteur, *Pratiques politiques et militantes de la social-démocratie autrichienne 1888-1934* (Paris, 2003), pp. 280-281.

movement – a coalition of disparate voter groups.

Bourgeois politicians, particularly of the populist right, the so-called Christian Socials, drew public attention to the threat of socialism. “In a cultural sense religion...might serve as an effective antidote to the ideological attractions of the Social Democrats.”¹⁹ Primarily, the Christian Socials appealed to the insecurity of the bourgeoisie in the face of the goals and methods of the socialists. Christian Socials vilified Jews and socialists interchangeably, since by implication a Christian would oppose both. Thus, the 'Christian' content was at least as much to stress the 'not Jewish' as to denote any serious religious orientation.

For their part, proletariat interests in late Habsburg Austria were represented largely by the Social Democrats. Radical nationalist parties, discussed in chapter one below, as well as Christian Socials tried to attract the interest of this growing constituency, but with little success. Though workers had played a role in the disturbances of 1848, they could not boast much by way of an organisation until after the granting of association and assembly rights in 1867.²⁰ That little was accomplished by the revolution of 1848 has been attributed to the lack of a prepared programme with which to consummate a victory. When the ensuing period of neo-absolutism seemed to yield to the coming of more favourable conditions with the 1867 constitution, would-be leaders of the nascent workers' movement took heart. That new constitution nominally guaranteed basic civil rights, including freedoms of speech and assembly. In November of that year, workers were granted the right to organize, whereupon the General Workers' Educational Union was born, providing form and leadership to the embryonic movement.²¹

In December of 1869, leaders decided to organize the presentation of a petition to

¹⁹ J. Boyer, *Political Radicalism in Late Imperial Vienna: Origins of the Christian Social Movement 1848-1897* (Chicago, Il., 1981), p. 224.

²⁰ N. Leser, *Zwischen Reformismus und Bolschewismus: Der Austromarxismus als Theorie und Praxis* (Vienna, 1968), p. 191.

²¹ V. Knapp, *Austrian Social Democracy 1889-1914* (Washington, D.C.), 1980, p. 5.

parliament, which was due to open on the 13th. Such a demonstration would test the robustness of the basic rights. The petition was a short but ambitious document. It demanded:

...the unrestricted right to organize and the repeal of the law with regard to the closed shop (*Zwangsgenossenschaften*); that furthermore during this session a bill will be put before parliament regarding the establishment of full and free rights of association and assembly, of absolute freedom of the press and the introduction of equal and direct suffrage ... guarantee of peace and freedom, and also the removal of the standing army through the introduction of a people's militia ('the general arming of the people')...²²

It was signed by ten who were presumed to be the masterminds behind the day's events. The demonstrators, said to number about 20,000 supplemented by curious onlookers as well as building workers from nearby, converged on the parliament building at about 8:00 am. Premier Taaffe agreed to receive the petition from three of the demonstrators – all signatories – and promised to put it before the Cabinet (*Ministerrat*), at the same time making clear that he regarded the behaviour of the workers as “revolutionary”.²³

In the immediate aftermath, a draft law dealing with the right of association for employers and employees was presented to parliament and quickly passed. Although it was not everything workers wanted, it counted as a victory. Actually, even before the demonstration, the draft had been prepared and the decision made by the government and the crown to present it at the first opportunity to parliament. Ten days later, on the night of the 23rd, the Interior Ministry responded in earnest to the demonstrations. In the middle of the night all but one of the leaders of the demonstration were arrested.²⁴ On the 4 July 1870, after several months of investigative confinement, the group stood trial for high treason. They were convicted ten days later and imprisoned.²⁵

There were three effects of this early workers' demonstration: first it embarrassed

²² L. Brügel, *Geschichte der österreichischen Sozialdemokratie* (Vienna, 1925), vol. 1, p. 188.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 187-188.

²⁴ The escapee was Hermann Hartung, who, using a back door, managed to slip away in the confusion of the raid at the flat occupied by him and Oberwinder. He found his way to Floridsdorf, where he boarded a train to the border.

²⁵ Brügel, *Geschichte der österreichischen Sozialdemokratie*, vol. 1, p. 192.

the Ministry of the Interior and the police, second it hurried the implementation of the above-mentioned association law and finally it presented to the establishment the prospect of mass action. Though some of the demands in the workers' petition could hardly have been thought unreasonable even at the time, others were more radical and impossible for the authorities to accept. The lesson was that a mass demonstration was in itself radical; so that to demonstrate in support of goals which would at the time be unattainable invited only negative consequences, in this case the arrest and confinement of a large portion of the leadership. This was no less harmful to the movement for the government's ultimate backing down and the release of the prisoners two years later. Following the 1869 demonstration at the opening of parliament, time had been wasted, and momentum lost. No sooner had the recovery of the movement commenced than, in 1873, a schism set in which was to last for sixteen years: between the radicals and the moderates.

On Black Friday, 9 May 1873, the stock market collapsed. The liberal cause would never recover from the *Grosser Krach* and the ensuing economic hardship. At the same time workers' leaders were demoralised and apparently unable to generate any momentum for their own cause. Nevertheless, the gathering pace of industrialisation and urbanisation eventually spurred both union activity and interest in the clubs which were the nearest permissible facsimile of a political party. Some well-publicised criminal acts by anarchist groups created an adverse climate. The authorities responded with an anti-terrorist law in 1884 and an anti-socialist law in 1886. It was during this trying time that the movement was first blessed with gifted leadership.

Recovery for the socialists from the events of 1869 took two decades and was largely the result of the efforts and direction of Victor Adler. He was born in Prague on 24 June 1852, one of the five children of Johanna and Salomon Markus Adler, just a year after the young couple had moved to the city from the village of Leipnik in Moravia. They moved on to Vienna when Victor was in his fourth year.

The children initially grew up in relative poverty, but Salomon eventually became very successful.²⁶ Young Adler received his secondary education at the elite Schottengymnasium, along with others who were to be prominent in fin-de-siècle Viennese politics, including Engelbert Pernerstorfer, later a leader in the Social Democratic Party, and Alois Liechtenstein, who was to play an important role in the Christian Social movement. When Adler began his studies at the University of Vienna in 1870, his friend Pernerstorfer, two years his elder, was already there, studying literature and social science. As students, they developed an interest in Lassalle, Schulze-Delitzsch and Proudhon, all prominent past socialists, around which interests they founded a discussion group.²⁷ At university, while Adler prepared for a career in medicine, both he and Pernerstorfer became involved in German nationalist politics. Adler met a law and political science student named Heinrich Braun, who was to introduce Adler not only to Karl Kautsky but also to a younger sister Emma Braun, who became Victor's wife in 1878. The next year Adler began to practise medicine, and he soon became known as a doctor willing to treat patients who were unable to pay. Thus began financial troubles which were long to dog the Adlers. Their hospitality, which brought many interesting people to their home, Adler's preparedness to give away his professional services and the strain of supporting the workers' movement would together consume his entire income and inheritance.

His treatment of the poor brought the young doctor into contact with many of the worst consequences of rapid urban growth and industrialization. Also, he came to know the workers' leaders. Because he lacked confidence in his ability to help them, he decided instead to prepare himself for a job as factory inspector in connection with new legislation regulating workplaces. To that end he travelled to England in the summer of 1883 to gain

²⁶ A measure of the family's prosperity is that Victor (then aged 26) and his new bride were able to stay on honeymoon for an entire year! Although some of that time was spent in Paris attending lectures of the then leading psychiatrist Martin Charcot, there is little evidence of the need to earn a living.

²⁷ Braunthal, *Victor und Friedrich Adler*, p. 26.

an understanding of the workings of the system there. In the report he produced on his return, he cited Marx, which seems to have alarmed Minister of Trade Pino. That cost Adler his chance to be a factory inspector but was a stroke of good fortune for the workers' movement. At first he refrained from declaring himself officially one of them for fear of upsetting his very ill father, but directly after Salomon passed away in January of 1886, Victor joined the Social Democrats.²⁸ In December of that year, with part of his inheritance, he established the weekly socialist paper *Die Gleichheit* (which eventually became the daily *Arbeiter-Zeitung*) and set out to unify the workers' movement, ultimately overcoming even Kautsky's suspicions.²⁹ One of the issues about which there was disagreement was suffrage reform. The radicals viewed representative institutions and their paraphernalia as tricks of the bourgeois system to be shunned by socialists, who would anyway be heirs to the inevitable revolution. Adler was able to convince them that to leave such a useful propaganda platform entirely to their opposition was tactical folly.³⁰

The payoff for Adler's hard work came when, at the end of 1888, 73 socialist delegates gathered at a small guest house in the village of Hainfeld to discuss healing the divisions in the party. The outcome was all that he had hoped, for although many of the leaders of the new united party, the *Sozialdemokratische Arbeiterpartei Österreichs*, could be thought of as radicals, they became more moderate under the influences of Adler and of the growing trade union movement, which had practical, short-term objectives.³¹ There would always be tension within the party (what parties are free from that?), such as the revisionist debate and later the war question; so maintaining unity would continue to be challenging.

At Hainfeld, there were a number of items on the agenda, of which the most

²⁸ Braunthal, *Victor und Friedrich Adler*, chapter 2.

²⁹ Knapp, *Austrian Social Democracy*, pp. 20-22.

³⁰ Braunthal, *Victor und Friedrich Adler*, p. 52.

³¹ Knapp, *Austrian Social Democracy*, pp. 25-26.

important was the first one: “The Clarification of the Principles of the Austrian Social Democratic Workers’ Party”. The clarification lived up to its billing. Though it started with the predictable genuflect to Marxist views in the form of enslavement of the workers and their pauperisation at the hands of the owners of capital, the “Declaration of Principles” went on to tell a different story. Its principles included that the party would be an international one, that the spread of socialist ideas required a free press and the right of assembly, that the party would strive to achieve general, direct and equal suffrage for all representative bodies, that work safety regulations would be sought for the protection of the working class, that universal free education would have to be offered, that the state and the church should be separated, with religion to be declared a private matter, that the standing army would have to be replaced by general arming of the populace, and finally that the Party would be taking positions on all matters of interest to their constituents and work energetically against any deepening or disguising of the class struggle or efforts to exploit the workers for the benefit of the ruling class. This was a Lassallean agenda with its distinctively practical focus. Following this declaration, there was a resolution of unity and others dealing with political rights, union rights and labour laws, press and public education. The resolution of unity committed the Party to the use of “appropriate means consistent with the people's natural awareness of the law”.³²

The unions remained the foundation of the party officially until the mid-90s and in effect until the middle of the following decade.³³ The party embarked on a period of strict legality. An indication of the seriousness with which this was observed is that the local *Bezirkshauptmann* von Lilienfeld (“District Captain” - the senior local official) had been invited to and attended the conference at Hainfeld.³⁴ The party emerged from the assembly

³² Brügel, *Geschichte der österreichischen Sozialdemokratie*, vol. 3, pages 401-2; also *Das Protokoll des Hainfelder Einigungsparteitages der Sozialdemokratischen Arbeiterpartei in Österreich* (Hainfeld, 2014), pp. 7-8.

³³ W. Maderthaner, ‘Die Entwicklung der Organisationsstruktur der deutschen Sozialdemokratie in Österreich 1889 bis 1913’, W. Maderthaner (Ed.) *Sozialdemokratie und Habsburgerstaat* (Vienna, 1988), p. 27.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

united under their new ‘Clarification of Principles’.

A mere few months after Hainfeld, the party sent a delegation of seven to the Socialist International Congress in Paris, attended by such luminaries of the movement as Friedrich Engels, Keir Hardie, William Morris, Wilhelm Liebknecht, August Bebel and Jean Jaurès. The Austrian delegation returned home the proud bearers of a resolution which entrusted them with the challenge of organizing a demonstration on 1 May 1890 in support of the international campaign for the eight-hour day. How to achieve this with their infant movement was a problem, but Victor Adler had an inspired idea: a holiday. The government would surely forbid a march and would take measures to oppose strike action, but they could not oppose a day off and a walk in the park. He was proved right.³⁵

Stefan Zweig remembered the scene:

The workers... had given out word that the first of May was to be declared the working people’s holiday, and they had decided to march in closed ranks in the Prater, ... This announcement paralyzed the good liberal middle classes with fright. Socialists! The word had a peculiar taste of blood and terror in the Germany and Austria of those days, like ‘Jacobin’ before and ‘Bolshevik’ since. ...A kind of panic set in. The police of the entire city and the surroundings were posted in the Prater, and the military were held in reserve, ready to shoot. ...the merchants let down the iron shutters in front of their shops, and I can remember that our parents strictly forbade us children to go out on the streets on this day of terror which might see Vienna in flames. But nothing happened. ... No one was insulted, no one was struck, no fists were clenched; ... Thanks to this circumspect conduct, the middle classes were no longer able to brand the workers as ‘revolutionary rabble’...³⁶

Although with this success the Socialists might have achieved a sort of respectability, their fortunes did not rise quickly. There was still tension between radicals and moderates – there was even a splinter group called the ‘Independent Socialists’. During the 1890s, however, Adler’s persistence, police action against anarchists and generally improving economic conditions all favoured the steady growth of Social Democracy with a practical orientation. As Adler expressed the progress in a letter to Engels in 1891, “We have advanced from being a sect or a horde of hooligans to the status

³⁵ Braunthal, *Victor und Friedrich Adler*, chapter 5.

³⁶ S. Zweig, *Die Welt von Gestern* (Stockholm, 1944), pp. 80-81.

of a political party which has earned recognition and whose views are taken into account.”³⁷

At the Linz party congress in 1892, an organisational framework was created for the party. Each district was to have one or more *Vertrauensmänner* (constituency representatives) and was to choose one of them as delegate to the *Land*-level organization, which in turn would send delegates to the Party Congress, to meet at least biennially. In 1897, following disappointing election results, street and block representatives were introduced to intensify the contact with the rank and file.³⁸ Thus the direction of the party was firmly in the hands of the ‘grass roots’.

May Day 1893 was an enormous parade, held on the Ring for the first time and involving more than 100,000 marchers. That summer, in August, Friedrich Engels visited Vienna during a tour of the continent and addressed several meetings of party members. He commented in his correspondence on ‘the unity of purpose, the splendid organisation, the enthusiasm ... you cannot help being carried away and saying: “this is the centre of gravity of the working class movement.”’³⁹ At the same time, radical members were calling for a general strike to back the demand for general and equal suffrage, and they began to gain support within the party. Taaffe’s effort to introduce universal suffrage, discussed further below, failed, and he was relieved of office by the Emperor. The Social Democrats were expected to escalate the fight for the vote but did nothing. There was frustration in the Party. At the Party Congress that autumn Adler was able to argue successfully first that to make common cause with a reactionary government would have made a laughing stock of the party and furthermore that a general strike would have been futile and destructive.⁴⁰

³⁷ W. Rauscher, *Karl Renner – ein österreichischer Mythos* (Vienna, 1995), p. 39.

³⁸ W. Maderthaner, ‘Die Entwicklung’, p. 38.

³⁹ T. Hunt, *Marx’s General: The Revolutionary Life of Friedrich Engels* (New York, 2009), p. 342.

⁴⁰ Braunthal, *Victor und Friedrich Adler*, chapter 6.

The next great threat to party unity came with the 'revisionist' debate. In brief, the question was whether, as Marx had held, the working class was to get progressively poorer until the revolution, or whether, as more recently suggested by the German socialist Bernstein, workers had actually improved their lot, necessitating a revision of Marxist theory. Of course, Adler had to 'admit' that Social Democrats had worked to improve their constituents' lives but sought to maintain his revolutionary credentials.

At the 1901 Party Congress he faced his critics, who may well have expected to confound Adler on an important point of Marxist dogma. The first hint that they had miscalculated came in the leading article of the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, dated the day before the opening of the congress, praising the constituency workers for all their good work.⁴¹ At the congress itself, packed full of the very party workers who had the previous day received their praise, Adler faced his ideologically sophisticated critics. He pointed out that it would be unwise to suggest to the rank and file that the party programme said their pauperization was inevitable. The opposition, though possibly correct in a doctrinaire Marxist sense, was not successful. Their final rebuttal was only half-hearted, as it had dawned on them that the *Vertrauensmänner* were certain to support the leadership, since the Party's objective was to improve the workers' lot.⁴²

As the Party became a feature of the landscape, the authorities became more tolerant, gaining an appreciation of their responsible attitude and constructive, if not friendly, posture.⁴³ Several attributes characterized the rise of Social Democracy in Austria. First, party members were increasingly inclined to act strictly within the law. Second, they concentrated on practical objectives, encouraged both by the attitude of their leaders and by their close association with a legal trade union movement bent on achieving

⁴¹ *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 1 Nov 1901.

⁴² Knapp, *Austrian Social Democracy*, pp. 116-123.

⁴³ F. Brandl, *Kaiser, Politiker und Menschen: Erinnerungen eines Wiener Polizeipräsidenten*. Leipzig, 1936), pp. 107-108.

positive results for their members. Third, they cultivated the habit of focusing on attainable individual goals – no doubt having learned from the wasted opportunity of the 1869 demonstration. By progressing one step at a time, they would always have a result to show.

Despite the political evolution thus clearly under way, general historiography has concerned itself not so much with the rise of those democratic institutions as with the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy. The demise of the Habsburg Dynasty and all that came in its wake has been attributed most often to the rise of nationalism.

For example, Oszkár Jászi, who after all was a witness to the times, provided the basis for much of the study of Habsburg decline, with his discussion of centripetal and centrifugal forces.⁴⁴ In summary, the latter were essentially gross economic inequality and the pressure of nationalities. Jászi included socialism as one of the centripetal forces, but on the other hand, it seems curious that he did not regard migration as another of those, though by implication one could accept migration, at least conceptually, as part of his discussion of free trade.⁴⁵ Arthur May prefaced his work from the 60s on the last years of the empire with a balanced, even favourable view: “Yet in retrospect it is clear that the Danube Monarchy afforded a good deal that was admirable in terms of a prototype and forerunner of an integrated multinationality union toward which the nations of western Europe appear to be groping, slowly and hesitantly.”⁴⁶

Later in the same decade, Carlyle Macartney opined that:

If the Monarchy was to survive, it must be as a multi-national state, not an a-national one, and in 1914 the peoples of the Monarchy were further than they ever had been from finding the basis of an accommodation between themselves.⁴⁷

However, at the very end of his survey, his analysis inferred that the survival of the

⁴⁴ L. Cole and D. Unowsky (eds.) *The Limits of Loyalty: Imperial symbolism, popular allegiances, and state patriotism in the late Habsburg Monarchy* (New York, NY, 2007), p. 2.

⁴⁵ Jászi, *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy*, pp. 177-214.

⁴⁶ A. J. May, *The Passing of the Habsburg Monarchy: 1914 – 1918*, (Philadelphia, 1966), p. 6.

⁴⁷ C. Macartney, *The Habsburg Empire 1790-1918* (New York, NY, 1969), p. 810.

Monarchy was not necessarily dependent on the support of all the constituent nations but rather rested on the support it enjoyed within whatever state remained.

Robert A. Kann reflected on the process of dissolution by juxtaposing views. One held external factors, including the influence of governments-in-exile on the Allied Powers, responsible for turning loose the forces which tore the empire apart. For example, Jean Bérenger re-examined (in 1994) the denouement of the Empire and concluded that the dissolution was not attributable so much to the question of nationalities as to the need of the victorious Entente Powers to contain the threat of German hegemony.⁴⁸ Alternatively, Kann acknowledged the view that the forces were all ready and merely turned loose by the war itself, and he agreed that the causes of the dissolution were within the Empire. Nevertheless, his assessment was that they alone would not necessarily have brought about its doom.⁴⁹

Hans Peter Hye lamented:

A systematic compilation of legislative activity, which goes beyond the contents of the *Reichsgesetzblätter* (Imperial Statute Book) does not exist, let alone an investigation of the formal and informal committees, in which, away from the public stage of the plenary sittings, the real political work of seeking majorities and useful compromises between parties and in the power triangle of the two houses and the government actually carried on. We are not even in a position to compare the share of the output which came from the government with that which sprung from parliament.⁵⁰

By way of contrast, Alan Sked suggested that the Monarchy was not in decline, that they could have dealt with their nationalities but were only prevented from doing so by the Great War.⁵¹

Along similar lines, James Shedel, in a 2009 lecture, suggested that pre-1848 absolutism needs to be viewed in a new light, with specific regard to the common rights of

⁴⁸ J. Bérenger, *A History of the Habsburg Empire* (London, 1994), p. 288.

⁴⁹ R. Kann, *A History of the Habsburg Empire 1526-1918* (Berkeley, Ca., 1974), pp. 517-520.

⁵⁰ H. Hye, *Das politische System in der Habsburgermonarchie: Konstitutionalismus, Parlamentarismus und politische Partizipation* (Prague, 1998), p. 194.

⁵¹ A. Sked, *The Decline and Fall of the Habsburg Empire 1815-1918* (London, 2001), pp. 279-304.

citizens throughout the realm, which would be another missing centripetal factor lending strength to Sked's view.⁵² For his part, Gary Cohen exhorted scholars of Habsburg history to re-examine the then generally accepted views regarding the last few decades of the Monarchy and its 'inevitable' collapse. While he commended John Boyer's two-volume study of the populist right, he encouraged further work on a more balanced view of the roles of central bureaucracy, parliament, provincial diets and officialdoms, communal governments and the various popular forces in the last decades of the Dual Monarchy. Cohen postulated that the parliamentary gridlock with which the last period is often associated seems to have obscured very real progress in the development of the responsiveness of government institutions to the needs of the citizenry.⁵³

Most recently, Pieter Judson, in his new general history from 2016, reprised in large part Jászi's assessment, picturing an establishment grappling with enormous social, demographic, technical and economic changes. Noteworthy in Judson's presentation were the sacrificing of efforts to address the backwardness of certain of the crown lands, for example Galicia and Dalmatia, in favour of the effort to achieve a uniform, centralised administrative regime⁵⁴ and the failure of the civilian institutions as well as the bonds of society under the strain of war and quasi-military rule⁵⁵. Nationalities figured in Judson's picture, but as part of the scene rather than the determining factor. After all, in that regard the Monarchy demonstrated creative flexibility producing different compromise responses, referred to below, to nationalist demands, for example in Moravia and Bukovina.⁵⁶ Judson's assessment is therefore a positive one: "Amid stunning social and technical transformations, faith in the virtues of a common empire crucially stabilized and

⁵² J. Shedel, 'Imperial Civics: Three Emperors and the "Pursuit of Happiness"', lecture at University of Vienna, 22 April 2009.

⁵³ G. Cohen, 'Nationalist Politics and the Dynamics of State and Civil Society in the Habsburg Monarchy 1867-1914', *Central European History*, 40 (2007), p. 243.

⁵⁴ Judson, *The Habsburg Empire*, pp. 121 to 130.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, Chapter 8.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 376-377.

coordinated heterogeneous desires, needs, and practices of millions of Austro-Hungarians.”⁵⁷ This demonstrates a refreshing appreciation of the extent to which citizens of the realm at the time enjoyed opportunities, both in career and trading terms, across a diverse and quite large area. Even if Richard Evans deemed Judson’s portrayal excessively ‘roseate’, the latter put in more balanced perspective the attention-grabbing tactics of nationalists, as Evans conceded.⁵⁸

Whether the immediate impetus came from within or without, whether it was the Monarchy which had been gaining strength or merely the population who had been improving their lives during a time of peace, and regardless of the number of different states that emerged from the chaos of the war, in 1918 the monarchists had nothing to offer and had been thoroughly discredited. It is worth remembering that just as Habsburg rule in Austria-Hungary came to an end in 1918, other European monarchies were meeting the same fate (or in one case much worse): the Wittelsbachs, the Wettins, the Württembergs, the Hohenzollerns, the Osmanlis and the Romanovs also lost their thrones. Most of the other expiring monarchies had only peripheral nationality-related discord, therefore it seems safe to conclude, at the very least, that the fate of the Habsburgs was not exclusively or even largely the result of nationality issues. In any case, had the Monarchy managed to retain the support of its subjects, the institution would have survived, even if only in post-war Austria. It did not. This thesis will explore how and why the Social Democrats, thanks to the efforts of their leadership, were among those who did retain the trust and confidence of the people and more surprisingly of their most vocal opponents.

During the period of interest, the noise and clamour of the nationalists diverted attention and resources which could more usefully have been devoted to real challenges: social problems, e.g. education, or international issues, e.g. the arms race. Nationalists tied

⁵⁷ Judson, *The Habsburg Empire*, p. 341.

⁵⁸ R. J. W. Evans, „A Liberal Empire? Ruled from the Spas?” in *The New York Review of Books*, March 23, 2017, pp. 36 to 38.

up the legislative machinery; so government was conducted by the cabinet and the bureaucracy for much of the period under consideration. This was a great frustration for the Social Democratic would-be reformers of the day, and it has also frustrated historians during the intervening century.

The nationalists' claim on the attention of historians has obscured the work done during the period by the Social Democrats to place themselves at the heart of the decision-making machinery. In a response to Cohen's exhortation, this thesis will examine the role of the Social Democrats as they strove to influence or merely to make use of the political institutions of late Habsburg Austria. The focus is not only the tactical and programmatic objectives which were the subject matter of day-to-day politics but also and more importantly the strategic objective of any opposition party, which is to prepare for government. That objective comprises four aspects: the tactics, the organisation, the programme and the leadership. The latter is the most important, since the leaders affected all the other considerations. Before turning to the specific subject matter of their efforts, it will be helpful to review and recapitulate historians' assessments of the leaders.

Aside from the contributions of the participants themselves and those who knew them personally, it took some time after 1945 before local historians showed productive interest in the history of Austrian Social Democracy. When in the early 1960s Rudolf Neck set out to publish a series of books on the workers' movement, he pointed out that the field had been neglected by Austrian historians since the collapse of democracy before World War II.⁵⁹ This was after all only a few years since the 1959 founding of the *Verein für Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung* (Association for the History of the Workers' Movement). During the 1970s the study of the workers' movement in Austria began to

⁵⁹ H. Mommsen, *Die Sozialdemokratie und die Nationalitätenfrage im Habsburgischen Vielvölkerstaat I. Das Ringen um die supranationale Integration der zisleithanischen Arbeiterbewegung (1867 – 1907)*, (Vienna, 1963), p. vii.

receive more attention from local historians.⁶⁰ Since Neck's lament, there have followed a number of assessments by historians of the Social Democrats' role.

In terms of the outcomes, the general verdict of historians is that the substantive results from Social Democrats' efforts before the First World War were meagre. They did not after all produce a flood of legislation. They did not at any time hold the reins of power, and they are said to have been unwilling to work in partnership with any of the bourgeois parties. They underestimated the appeal of nationalism, and their failure to accommodate the separatist agenda ultimately led to their alleged 'disintegration'.

On a general level for example, William Johnston's assessment is quite severe:

The chief failing of Austrian socialism under Viktor [*sic*] Adler was a tendency to ignore the misery of the masses. The SDAP proved so loyal to Franz Joseph that it recruited an elite among labor while ignoring the nameless many....The flophouses of Vienna, which helped to sour Hitler, found too few critics among Social Democratic leaders; the slums of Ottakring and Brigittenau, where working girls sold themselves to the first comer, were not improved until after World War One.⁶¹

This judgement is unequivocal, but does not stand up to closer examination. There was after all no opportunity for the Social Democrats before the war to achieve much in practical terms, certainly at the level of housing and women's rights in working class districts of Vienna, since the local franchise was thoroughly 'stacked' against them. The connection between alleged loyalty to Franz Joseph and the 'recruitment' of an elite remains unclear. Whatever the significance of that 'recruitment', the view that socialists were out of touch with their putative constituents, the 'nameless many', is conclusively refuted by the CVs of many Social Democratic leaders introduced in this thesis and the party structure discussed above.

Not quite so uncharitable, but still not positive, was the judgement of Vincent Knapp. He wrote that, during the 25 years from Hainfeld to the outbreak of war:

The primary focus of the movement was upon its own internal development as it

⁶⁰ H. Konrad, *Das Entstehen der Arbeiterklasse in Oberösterreich* (Vienna, 1981), p. 9.

⁶¹ W. Johnston, *The Austrian Mind: An Intellectual and Social History 1848-1938* (Berkeley, Ca., 1972), pp. 101-102.

fought to maintain its precarious unity as an international party representing the various national elements in the western half of the Austro-Hungarian empire. Beyond this natural concern, it concentrated upon the nationalities question and the attainment of political and social democracy. These were the matters that occupied its press and these were the topics of intra-party debate.⁶²

In Knapp's assessment, once the suffrage campaign had 'succeeded', there was little to hold the Social Democrats together:

In actuality, the Germans and the Czechs never talked to one another. What dialogue there had been in the past had been based upon their common desire to advance themselves politically by means of universal manhood suffrage. Once this goal was achieved, what divided them increasingly replaced what had once united them.⁶³

Knapp thus points out that, despite having their representatives in parliament, the only legislative successes the Social Democrats could claim between 1907 and 1912 were the banning of white phosphorous and the shortening of the workday.⁶⁴ Knapp's unfavourable evaluation of the parliamentary results appears from his citations to be based entirely on Ludwig Brügel's inventory of the legislative score.⁶⁵ Knapp gave no sign of having examined any of the inter-party relationships in parliament or Social Democrat contact with the bureaucracy.

In his study of the party's activity during the war, Clifton Follis presented a much more favourable view, concentrating heavily on the day-to-day aspects of party life, including how the unions fared. He was forthright in his favourable evaluation of the result for the Social Democrats:

The party, having organised and led the revolution, emerged from it as the single most powerful force in the new German-Austrian state. The Habsburgs were gone, replaced by a young parliamentary democracy in which the Social Democratic influence was predominant.⁶⁶

However, the author's view evolved during the course of his closing remarks, finally

⁶² Knapp, *Austrian Social Democracy*, page viii.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 176.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

⁶⁵ L. Brügel, *Soziale Gesetzgebung in Österreich von 1848 bis 1918* (Vienna, 1919).

⁶⁶ C. Follis, 'The Austrian Social Democratic Party, June 1914-November 1918' (Palo Alto, Ca., PhD dissertation, 1961), p. 442.

coming to the conclusion that the Austrian Revolution was actually made by the defeat of Austria-Hungary and the national revolutions, rather than by the Social Democrats.⁶⁷ This conclusion is problematic in light of the sequence of events described in his dissertation. Follis had carefully explained how the socialists demanded the Monarchy be abolished and replaced by a republic, whereupon the Monarchy removed itself from government the very next day, with the acquiescence, however grudging, of German Nationalists and Christian Socials. His account reveals scant reason for the support or even toleration by both parties of a government designed and led by the Social Democrats. Certainly, based on their subsequent form, those groups should not have been partners, even for a moment, in such a government.⁶⁸ That they were is testimony to the effectiveness of the Social Democratic leadership in the preceding three decades, which Follis failed to appreciate. That several of the Crown Lands had in the meantime declared themselves independent does nothing to reduce the significance of the Social Democrats' accomplishment. Quite the contrary: the influence they were able to bring to bear should have been severely diminished following the loss of Bohemia and Moravia, but it was not.

One of the superficially irreconcilable tensions within Austrian Social Democracy has been that between organisational centralisation and individual freedom of thought and action. This tension has been characterised by Norbert Leser as between Individualism and Collectivism, and Leser recognised this as a problem to be expected in the running of any large organisation, particularly one with a strong doctrinal tradition. It is challenging enough to direct a mass political party, but an ideological heritage, like the doctrine of Marx, or even a single tenet makes leadership even more difficult. Time and effort are demanded by non-productive and highly divisive debates. Leser described the tension as between "...the high regard for individual freedom of expression and action according to

⁶⁷ Follis, 'The Austrian Social Democratic Party', p. 450.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 436-7.

conscience on the one hand and the need for organisational unity and discipline on the other....”⁶⁹

Mark Blum pointed out that the Executive committee of the party consisted, during the period between 1892 and 1918, of between twelve and twenty members, that it was located permanently in Vienna and finally that it controlled daily political action.⁷⁰

“Theoretically, a party member might take issue with the leaders at any time, but conflict might occur only within the walls of the party, not in public.”⁷¹ Not only was the party, in Blum’s view, unduly centralised, it was undemocratic:

Instead of a democratic structuring of their own political party, with two-way communication and democratic participation facilitated among all members, the Austrian Social Democratic leadership emulated the political structure of the non-democratic Habsburg state. Instead of establishing the community of work as the social basis for equality and equity within the party as a model for their future aspirations, they created an elite group of oligarchs based on level of education and personal favour.⁷²

The picture presented by Blum is of a monolithic structure, while the actual organisation of the party clearly, set out above, contradicts that assertion.

In contrast, Paul Pasteur, examining the development of Social Democracy in Austria between Hainfeld and the clerical-fascist coup in 1934, described the Social Democratic Party of Austria in more accurate terms:

Contrary to certain received ideas, Austrian Social Democracy did not become the ‘grand army of the proletariat’ from one day to the next. It took more than two decades to develop a stable organisational structure. That had to wait in effect until the Reichenberg party conference in 1909 to adopt a statute defining the structure of the party.⁷³

In an article on the subject of party organisation, Wolfgang Maderthaler has clarified the background. The growth of the party following the unification at Hainfeld had urgently necessitated a new organisational structure, and this task was undertaken by the

⁶⁹ Leser, *Zwischen Reformismus und Bolschewismus*, p. 201.

⁷⁰ M. Blum, *The Austro-Marxists 1890-1918: A Psychobiographical Study* (Lexington, Ky., 1985), p. 11.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁷² Blum, *The Austro-Marxists*, p. 5.

⁷³ Pasteur, *Pratiques politiques*, p. 87.

party assembly of 1892 in Linz. In Maderthamer's assessment:

In as much as this was the first attempt at a super-regional party directorate and an effort to draw together a network of party committees, with activities directed from the top down (which in any case was neither unbroken nor frictionless in application) and selection of leaders at all levels democratically, it could be portrayed as centralist.⁷⁴

According to Maderthamer, after 1892 the party structure was reviewed at the party congress every other year and adjusted in accordance with changes in circumstances. In Reichenberg in 1909 the meeting produced an important change in that the party and the unions were separated, direct party membership was introduced and a scheme of subscriptions was established to provide the party with revenue.⁷⁵ Pasteur saw in this big step the start of the organised workers' party. Ironically, it could be said that the separation from the unions formally opened the way for non-proletariat membership of the party. None of the historians commented on the likelihood that this could have been a conscious aim.

Just as with the question of organisation, historians have commented on the central tension in the tactical area. Here, however, the conflict was substantive and important. The triumph at Hainfeld was the unification of the party, the healing of the rift between the radicals and the moderates. Of course, Hainfeld did not end the tension between advocates of reform and those of revolution. In fact most, if not all, recent historians have implicitly reproached Austrian Social Democracy for its reformist tendencies, the strong implication being that any party associated with Marxist doctrine, however loosely, must hold itself to a very high revolutionary standard. This is the other side of the problem of dogma: any alleged deviation from strict Marxist orthodoxy would inevitably be criticised by opponents as hypocrisy. It would nonetheless be fair to point out that Social Democratic responses were often at odds with their most moderate party positions. One example

⁷⁴ Maderthamer, 'Die Entwicklung', pp. 32-34.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

would be the response of the leadership to Taaffe's proposed suffrage extension. As mentioned above, the party decided for tactical reasons not to support the reform, even though programmatically that stance was open to criticism. Another example was the equal status of nationalities, Pasteur thus dismissed their stance on the Badeni language reform, treated at some length below, suggesting that Social Democrats merely 'howled with the wolves' when they opposed the reforms on the somewhat dubious grounds that the measures did not serve the equality of the different peoples but rather were an attempt to accommodate the Czech bourgeoisie.⁷⁶ This may have been a legitimate criticism, but at the same time, it would be easy to suggest that Victor Adler was reverting to nationalist type. It is true that Adler, aged 30, had been one of the co-authors of the Linz Programme, a significant contribution to the development of the German Nationalist movement.⁷⁷ However, at the time of the Badeni language reforms, Adler, in his mid-forties, would have had to ignore his intervening fifteen years of work largely for the benefit of workers of all nationalities – an unlikely relapse. Finally, there was another quite immediate and specific objection to Badeni's proposals in the manner of their attempted imposition, which will be discussed below. Interestingly, Andrew Whiteside cited Adler's and his party's deputies having voted in favour of Badeni's earlier suffrage reform (granting universal, though not direct or equal, manhood suffrage) as an example of internationalism conflicting with workers' immediate interests.⁷⁸ This is a strange suggestion, since there were at the time (1896) no Social Democrat *Reichsrat* deputies. Adler himself did not become one until 1905!

Blum framed the leaders' response, in this case Karl Renner's and Otto Bauer's, in terms of individual needs and personality problems:

Their hesitation to assert socialist principles when in positions of power or to support workers in assertive action against the government reflected a temporizing

⁷⁶ Pasteur, *Pratiques politiques*, p. 39.

⁷⁷ Macartney, *The Habsburg Empire*, p. 654.

⁷⁸ A. G. Whiteside, *Austrian National Socialism before 1918* (The Hague, 1962), p. 70.

character that was often justified by metaphorical ‘theory’. Their inability to make timely decisions and their passivity in the midst of social crisis can be seen as symptoms of their inability to assimilate social facts into their publicly stated mission.⁷⁹

More approvingly, Pasteur concluded that after the first decade of the twentieth century, the Social Democratic Party appeared as a party of government. They supported the war in 1914 in the sense that they co-operated in the effort as members of the community. When the conflict became unpopular, they tried to stem spontaneous strikes and rejected violent revolution. They managed to lead the movement of workers' councils, which had developed outside their control.⁸⁰

In his conclusion, Knapp suggested the Social Democrats had been let down by their tactics, particularly their proletarian exclusiveness. He saw this preventing them from making effective alliances with other groups. Furthermore, while he conceded this may have been a strength at first, he thought it had eventually become a handicap⁸¹. Knapp did not explain why either would be valid assessments. The biographies of the Social Democrats’ leaders demonstrate strong representation from both bourgeoisie and proletariat. Furthermore, simple arithmetic made abundantly clear that support from outside the proletariat was a *sine qua non* for any real political impact.

With specific regard to the immediate pre-war period, Leser devoted an entire chapter to “The Theory and Practice of Sitting it out” wherein he explained that having won the struggle for direct and equal suffrage, the Social Democrats found themselves the strongest party in parliament but at the same time not strong enough to command a voting majority. Since this limited their influence, what followed would inevitably be frustration and disappointment, more particularly as the leadership was unwilling to use obstruction as a lever. Was this ‘sitting it out’ a matter of the inevitable, arising out of confidence or

⁷⁹ Blum, *The Austro-Marxists*, p. 5.

⁸⁰ Pasteur, *Pratiques politiques*, p. 279.

⁸¹ Knapp, *Austrian Social Democracy*, p. 202.

indeed belief in the coming revolution, or realism? From the leadership's point of view, their actions on balance indicated the latter, though Leser seems not to have been so sure:

As an antidote to the disappointment in the present, the comfort of the revolutionary future was often employed. The defence against revisionism was therefore a sham; one fought against Bernstein and the revisionists not because they deprived the party of the possibility of revolution but rather of the comfort of that possibility.⁸²

Also, the tension between attitudes to the institutions of the empire had called for a vigorous defence from the leadership. In Leser's words again:

As long as one did not disturb revolutionary symbols and taboos, one could conduct revisionist politics, even under the camouflage of the struggle against revisionism, indeed the mere admission of the revisionist character in the form of conclusive action brought forth resistance from the ranks and forced on the leadership a rush to cover the momentarily revealed abyss.⁸³

With Adler's resolution of the revisionist controversy at the 1901 party congress the party effectively ignored the pauperisation issue, carrying on their efforts to improve the lives of their constituents. In support of his argument, Leser quoted Victor Adler from the party congress in 1896 that social democrats' business was not to talk about revolution but rather to make it. He suggested that Adler had "turned the truth on its head": "for the entire history of Austrian Social Democracy is impressive proof of the opposite: in the Austrian party revolution was only ever discussed, in order not to have to do it, to be able to postpone it to an unspecified time."⁸⁴

Tactics will be an important part of this thesis. The preference of the Austrian Social Democrats for evolution and reformism, the liking for using Marxist rhetoric alongside Lassalleian deeds, the abhorrence of undue heroics and the propensity to compromise are all part of the build-up to the proclamation of the First Republic. However thorough the existing historiography has been on this aspect of Austrian Social Democracy, it has concentrated on internal party debates, on the effect on the membership as reflected

⁸² Leser, *Zwischen Reformismus und Bolschewismus*, p. 237.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 241.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 246.

at party congresses, on doctrinal consistency vis-à-vis Marxism or for that matter Lassalleanism, but not on what for this thesis is the key question, how tactics supported the strategic aim to move the Social Democrats into a governing position so that they could implement their policies.

Pasteur pointed out that from early in the workers' movement, the teachings of Ferdinand Lassalle played an important role. Certainly one aspect of that approach is undeniable:

For Lassalle, the proletariat must become the master of the state, but their conquest must be through the ballot. The struggle for universal suffrage, until its success, was a central feature of the social democrats in the workers' movement, which was the cause both of their rupture with the Liberals and also their tumultuous relationship with the more radical fringes of the workers' movement, which refused all participation or compromise with the state.⁸⁵

Faulty doctrinal consistency has been a concern of a number of commentators, in particular Knapp, who implicitly criticised the Hainfeld programme for its juxtaposition of Marxist rhetoric and Lassallean content. The latter was a clearly reformist programme, including as it did objectives like universal suffrage and state-sponsored social reform.

The tension between the Marxist view and the Lassallean is a constant refrain among the historians, and the underlying assumption, particularly by Blum and Knapp, has been that the latter was definitely a watered-down version of Socialism. The clear exception to this generalisation is Pasteur, whose view on this was more pragmatic – pointing out that the Marxist, revolutionary rhetoric was most likely aimed at keeping the leftward section of the party on board, so to speak, while the actual programme had to contain at least some realistically attainable objectives. This after all was the lesson of 1869, when excessively radical demands were met with a strong response ultimately harmful to the party's interests.

Pasteur also lamented that, under the auspices of 'Austromarxism', historiography

⁸⁵ Pasteur, *Pratiques politiques*, p. 20.

during the 1970s, particularly in France, Italy and Germany, made too much of that stream of thought, thereby obscuring Social Democracy itself.⁸⁶

Vincent Knapp, an early non-participant to attempt a history of Austrian Social Democracy before the Great War, was not kind in his judgement, but his most damning faint praise was reserved for the leaders: “The history of Austrian Social Democracy before 1914 is not a spectacular story, maybe because it produced no truly spectacular leaders.”⁸⁷ Knapp attributed the legal and practical orientation of Austrian Social Democracy to the Liberal background of its leaders, most notably Victor Adler and Engelbert Pernerstorfer.⁸⁸ But there are other explanations. The organisation of the party grew with the unions and was arranged around the constituency workers, who worked on an everyday basis among a membership with practical needs. Moreover, Victor Adler’s conversion to the cause was through exposure as an adult professional to the real everyday needs and worries of working people.

Other historians, particularly Blum, have found the leaders too Germanocentric, Jewish and bourgeois: “The habits of their intellectual background inevitably transformed revolutionary ideals into thought tailored to the regularity of their lives as Austrian citizens of the middle class.”⁸⁹ As with Johnston, the implication here is that bourgeois support for the workers’ movement is somehow inappropriate, even hypocritical. That is difficult to accept, since it must be up to members of all classes to make the most of their gifts and to serve the causes they deem worthwhile.

From a biographical standpoint, there has been some work done on many of the leaders, more on the Adlers (father and son) than the others, and very largely by colleagues and personal friends, e.g. Julius Braunthal on Bauer and the Adlers⁹⁰, Otto Leichter on

⁸⁶ Pasteur, *Pratiques politiques*, p. 66.

⁸⁷ Knapp, *Austrian Social Democracy*, p. ix.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. vii.

⁸⁹ Blum, *The Austro-Marxists*, p. 14.

⁹⁰ J. Braunthal, *Victor und Friedrich Adler und Otto Bauer: Eine Auswahl aus Seinem Lebenswerk* (Vienna, 1961).

Bauer⁹¹, Jacques Hannak on Renner⁹² and Max Ermers on Victor Adler⁹³. Exceptions would include Werner Meysels' recent biography of Victor Adler⁹⁴, a good narrative, Mark Blum's psycho-biographical study of the Austro-Marxists, including Renner and Bauer⁹⁵ and more recently Ernst Hanisch's critical biography of Otto Bauer⁹⁶.

Once again, Johnston's assessment is not positive: "Although many of its leaders were Jewish, they tended to share Adler's anti-Semitism."⁹⁷ What he meant by 'many' is not clear, though there were certainly a good few, for instance the various Adlers and Bauer. As to the allegation of anti-Semitism, Johnston directed the reader to a work entitled *Sozialisten zur Judenfrage* by Edmund Silberner. In fact, Silberner's work was written in English when the author was studying at Princeton between 1945 and 1950, and the German translation was later published in Germany.⁹⁸ The author deemed Victor Adler anti-Semitic for not being sufficiently enthusiastic or direct in his responses to public anti-Semitism, and he enlisted Adler's then only biographer, Max Ermers, in support. The latter citation⁹⁹ is at the very least a stretch¹⁰⁰, and it is not unreasonable to suggest that Silberner was, given his own historical context, perhaps over-ready to diagnose anti-Semitism or Jewish self-hatred, particularly on the part of non-Zionists. Silberner further criticised Adler for not wanting 'too many Jews' active in the party and for deeming his Jewishness a potential burden on the party¹⁰¹. Silberner was not alone. Robert Wistrich has argued that Austrian Social Democrats tolerated and even used anti-Semitism as a weapon against

⁹¹ O. Leichter, *Otto Bauer: Tragödie oder Triumph* (Vienna, 1970).

⁹² J. Hannak, *Karl Renner und seine Zeit: Versuch einer Biographie* (Vienna, 1965).

⁹³ M. Ermers, *Victor Adler: Aufstieg und Grösse einer sozialistischen Partei* (Vienna, 1932).

⁹⁴ L. Meysels, *Victor Adler: Die Biographie* (Vienna, 1997).

⁹⁵ Blum, *The Austro-Marxists 1890-1918*.

⁹⁶ E. Hanisch, *Der grosse Illusionist: Otto Bauer (1881-1938)* (Vienna, 2011).

⁹⁷ Johnston, *The Austrian Mind*, p. 100.

⁹⁸ E. Silberner, *Sozialisten zur Judenfrage* (Berlin, 1962), pp. 8 and 234.

⁹⁹ Ermers, M. *Victor Adler*, p. 230.

¹⁰⁰ Ermers' view (p. 229) was: "Victor Adler was full-blooded Jew and full-blooded bourgeois. As little as his baptism in the Schönerer years destroyed his Jewishness, just as little did his joining the workers destroy his bourgeois upbringing."

¹⁰¹ Silberner, *Sozialisten zur Judenfrage*, pp. 234-235.

Liberalism, which from a Marxist standpoint may be understandable.¹⁰² But to label Victor Adler anti-Semitic on the grounds that he was not sufficiently anti-anti-Semitic seems unreasonable, in the context of Adler's time and of his aims. Adler's dedication to the Social Democratic cause can hardly be doubted, and he clearly thought that engaging with Christian Social anti-Semitism would hamper Social Democratic efforts. Furthermore, Julius Braunthal, biographer and personal acquaintance of both Victor and Friedrich Adler, took specific issue with Silberner's view.¹⁰³ After all that, Johnston did not suggest any conclusion, once again dropping comments which contained implied reproaches.

In contrast, Leser's view of Victor Adler was slightly more sympathetic:

It is wholly typical of the development of Dr Victor Adler and furthermore also decisive and typical with regard to the subsequent expression of his socialism that his initial involvement in active politics was not as a doctrinal enthusiast or someone keen on politics per se, but rather was motivated overwhelmingly on humanitarian grounds and continued on that basis... Just as Moses led his people to the promised land but did not get there himself, just so does Victor Adler's life work seem bound up with the fate of the Habsburg Monarchy. His death the day before the proclamation of the republic left him on the threshold of an age for which he prepared with his life's work, which he left as a bequest.¹⁰⁴

Beyond his positive view of Victor Adler, Leser regarded Karl Renner and Otto Bauer as the outstanding ideological contributors to the Austro-Marxists' intellectual and programmatic make-up. In the course of a detailed treatment of the writings of both men, he drew an interesting contrast between the Lassallean Renner and the Marxist Bauer. The juxtaposition is well illustrated in connection with their attitude to the inflation tormenting Austria at the end of the first decade of the century. Leser framed the contrast by summarising Bauer's view:

that the emphasis on Bauer's part of the punctual change to socialism and the expectation of the capitalist collapse was already at this early stage not an invitation to act, but rather an alibi for not doing so, not a signal to tear down barriers but the ideological grounds for respecting barriers,

¹⁰² R. Wistrich, 'Socialism and Antisemitism in Austria before 1914', *Jewish Social Studies*, vol. 37, 3/4 (Summer-Autumn, 1975), pp. 330.

¹⁰³ Braunthal, *Victor und Friedrich Adler*, p. 143.

¹⁰⁴ Leser, *Zwischen Reformismus und Bolschewismus*, pp. 195-196.

and then the approach of Karl Renner:

Before the First World War, Renner had already rejected this resignation dressed in revolutionary disguise, which would only serve to highlight the limitations on what was immediately attainable as an excuse for delaying action.¹⁰⁵

Blum also dealt with both Renner and Bauer, along with Victor's son Friedrich Adler and Max Adler, who was no relation to Victor and Friedrich, in what he termed a 'psychobiographical study'. Appropriately enough, he drew quite heavily on his reading of Freud for a significant part of his work.

In the treatment of Karl Renner, Blum had the benefit of the subject's own autobiographical account of his youth, which Renner wrote after the Second World War, i.e. when he was already in his 70s. Without the benefit of Freudian psychoanalytic skills, it seems safe to say that any incidents or impressions recounted in that work are those that had made a lasting and profound impression on young Renner and those he particularly wanted to remember. With that in mind, Renner's account indicates that his parents were not well off even by the standards of rural Moravia at the time. Nonetheless, his father had a book, which Renner remembered being quite thick, on the subject of the topography of Moravia. Young Renner was fascinated by this book, and the boy devoured its contents, learning much about the land before even venturing far from home.¹⁰⁶ As he approached secondary school age, his father's increasingly precarious business finally collapsed. During the last stages of that process, Renner found himself spending lots of time at the home of his mother's brother, a much more comfortably established resident of Kunzendorf bei Mährisch-Trübau.¹⁰⁷ Not surprisingly, memories of that household by comparison to those of the parental home were of an orderly and comfortable environment. When Renner had started his secondary education, against the background of his family's woes, he was lucky enough to encounter teachers who sparked his interest, particularly in

¹⁰⁵ Leser, *Zwischen Reformismus und Bolschewismus*, p. 103.

¹⁰⁶ K. Renner, *An der Wende zweier Zeiten: Lebenserinnerungen von Karl Renner* (Vienna, 1946), p. 45.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

the sciences and the classics.¹⁰⁸

Blum drew some interesting, possibly surprising, conclusions from Karl Renner's recollections of his youth:

Renner's absorption with topography, his ability to locate himself in geometric space, reflects his hunger for a public world that could provide him with the security his childhood world lacked. By knowing the names of the towns and their distances from one another, he could know where his father was during his long journeys and accompany him in imagination. That knowledge of location gave him a sense of control over his life and the habit of linking issues and events to an abstract geography....To some degree, all learning served that function for Renner; as a youth it was definite compensation for an uncertain environment.¹⁰⁹

From the memory of his uncle Habiger's home in Kunzendorf, Blum concluded that "The house and family seemed to be a living symbol of German culture in the Austrian state."¹¹⁰ Furthermore, he suggested that Renner's family provided for him "a bedrock *insecurity* of reality" (emphasis mine) and that his life's work on social issues was to "correct the pain he knew as a victim".¹¹¹ However, Habiger's influence was in Blum's view, a countervailing one – of bourgeois order and certainty, "those rules and images that constitute the invisible voice of authority in what should exist in behaviour, what is right."¹¹²

Blum drew together these three influences, the insecurity of the parental home, the contrasting security offered by learning and the exemplary environment in Uncle Habiger's home, in a synthesis with which he sought to explain Renner's approach to the political, ideological and constitutional issues of his day: "Although socialism promised alleviation of his parent's [*sic*] situation, the way socialism would order the lives of its citizens took on the look of the Habiger reality when conceived by Renner."¹¹³ In Blum's assessment, this conclusion presents a contradiction, or at least a tension. He noted, in a mildly

¹⁰⁸ Renner, *An der Wende zweier Zeiten*, p. 129.

¹⁰⁹ Blum, *The Austro-Marxists*, pp. 38-39.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 41.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

accusatory tone, that Renner “almost” accepted a job in the bureaucracy “because of the social and economic certainty it would provide.”¹¹⁴ This perceived contradiction and its accommodation within the framework of Marxist orthodoxy provided a leitmotiv in Blum’s treatment of Karl Renner’s character.

Blum then examined several of Renner’s works on the subjects of nationality and the law. In *Staat und Nation*, Renner proposed a separation of those two concepts and the ‘personalisation’ of the latter. Blum’s assessment was that “Renner’s separation of culture from state, his positing of a dual allegiance in the day-to-day life of the Austrian citizen, is a metaphorical key to his own dualism of mind in this period before his entrance to parliament and successful career in the Austrian Social Democratic Party.”¹¹⁵

Having demonstrated his appreciation of metaphor, Blum ventured a simile in a passing reproach: “One can see shining like a dark star within the addenda Renner published in the months after *Staat und Nation* the question he never answered: what is national culture in the modern state?”¹¹⁶ Using citations from Renner’s work, not only *Staat und Nation* but also shorter pieces published before and subsequently, Blum summed up the predicament of the Social Democrats as a group, finding themselves forced to deal with the nationalities issue, when it held little promise of producing progress toward any of their goals.

In his appreciation of Renner’s work on the subject of the law, Blum was not surprisingly less convincing. Karl Renner was a respected authority in that area, had reached the status of Doctor of Law, published several pieces on the law and drafted a constitution. Blum by contrast could fairly be termed an enthusiastic amateur commentator, as he implicitly conceded. That did not deter him however from judging

¹¹⁴ Blum, *The Austro-Marxists*, p. 41.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

Renner “authoritarian” and “anti-democratic”¹¹⁷ on account of his (in Blum’s view) undue respect for the rule of law. Blum’s attribution of the writing of *Die Rechtsinstitute des Privatrechts und ihre soziale Funktion* to the Renner family business failure and its consequences was more convincing, and, in Blum’s view, this work “placed Renner firmly in the ranks of the Revisionists.”¹¹⁸

Even if Renner’s clearly German outlook was a result of the time at his uncle’s rather than of his upbringing as a whole, it is surely stretching a point to conclude as Blum did that this constitutes grounds for terming Renner a German Nationalist. In what seems very much like a surprise ending, Blum concluded, as if with a shrug: “With his great respect for the law of his forefathers and the established norms of society, perhaps Karl Renner was the best man to be the conservative buffer for any transition from the old to the new in a time of social change.”¹¹⁹

Whatever harmful influence Renner’s childhood had on his subsequent development, the experiences were not uniquely his. During the processes of industrialisation and urbanisation, not only were people having to adjust, as Karl Renner did, to new homes in the city which offered none of the social certainties of the rural existence they had left, but furthermore they found themselves in an ethnic kaleidoscope having to deal with completely new forms of employment in unfamiliar settings. Not all of these people had enjoyed Renner’s education or had the blessing of his time with the Habigers, and this cannot have been lost on Karl Renner. His appreciation of the predicaments faced by those less fortunate than himself must provide more compelling explanations for Renner’s views and actions than what Blum so painstakingly winkled from Renner’s extensive writings and recollections of his youth.¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ Blum, *The Austro-Marxists*, p. 61.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 179.

¹²⁰ See W. Maderthaner and L. Musner, *Die Anarchie der Vorstadt: Das andere Wien um 1900* (Frankfurt, 1999).

In his treatment of Otto Bauer, Blum was concerned with both the larger cultural milieu in which Bauer grew up and the particular circumstances of the Bauer family. Bauer's habits of mind and behaviour were deemed typical of "...the Austrian mode of cultural denial – the styles of thought and human interaction into which a citizen is schooled by his society to avoid and to distort the facts of his existence which he cannot accept."¹²¹

Turning to the Bauer family, Blum cited work by Freud and other scholars dealing with the Bauers which together painted a distressing picture of the family: a philandering father and an obsessive compulsive mother. Therefore: "his inability to be decisive in moments of crisis and the lack of congruence between his stated principles and political behaviour were the products of a family milieu that was not conducive to normal development."¹²²

However, Blum saw benefits derived by Bauer from his very trying parents: "Undoubtedly, Otto's healthy attempts to relate to his parents and resolve their differences developed strong interpersonal abilities in him which became evident later, when he played the go-between among the warring generations in the Austrian Social Democratic Party."¹²³ This skill was to be very useful during the war, when, according to Blum: "Bauer's popularity and success with members of both left and right wings of Austrian Social Democracy lay in just such a quality of avoiding conclusive showdowns."¹²⁴ Given that Bauer spent three quarters of the war in Siberia, he must have been very gifted indeed.

Finally, Blum saw psychological grounds for Bauer's embrace of Marxism.

Otto Bauer found in Marx a metaphorical promise that might free him from his original home and lead him to a new land. Bauer's original home was a place of pain and irresolvable conflicts. Marx gave him a body of thought, and Austrian Social Democracy gave him a political home that enabled him constantly to defend

¹²¹ Blum, *The Austro-Marxists*, p. 73.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 73.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 184.

himself from reality as it was, in the name of what it might be.¹²⁵

Blum's assessment of Otto Bauer, like that of Karl Renner, consisted of identifying noteworthy aspects of his behaviour and relating them to the peculiarities of his upbringing. The clear *leitmotiv* for both are dual ironies: on the one hand between the revolutionary rhetoric of the Social Democratic leadership as compared to their much more evolutionary actions and on the other hand the working class styling of the Social Democratic Party as compared to the bourgeois attitudes and ambitions, and to different extents background, of the leadership. As if unrelated to the psychoanalytic and often highly critical assessments, Blum allowed himself to point out a positive outcome: "the Austro-Marxists dedicated their lives to a principled cause, and even if their political action was ineffective in achieving its goals, the men moved the idea of social democracy into the normative options of European culture, where it is practiced today."¹²⁶ One might imagine Blum agreeing that Otto Bauer would have been pleased with that outcome had he survived, as Karl Renner did, to see the party take a prominent place in the Second Republic.

Although the focus of Blum's book, as reflected in the title, is the period between Hainfeld and the end of the Great War, the evaluation of Otto Bauer is very clearly from the standpoint of his deemed 'failure' as the leader of the Workers' Movement during the First Republic. Moreover, Leser, most particularly in his main work from 1968, was also focused heavily on the defeat in the civil war of 1934.¹²⁷ That may be tempting, but surely the immediate result of that Civil War was only a temporary setback, as the formation of the Second Republic eleven years later made quite clear.

To illustrate the Social Democrats' progress, this thesis presents the three decades in question in terms of a series of themes. Chapter One will examine the socialists'

¹²⁵ Blum, *The Austro-Marxists*, p. 74.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 209.

¹²⁷ Leser, *Zwischen Reformismus und Bolschewismus*, pp. 19-21.

response to the challenge presented by the 'nationalities question', where they offered an ingenious solution appreciated by few if any subsequent critics or historians. The suffrage campaign and the immediate aftermath, including the election of the 'people's parliament', and the first legislative successes will be the subject for Chapter Two. Chapter Three will trace the presentation by Social Democrats of their reform proposals in several areas beyond voting rights: social insurance, education and housing, before returning to the use of demonstration in connection with gathering inflation and the increasing shortage of meat. Finally, the Great War will be the subject of Chapter Four with specific regard to the socialists' evolving position. While this introduction has dealt with more general historiography, the following chapters will contain historians' more specific treatments to date. The conclusion will show that the leading role played by the Social Democrats in 1918 demonstrated the well-earned success of their efforts during the preceding three decades.

Chapter 1 – The Nationalities Question

Nationality has provided subject matter for much of the history written about the final few decades of the Monarchy. For our purposes, however, it will be important to examine the “nationality question” from the standpoint of how the Social Democrats addressed the issue. Specifically, how did they present to their opponents and the broader public suggestions for dealing with the tensions between Austria’s constituent nations, and how did those ideas evolve to the point where Social Democrats could propose a logical and feasible approach to the issue? By the 1880s there was increasing pressure on politicians to bolster their nationalist posture, even at the expense of more substantive aspects of their proposals, whether liberal or conservative, federalist or centralist.¹ In such a climate, nationalists found compromise very difficult, as it left them subject to criticism from their more radical associates.² It was in this increasingly febrile atmosphere that the first of the Social Democrats’ General Principles, adopted unanimously at the Hainfeld party congress at the end of 1888, “condemned privileges of nations as well as of birth, possession and ancestry”.³ While it was clear that they were unlikely to be in a position to implement such a programme, practical and responsible politics demanded that they have a strategy which could resonate not only with potential supporters but also with waverers and opponents of all nationalities, since it was in that context that they were hoping eventually to be in the position of governing. As Karl Renner, writing under the pen name ‘Rudolf Springer’, made clear in an early attempt to come to grips with the nationalities question, noting that there was no shortage of ambitious demands: “Every party programme must have the potential eventually to become law.”⁴

The indictment most insistently brought against Austrian Social Democrats has

¹ P. Judson, *The Habsburg Empire: A New History* (Cambridge, MA, 2016), p. 299.

² *Ibid.*, p. 377.

³ *Das Protokoll des Hainfelder Einigungsparteitages der Sozialdemokratischen Arbeiterpartei in Österreich* (Hainfeld, 2014), pp. 7-8.

⁴ K. Renner (pseud. Rudolf Springer), *Der Kampf der österreichischen Nationen um den Staat* (Vienna, 1902), p. 4.

been that they mishandled the nationalities issue, or that they never addressed it. A leading commentator on this subject has been Helmut Konrad, whose explanation ran:

In the years after Hainfeld, Victor Adler developed a very effective strategy to keep the national conflicts in the party from getting too strong. He always directed the entire energy of the movement toward goals which lay outside of the nationalist arguments. Until 1893 the struggle against the Taaffe administration offered such a target. Taaffe's strategy of playing off the nationalities of the empire against one another offered in addition welcome proof that Nationalism was a consciously employed instrument of repression.⁵

According to Konrad, following the collapse of Taaffe's administration the principal battleground was the campaign for universal, then general and equal manhood suffrage. Once the suffrage battle had been 'won', there was no more putting off the issue of nationalities. Unfortunately, in Konrad's view, Victor Adler's "...inadequate theoretical understanding of the national question, together with the success of his own tactics, led him to underestimate the problem." Realising that, and taking into account that he was strongly associated with Kautsky's territorial and *großdeutsch* position, Adler was content to let the younger theoreticians Renner and Bauer take the lead on the nationalities question.⁶ There are two problems with this assessment. First, there was in reality no sequence. These issues never presented themselves in so orderly a procession. Nationality controversy and the suffrage campaign demanded and received attention during the entire period under consideration. Furthermore, the suffrage campaign was not successfully concluded in any sense until 1918 as will be seen in chapter two below.

In 1899, Karl Renner, under the pseudonym 'Synopticus', published a work on the nationality issue entitled *Staat und Nation*. Renner hoped to be able to reduce the national power issue to a completely cultural level. The approach was a government which entailed the segregation of language and cultural issues on the one hand from administrative and economic ones on the other. For the latter he laid out eight areas to replace the then

⁵ H. Konrad, *Nationalismus und Internationalismus: Die österreichische Arbeiterbewegung vor dem ersten Weltkrieg* (Vienna, 1976), p. 50.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

existing seventeen crown lands.⁷ Though a similar approach was proposed by the South Slav delegation to the party congress in Brünn that same year, it was not adopted. In its stead, and to some extent under its influence, the so-called *Brünner Programm* (discussed further below) encapsulated the party position. Robin Okey explained:

The Brno (Brünn) party conference of the Socialists in 1899 advocated the reorganisation of the Monarchy as a ‘federal state of nationalities’, the units being ethnic rather than historic crownlands. Essentially, it was to be cultural federalism, for political and economic matters would fall to the central organs of the state. The centre, too, was to arbitrate on the vexed question of minorities. These provisions hardly provided an operational blueprint. In effect the Brno programme was a tactic designed to hive off a divisive issue in the hope that party members’ minds could then be re-directed to the key concerns of socialists.⁸

In Norbert Leser’s view, this created more problems than it solved, if indeed it solved any.⁹ Konrad faulted socialist thinkers for getting carried away with the cultural and psychological aspects of the question, when they should have spared some thought, time and effort for the economic angle.¹⁰ However, one can well imagine that Victor Adler and many of his colleagues in the leadership saw little economic promise for their movement in the nationalities debate. On the negative side, any additional rights or benefits advocated, for example on behalf of Czech workers anywhere in the empire, would inevitably threaten German workers in those areas, as with language reform, whereby largely mono-lingual German job-seekers would be disadvantaged in relation to their more often bi-lingual Czech contemporaries. On the positive side, what could be obtained in any real, measurable sense from the entire debate? There was little in the way of housing improvement, of increased wages, of better working conditions, of better or greater employment opportunities, indeed of anything concrete to be gained by involvement in the day-to-day debate on the nationality question or for that matter from any ‘solution’, even outcome. The Social Democrats were effectively forced to have a

⁷ Konrad, *Nationalismus und Internationalismus*, p. 89.

⁸ R. Okey, *The Habsburg Monarchy C. 1765-1918 From Enlightenment to Eclipse* (London, 2001), p. 308.

⁹ N. Leser, *Zwischen Reformismus und Bolschewismus: Der Austromarxismus als Theorie und Praxis* (Vienna, 1968), pp. 249-250.

¹⁰ Konrad, *Nationalismus und Internationalismus*, p. 4.

position, both Karl Renner and Otto Bauer indeed contributing acclaimed monographs on the subject, but the discussions were bound to be a dead end for them. Nevertheless, the criticism that the Social Democrats failed to deal with the issue effectively can be taken as strictly correct in that they did not ‘solve’ the problem. That is not, however, a fair verdict unless one defines what would have been deemed success, and that is plainly impossible. The unavoidable conclusion is that it is reasonable to judge the approach of the Social Democrats only on the basis of how their proposals were calculated to help or to avoid hindering them given their objectives and further to what extent their contribution served the intended purpose.

The Social Democrats of course realised that this was not an issue which could be of any use to them or their constituents. It was likely to be an obstacle not only to the extent that it crowded more practical subjects out of the debates but further in that it hindered co-operation between the different ethnic groups in the general population and more particularly within their movement. As Karl Renner explained: “Progress for Austria is only conceivable once the inalienable rights of the nations are conceded, which will save them the need to have their own national bloc in parliament, enabling them to turn their attention to social and economic projects.”¹¹ The main focus of the Social Democrats, in addition to voting rights, was after all on concrete social and economic concerns.

It will be helpful to have an appreciation of the size and scope of the challenge as it presented itself in Austria in the last quarter of a century before the Great War. From the early efforts at constitutions in the 1840s, equal rights of all the nations were guaranteed, but the content of that guarantee and the means of enforcing it were never specified.¹² What constitutes a nation has been debated endlessly and has yet to be settled with any degree of unanimity. As Judson noted, the concept was a moving target. “In 1848,

¹¹ K. Renner (pseud. Rudolf Springer), *Der Kampf der österreichischen Nationen um den Staat* (Vienna: Franz, 1902), p. 29.

¹² H. Hasenmayer, ‘Die Stellung der österreichischen Sozialdemokratie zum Nationalitätenproblem in Österreich’ (Vienna: PhD dissertation, 1950), p. 11.

however, what was generally meant by ‘the nation’ in public discourse changed its character radically, from a socio-political unit that promoted the rights of a ruling elite to a mass-based phenomenon defined in broadly cultural Herderian terms.”¹³ During the barely two generations from 1848 to the Great War, then, several constructs could represent nations: the noble nation, being those with political privilege, as in Hungary; the fatherland of all the state’s citizens; the various crown lands, for example Bohemia; the language communities, or the estates represented in a diet.¹⁴ The choice always depended on contextual views and aims. In Austria-Hungary nations were officially defined in terms of language, and from the census of 1880, inhabitants were required to specify their language of everyday usage, with no recognition of secondary language ability. This was an inadvertent boost to those who would try to map territories of different nationalities, as bilingual people were counted for only one language.¹⁵

Broadly speaking there were in Austria of the late nineteenth century at the very least four nations represented by significant populations: Germans, Czechs, Poles and Ruthenes (western Ukrainians). The Jews were not counted as a nation, since they were not linguistically distinct, even if confessionally and to a large extent ancestrally discrete. Hungary had populations of not only Magyars but also Croats, Slovaks and Romanians.

In 1910 Austria’s population broke down as follows:¹⁶

<i>Nationality</i>	<i>Percentage of population</i>
German	35.58
Czech & Slovak	23.02
Poles	17.77
Ruthenes	12.58
Slovenes	4.48
Serbs & Croats	2.8
Italians & Ladinos	2.75

¹³ Judson, *Habsburg Empire*, p. 199.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 85-87.

¹⁵ J. King, *Budweisers to Czechs and Germans* (Princeton, 2002), pp. 57-62.

¹⁶ H. Rumpler, *Eine Chance für Mitteleuropa: Bürgerliche Emanzipation und Staatsverfall in der Habsburgermonarchie*. Vienna, 1997), Table 7, p. 557. These are on the basis of language, and nationalities with less than 1% are not included.

When the bulk of the population was made up of farmers and farm labourers, with literacy the privilege of the few, the polyglot population had caused little difficulty. Until late in the eighteenth century, the language of administration and law was Latin. What Karl Renner later called 'language compulsion' would have been unthinkable. However, in 1784 Joseph II, aiming to achieve greater administrative efficiency, confirmed German as the official language of government in the Empire.¹⁷ As Judson explained,

Joseph favoured German because of its new status as a literary and scientific language in the eighteenth century. At the same time, however, this period saw efforts in Bohemia and Hungary by regional patriots to revive, modernize and promote the Czech language and the Hungarian language as well.¹⁸

Therefore, while Joseph's reform may not have seemed unreasonable at the time to German speakers, it set the stage for some very heated debates over the following century and beyond. Not long after the reform was promulgated, it was rescinded for Hungary, and it was further relaxed in western areas later.¹⁹ Furthermore, during the Taaffe government there were reforms in 1880 to acknowledge the increased importance of the Czech language by giving it greater status even in majority German areas of Bohemia.²⁰ Taaffe's anti-liberal government, known as the Iron Ring, was founded on a coalition of several interests with a strong Slav flavour: federalist large landowners, conservatives and Polish nobles from Galicia.²¹ During the life of this government therefore, there was a sharpening of German sensitivity to Slav 'encroachments' on their position.

During the nineteenth century, people began to move to the cities in search of jobs. Thus Cisleithania's make-up shifted from largely rural in 1850 to majority urban in 1914. For example, while the population of Bohemia increased 32% between 1869 and 1910,

¹⁷ R. Kann, *A History of the Habsburg Empire 1526-1918* (Berkeley, Ca., 1974) p. 185.

¹⁸ Judson, *Habsburg Empire*, p. 81.

¹⁹ C. Macartney, *The Habsburg Empire 1790-1918* (New York, NY., 1969), p. 123; and H. Hantsch, *Die Geschichte Österreichs 1648-1918* (Graz, 1953), 2nd edition, p. 232.

²⁰ E. Hellbling, 'Die Landesverwaltung in Cisleithanien', A. Wandruszka and P. Urbanitsch (eds.), *Die Habsburgermonarchie, 1848-1918*, vol. 2 *Verwaltung und Rechtswesen* (Vienna, 1973), p. 245.

²¹ King, *Budweisers*, p. 55.

those of the cities increased much more quickly: Prague by 41.9% and Reichenberg by 62.3%.²² There were several factors driving this migration. First was the pressure on rural population owing to limits on the division of farms amongst offspring and the decline of cottage industry, both of which made it increasingly difficult to make a living on the land. Next were the legal prerequisites for migration, namely the liberation of the peasants in 1848 and their freedom to move, granted in the 1867 Basic Law. Furthermore, from a practical standpoint, rapid improvements in the transport system facilitated movement to industrial centres. The combined effect of all these factors was that by 1910, 6.35m of the total Cisleithanian population of 28.6m were ‘internal migrants’.²³ At the same time, compulsory schooling, the growth in newspaper circulation and increasing availability of books brought ever larger portions of the populace out of the ignorance and isolation of their rural roots. The socio-ethnic situation in Austria was therefore highly fluid during the second half of the nineteenth century, but as Jeremy King pointed out: “To this day, both in real time and retrospectively, ethnic understandings convert dynamic interaction among socio-economic interests into conflict between statically defined groups and obscure the political roles of the state.”²⁴

Increasingly urban, more universally literate, more intrusively polyglot, Austria’s population on the eve of the First World War was ethnically mixed and divided like no other in Europe. It had started as a very chaotic patchwork of overlapping populations with no readily apparent rules of separation. There had never been any need for a formal segregation, as it would only have served to inhibit trade and business. Karl Renner remembered that in the Moravia of his youth Czech and German farmers would exchange children for periods to allow the youngsters to gain some competence in an important

²² *Statistik Austria*, census figures for 31 Dec 1869 and 1910.

²³ H. Fassmann, ‘Die Bevölkerungsentwicklung 1850 – 1910’ in Rumpler, Helmut, and Peter Urbanitsch (Eds.), *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848-1918*, vol. 9 *Soziale Strukturen*, part 1 *von der feudal-agrarischen zur bürgerlich-industriellen Gesellschaft*, section 1/1 *Lebens- und Arbeitswelt in der industriellen Revolution*, pp. 172-173.

²⁴ King, *Budweisers*, p. 10.

second language.²⁵

Until I was 12 years old, we had almost daily at our family meals a foreigner who was not foreign to us at all.... In accordance with local custom, my parents sent each of their sons, once they had had three or four years in the local primary school, on exchange to a farm family in Eibis (a Czech village not far away) and took in one of their sons....The Czech boys naturally called my parents father and mother, as we boys did our Czech parents, Otec and Matka.

Renner was careful to qualify this by explaining that the two nationalities were by no means integrated, with bi-national marriage rare, for example.²⁶ However, it is plain that life in rural Moravia was not carried on with daggers constantly drawn and that there was a very practical approach to the challenges of bilingualism. Hugo Hantsch suggested nationality relations were more relaxed in Moravia than in Bohemia for several reasons. First the Moravian Czechs there were more predominantly agrarian than their Bohemian co-nationalists so less susceptible to nationalist radicalism, which was largely an urban, bourgeois phenomenon. Second Moravian Czechs were normally disinclined to follow leads from Bohemia. Finally, economic factors tied them much more closely to Lower Austria than to Bohemia.²⁷

Catherine Horel noted that, while village life in mixed districts would have involved two nationalities, the urban scene was much more complex, with multi-language families not rare and those with four language groups represented by grandparents not unheard of.²⁸ Furthermore, when the members of the various nations were counted for each census, the picture became more convoluted. Emil Brix has observed that economic nationalism played a distorting role. Landlords and employers were known to exert pressure on their employees or tenants to choose the 'right' nationality.²⁹ The inescapable

²⁵ K. Renner, *An der Wende zweier Zeiten: Lebenserinnerungen von Karl Renner* (Vienna, 1946), pp. 45-46.

²⁶ Cohen, admittedly concentrating on Prague, found that marriage registries included no indication of ethnicity. See G. Cohen, *The Politics of Ethnic Survival: Germans in Prague, 1861-1914* (Princeton, NJ., 1981), p. 135.

²⁷ Hantsch, *Geschichte Österreichs*, p. 6.

²⁸ C. Horel, 'Multi- und Plurikulturalismus in urbaner Umwelt – Nationale und soziale Vielfalt in den Städten der Habsburger-Monarchie 1867-1914', *Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, 113 (2005), p. 356.

²⁹ E. Brix, 'Die Erhebung der Umgangssprache im zisleithanischen Österreich' in *Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, 87 (1979), p. 421.

conclusion is that, while there are lots of statistics, they are quite probably a flimsy basis for any conclusions beyond the most general, even before taking into account that populations were increasingly mobile.

Because of that movement, the industrialization and urbanization of the nineteenth century made the patchwork picture even more untidy. Fortunately for the development of the Austrian economy and for the career prospects of the people themselves before the Great War, population followed opportunities without reference to borders, and urban centres attracted the ambitious from all nationalities and in all walks of life from everywhere in central Europe. Furthermore, nationality did not unduly impede day-to-day affairs. In Prague for example:

Convenience and practical economic considerations generally weighed more heavily than ethnic loyalties in determining business relations in Prague at the end of the century. After the early eighties politicians and voluntary associations on both sides repeatedly called for ethnic preference or outright boycotts in business dealings, but individual Czechs and Germans apparently followed considerations of economic advantage and continued to deal with each other as suppliers and customers, colleagues and employees. The attempted boycotts generally had only limited success, and even nationalistic newspapers had to admit that neither Czech nor German businesses cared to do without customers of the other ethnic group.³⁰

At the same time, it was easy for groups to believe they were unfairly disadvantaged. Most notably in Bohemia, the Czech majority of the population were made to feel lesser citizens, when arguably they deserved to be on equal footing with the minority Germans in their part of the Empire. Using tax revenue as a proxy for economic output, the picture by crown land looked like this:³¹

<i>Tax Revenue by area in 1895</i>				
	<i>Share of</i>			
	<i>Direct tax</i>	<i>Sales tax</i>	<i>Tobacco tax</i>	<i>Population</i>
Lower Austria	31.1%	18.8%	26.9%	11.5%
Bohemia	25.8%	33.9%	26.7%	24.4%
Moravia	10.3%	17.0%	8.3%	9.4%
Galicia	9.3%	14.0%	13.0%	27.9%
Other	23.8%	16.3%	25.1%	27.1%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

³⁰ Cohen, *The Politics of Ethnic Survival*, p. 126.

³¹ J. Wysocki, 'Die österreichische Finanzpolitik', A. Wandruszka and P. Urbanitsch (eds.), *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848-1918*, vol. 1 *Die Wirtschaftliche Entwicklung* (Vienna, 1973), Table 20, p. 102.

This shows that Bohemia paid more than their share of tax relative to population.

The most obvious manifestation of the Czechs' second-class status, especially in Bohemia and Moravia, was in the treatment of language. Czech nationalists realised that this was a good platform on which to base any agitation. Not only did language distinguish their constituents from others, it also provided the means of access.³² Czech politicians could address their constituents directly. At the same time, Czechs were not helped by Count Stadion's curial franchise, which heavily favoured the existing order, in this case the Germans, even in the absence of electoral geometry.

Hantsch examined the German position in the Empire in 1910. Germans were heavily over-represented in civil service jobs; they had much more than their proportionate share of higher education places, and they had many more newspapers in their language. They were also wealthier. Germans accounted for just over a third of the population, but they paid almost two thirds of all direct tax.³³ These bourgeois Germans had become accustomed to pre-eminence; so they became restive as they found themselves sharing status or even ceding control to their Czech countrymen. Thus pushed into a corner, they desperately defended the prerogatives of their traditional status.

At the same time, the number of Czech language *Volksschule* (primary schools) increased quite rapidly during the last two decades of the nineteenth century, while during the same period German language *Volksschule* actually declined in number.³⁴ Education reform had lagged during the *Vormärz*, but immediately after the revolution in 1848, the pace picked up smartly. Starting with secondary schools under the leadership of Franz Exner, the reform embraced elementary education by 1870. Between 1880 and 1900 the portion of 10 to 19 year olds attending post-elementary education increased by 75% in Cisleithania.³⁵ While Exner's aim was to have mandatory instruction in the mother tongue

³² Cohen, *The Politics of Ethnic Survival*, p. 275.

³³ Hantsch, *Geschichte Österreichs*, pp. 32-34.

³⁴ T. Kelly, *Without Remorse: Czech National Socialism in Late-Habsburg Austria* (Boulder, Co., 2006), p. 18.

³⁵ M. Freidrich, B. Mazohl and A. von Schlachta, 'Die Bildungsrevolution', Rumpler, Helmut, and Peter

and optional study of other languages in the respective areas, bilingual schools became less numerous under the pressure of radical nationalist agitation.³⁶ The success of the educational reform can be judged by Cisleithania's literacy rate of 83.5% in 1910, which included Galicia and Bukovina, where the rate was only 58%. That compared favourably with France's 85% literacy.³⁷

Despite Czech progress, the lopsided franchise arrangements had the effect of preserving German hegemony in the legislative machinery.³⁸ As industry grew, Czechs developed a growing middle class of their own, and with Taaffe's loosening of the franchise in 1882,³⁹ their community began to gain greater voice in the political sphere. Indeed, the Dual Monarchy and particularly the tactics used by Taaffe in his years of government seem to have whetted the appetites of the Czechs and aggravated the Germans as noted above. Thus, after years of playing nationalities off against one another, Taaffe's government was ultimately brought down by this issue. When parliament convened on 10 October 1893, the government brought before the house a proposal drastically extending the franchise, causing privileged minorities within his coalition to withdraw their support.

His government had also set the charge which was to cause the collapse of the government of his successor (Prince Alfred Windischgrätz) as well. Taaffe's promise of a Slovene *Gymnasium* (Grammar School) in the majority German town of Cilli in southern Styria came to be redeemed. The Germans withdrew their support for the Windischgrätz ministry in protest.⁴⁰ They were of course conscious that in Cisleithania the Slav population outnumbered the German, a situation which would be further aggravated by the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1908. There was very nearly a compromise

Urbanitsch (Eds.), *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848-1918*, vol. 9 *Soziale Strukturen*, part 1 *von der feudala-grarischen zur bürgerlich-industriellen Gesellschaft*, section 1/1 *Lebens- und Arbeitswelt in der industriellen Revolution*, pp. 68-69.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

³⁷ Judson, *Habsburg Empire*, p. 335.

³⁸ H. Hasenmayer, 'Die Stellung der österreichischen Sozialdemokratie zum Nationalitätenproblem in Österreich' (Vienna: PhD dissertation, University of Vienna, 1950), p. 13.

³⁹ Cohen, *The Politics of Ethnic Survival*, p. 143.

⁴⁰ F. Mayer, *Geschichte Österreichs: mit besonderer Rücksicht auf das Kulturleben* (Vienna, 1909), p. 759.

solution, but that was scuppered by the Education Minister Stanislaus von Madeysky who thought the proposal would cause his Polish countrymen difficulties with the Ruthenes.⁴¹ Herbert Hasenmayer observed: “After 1867 the Germans in the monarchy were no longer in harmony with the crown, because the government from then on needed to adopt a sympathetic attitude to the other nationalities, which meant the Germans lost many of their privileges vis-à-vis the others.”⁴²

The elections of 1897 were the first on the basis of (nearly) universal, though still not equal, manhood suffrage. The presence of a distinct and growing Czech bourgeoisie can be clearly discerned in the evolving makeup of the lower house.⁴³

<u>Election year</u>	<u>Total members</u>	<u>Members from</u>	
		<u>Czech parties*</u>	<u>Social Democrats</u>
1873	353	33	0
1879	353	54	0
1885	353	63	0
1891	353	49	0
1897	425	60	15
1901	425	88	10

*including all the Czech parties except the Czech National Socialists, of whom more below.

At the same time, the plight of the German population can be quickly understood with a look at the following numbers for the total civilian population of Prague and its four inner suburbs, as it developed between 1869 and 1910:⁴⁴

<u>Census Year</u>	<u>Civilian Population</u>	<u>Of which Germans</u>	<u>% German</u>
1869	204,488	no language census	
1880	255,928	38,591	15.1%
1890	314,158	37,746	12.0%
1900	394,030	29,405	7.5%
1910	442,017	32,332	7.3%
Change from 1880	72.7%	-16.1%	-51.7%

⁴¹ B. Sutter, *Die Badenischen Sprachenverordnungen von 1897: ihre Genesis und ihre Auswirkungen vornehmlich auf die innerösterreichischen Alpenländer* (Graz, 1960), vol. 1, p. 115.

⁴² Hasenmayer, ‘Die Stellung’, p. 8.

⁴³ O. Knauer *Das österreichische Parlament von 1848-1966* (Vienna, 1969), pp. 19-20.

⁴⁴ Cohen, *The Politics of Ethnic Survival*, Table 3/1, pp. 92-93.

These figures illustrate clearly the descent from a small, privileged elite to a tiny, beleaguered minority, whereby the Germans who dominated Austria in the broader sense found themselves positioned very differently in local situations.

Having introduced near universal, if not equal, manhood suffrage, with effect for the *Reichsrat* elections in 1897, Minister President Count Kasimir Felix Badeni had set about trying to produce a solution to the language issue. Berthold Sutter wrote the definitive work on this effort. He described Badeni as of distinctly Galician background and outlook, with no experience or knowledge of the issues or the characters involved in the Czech-German language tensions.⁴⁵ Not surprisingly for Sutter then, Badeni handled the negotiations with the Germans badly, using threatening tactics and not fully or accurately discussing the details with them.⁴⁶ When the language reforms were promulgated in the spring of 1897, they significantly extended, with effect from July, 1901, the need for dual language competence in large parts of the Bohemian and Moravian civil service.⁴⁷ These measures triggered protests, riots and obstruction in parliament. Sutter reckoned that no one had foreseen the German response, nor that an issue in Bohemia and Moravia would cause such vehement protests even in the Alpine lands.⁴⁸ Karl von Grabmayr, a conservative Tyrolean deputy, viewed the reforms largely in the light of an increasingly ominous Slavic majority.⁴⁹ For his part, Sutter deemed the damage done to the standing of the monarchy irreparable, and observed that, after 1897 “the peoples fought no longer over the state and its structure, but rather against the state, which they ceased to

⁴⁵ Sutter, *Die Badenischen Sprachenverordnungen*, vol. 1, p. 128.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 169.

⁴⁷ *Landes-Gesetz-Blatt für das Königreich Böhmen*, Jahrgang 1897, Stück VI, Nr 12 and 13 of 5 April 1897 and *Landes-Gesetz- und Verordnungsblatt für die Markgrafschaft Mähren*, Stück V, Nr. 29 and 30 of 22 April 1897. The pair of ordinances for each crown land were identical, the first pertaining to language use and the second to qualifications, whereby the second language was to be mastered before 1 July 1901. All four were signed by five ministers: Minister President Badeni, Finance Minister Biliński, Agriculture Minister Lebedur, Justice Minister Gleispach and Trade Minister Glanz.

⁴⁸ Sutter, *Die Badenischen Sprachenverordnungen*, vol. 1, p. 171.

⁴⁹ K. Grabmayr, *Erinnerungen eines Tyroler Politikers 1892-1920: aus dem Nachlasse des 1923 verstorbenen Politikers* (Innsbruck, 1955), p. 45. He would later oppose direct and equal suffrage (p. 115) and the *Verein Freie Schule* (p. 166).

regard as sensible.”⁵⁰ Likewise, Andrew Whiteside opined:

No return to stable constitutional government ever took place; the country reverted to a universally detested absolutism; the conviction spread among both Czechs and Germans that the problem of reconciling their conflicting ideas of liberty and equality could not be solved within the multinational state; the commitment of the Austrian peoples to a civilized solution of their problems declined; and the politics of extremism ultimately replaced the politics of consensus.⁵¹

Having correctly noted that this all put the Social Democrats in an awkward position, Whiteside’s view of their response during the controversy was that it had consisted of “little more than doctrinaire Marxist formulas”, and he felt that they had misjudged the mood of their constituents.⁵² This view is difficult to accept, as there was nothing the least Marxist about objecting to government by decree. On the other hand, there was merit in Whiteside’s comment about mood, since all save one of the few seats the Social Democrats had won in the new parliament had come from Bohemia, Moravia and Galicia⁵³.

Rottensteiner was much more direct in his condemnation of the Social Democratic handling of the situation. He pointed out that the reforms were appropriate and just, and that a truly internationalist social democratic movement should have supported them, whereas instead they had sided with the German Nationalists and helped to bring about the fall of Badeni’s government.⁵⁴ It is hard to deny that the plainly Germanocentric implications had to be clear to them at the time. However, with regard to their multinational constituency, their stance was plainly justified. Any gain for one of their constituent groups (in this case the Czechs) could always be regarded as a loss for others (here, the Bohemian Germans).

Mommsen agreed that the position was a difficult one for the Social Democrats, but pointed out that the government had let them off the hook by ignoring the proposal,

⁵⁰ Sutter, *Die Badenischen Sprachenverordnungen*, vol. 1, p. 402.

⁵¹ A. Whiteside, *The Socialism of Fools: Georg Ritter von Schönerer and Austrian Pan-Germanism* (Berkeley, Ca., 1975), p. 313.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 177.

⁵³ Knauer, *Das österreichisches Parlament*, pp. 63 – 194.

⁵⁴ A. Rottensteiner, “Der Kampf” die theoretische Zeitschrift der österreichischen Sozialdemokratie und die “kulturelle-nationale Autonomie” (1907-1914) (Vienna: PhD dissertation, 1950), p. 45.

sponsored mainly by socialists but also by a German progressive and several Poles and Ruthenes, that the whole matter be submitted to a 48 man committee formed to deal specifically with language reform.⁵⁵ The Social Democrats had not protested the reforms as such, but they had criticized Badeni for his use of §14 to enact them, bypassing parliament.⁵⁶ The *Arbeiter-Zeitung* made this position absolutely clear immediately on publication of the first set of orders, long before the disturbances reached full fury. Their view was

If we lived in a state with reasonable democratic institutions, the language dispute would soon be settled. No one would doubt that officials are there for the citizens, not the citizens for the officials, and that therefore whoever wanted to be an official would need to be fluent in both languages of the citizens he would have to serve. One would have to understand that the requirement that the Czech official must understand German, and the German, Czech poses no greater difficulty than the requirement that both know Latin or that applicants to technical schools know French and English. **If the practical requirements of the citizens were to decide the matter, the usefulness of mono-lingual officials would rapidly diminish, and that would be that.**

But instead, the matter had to be dealt with by the bureaucracy and thus became a battleground for all those seeking positions of power in government.⁵⁷

By the end of the year, the chaos in governing circles became so prevalent that *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* published a lengthy piece by Mark Twain explaining the scene to their American readers.⁵⁸ In contrast, Jakub Beneš observed that "...robust internationalism still generally prevailed in Austrian Social Democracy and an autumn 1897 demonstration for national peace and reconciliation in Prague attracted 20,000 Czech and Bohemian German workers."⁵⁹ In Judson's view, "The Badeni language ordinances – as necessary as they might have been to the proper functioning of public life in Bohemia – could not simply be legislated."⁶⁰ Richard Evans, in his recent review of Judson's history,

⁵⁵ *Stenographische Protokolle des Abgeordnetenhauses, XIII. Session, Beilage no.6*, and *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 24 September 1897.

⁵⁶ Macartney, *The Habsburg Empire*, p. 664; and L. Brügel, *Geschichte der österreichischen Sozialdemokratie* (Vienna, 1925), vol. 4, pp. 318-319.

⁵⁷ *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 7 April 1897, emphasis by the author.

⁵⁸ M. Twain, 'Stirring Times in Austria', *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, 96 (1898), pp. 530-540.

⁵⁹ J. Beneš, "Socialist Popular Literature and the Czech-German Split in Austrian Social Democracy 1890-1914" in *Slavic Review*, volume 72, no. 2 (Summer 2013), p. 345.

⁶⁰ Judson, *Habsburg Empire*, p. 313.

proposed that the Badeni crisis “showed that the country, however multinational, could never be governed against the perceived wishes of its German minority”.⁶¹ It would be more accurate to say that the country could not be governed against the will of any group prepared to obstruct the political process or, as the Social Democrats (and Judson) pointed out, that manner of speech does not lend itself to regulation by decree. Judson also suggested the whole episode had encouraged the Emperor to view more suffrage reform as a means of diluting the power of the nationalists by giving a bigger role to the mass parties.⁶² On the other hand, Andrew Whiteside was right to highlight the dilemma faced by Social Democrats, pointing out that their newspaper in Reichenberg attacked the speech ordinances while the Czech and German sides of the party in Prague were busy organising anti-nationalist demonstrations.⁶³

Having accomplished their unification at the start of the 1890s, the Social Democrats’ first order of business was the suffrage project. While the nationality issue continued to demand attention, the stress they laid on practical goals paid dividends. “In the 1890s the Czech Social Democrats rapidly won a large following among Czech industrial workers for a programme of universal suffrage, industrial reform, national equality, and an eventual end to capitalist exploitation.”⁶⁴ It is worth stressing that this list came directly from Hainfeld. With regard to the relations between the Czech and German sides of Social Democracy, their formal separation can be misleading. Hans Mommsen noted that co-operation between Czech and German socialist groups was notable even before Hainfeld, during the time authorities made an overall organisation impossible. He gave the example of Josef Hybeš, who was simultaneously editor of both the Czech organ, *Dělník*, and the German one, *Zukunft*. Hybeš was the son of a home weaver and a textile worker. After Volksschule, still a boy, he became a weaver's assistant. He moved to

⁶¹ R. Evans, “A Liberal Empire? Ruled from the Spas?” in *New York Review of Books*, March 23, 2017, p. 38.

⁶² Judson, *Habsburg Empire*, p. 315.

⁶³ A. G. Whiteside, *Austrian National Socialism before 1918* (The Hague, 1962), p. 69.

⁶⁴ Cohen, *The Politics of Ethnic Survival*, p. 237.

Vienna at age 17, where he became active in the Czech Workers' Study Club and subsequently with radical socialists. Still not 30, he turned to journalism, through which efforts he was expelled from Vienna in 1884 and Prague the following year.⁶⁵

Mommsen also mentioned, as a further illustration of co-operation between the two nationalities, that during the 1880s, when political organisation was severely circumscribed for socialists, the Czech party had a secret press, which they gave to the Germans for safety.⁶⁶ Later, with support from Czech socialists, a Society of German Workers was set up in Prague in 1897. The organisation was essentially a reading and lecture club, and they met monthly in Czech workers' pubs or socialist facilities. Politically, the members supported Czech Social Democrats and opposed German Liberal policies.⁶⁷

Mommsen postulated several benefits the Czechs could easily see from their readiness to work with the Germans during the 1890s. They had colleagues, like Hybeš, in important positions in the movement, and they were able to produce Czech language material thanks to German support of the Czech press.⁶⁸ Professor Cohen came to a similar conclusion from the standpoint of the German Liberal establishment in Prague, which he explained had never been able to make headway recruiting working class backing for their causes, who were more willing to work with their Czech proletariat comrades.⁶⁹

It is worth pausing at this stage to mention also the developments in the trade unions, since they are often cited, with superficial justification, as having demonstrated the inevitability of national separation and thus used as a proxy for the failure of Social Democracy to come up with any answers. There has recently been an extensive study of trade unions and internationalism in the Monarchy, which concluded that unions in the last

⁶⁵ *Österreichisches biographisches Lexikon 1815-1950* Online-Edition, www.biographien.ac.at (August, 2016).

⁶⁶ H. Mommsen, *Die Sozialdemokratie und die Nationalitätenfrage im Habsburgischen Vielvölkerstaat I. Das Ringen um die supranationale Integration der zisleithanischen Arbeiterbewegung (1867 – 1907)* (Vienna, 1963), p. 68.

⁶⁷ Cohen, *The Politics of Ethnic Survival*, pp. 250-251.

⁶⁸ Mommsen, *Die Sozialdemokratie und die Nationalitätenfrage*, p. 181.

⁶⁹ Cohen, *The Politics of Ethnic Survival*, pp. 190-191.

few decades of the Habsburg era worked quite extensively and productively together.⁷⁰ Indeed it was an imperative for them, since their counterparties were largely trans-national. The Vienna *Reichsgewerkschaftskommission* and the *Odborové združenie československé* in Prague needed the balance and the scale which they could achieve only by working together, particularly in supporting strike action. By the same token, competition between the two would merely have been to the detriment of their members. It could well be argued that the effective collaboration of the two union groups was a demonstration of the usefulness of Karl Renner's ideas, discussed at length below, as indeed Mommsen pointed out emphatically in his extensive work on the subject.⁷¹

Division of party or union structures along linguistic lines, characterised as 'national', cannot be taken in itself as a triumph of nationalism. In the absence of studies on the extent of bilingualism in Social Democratic circles, it is reasonable to suppose it was not common. In any case, discussion of this subject has surprisingly treated language skill as a binary question, in which one either has the second language or does not. To have enough language for a job in no way qualifies a person even for moderate socializing, let alone for taking useful part in political or trade union meetings or reading any but the simplest promotional material. Therefore, even with Czechs and Germans working side by side in the same factories or sharing political priorities, as no doubt many did, the running of a fully unified operation in a setting where few could have a conversation was impossible. Given that context, the case for parallel organizations was at the very least compelling if not overwhelming from the start. To suggest that having separate party structures along linguistic lines represented a concession to any profound programmatic or ideological differences is unreasonable.

By the same token, to suggest, as Jakub Beneš has⁷², that workers not responding to

⁷⁰ J. Evers, *Internationale Gewerkschaftsarbeit in der Habsburgermonarchie, unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Reichsgewerkschaftskommission und ihrer deutsch-tschechischen Arbeit vor 1914* (Vienna, 2010).

⁷¹ Mommsen, *Die Sozialdemokratie und die Nationalitätenfrage*, p. 5.

⁷² Beneš, "Socialist Popular Literature", p. 330.

bourgeois nationalist appeals did not necessarily mean they were nationally indifferent or not nationalist, implies that the mere use of a language made people nationalist in the absence of conclusive proof to the contrary. It is hard to accept this logic in support of Beneš's view that workers' grassroots movements were nationalized by 1911.⁷³ It is very clear from the extent of Social Democratic support in Bohemia that merely speaking a language, in this case either Czech or German, does not make one a 'nationalist'.

That said, there were both Czech and German radically national 'socialists' who were ideologically quite distinct and unrelated other than on specific issues (such as the banning of phosphorus in the manufacture of incendiary devices discussed below), namely the Czech National Socialists and the German Workers' Party.⁷⁴ The latter group took the view that the Social Democrats were insufficiently protective of specifically German issues, thus appealing to the insecurities, fears and resentments of Germans in the face of Czech migration to cities. Andrew Whiteside's study of this German 'party' showed their membership as great as 37,446 at the height of their influence in 1909⁷⁵. They never had more than two mandates in the Reichsrat; so it is difficult to assign much success to their appeals.

On the other hand, when in 1897 the Social Democrats vaulted from obscurity to a third of the popular vote in the Bohemian lands, they followed up by refusing to endorse a Czech nationalist programme, the so-called *Böhmisches Staatsrecht* (or Bohemian State's Right), thus giving more radical nationalists on the left an opportunity.⁷⁶ *Böhmisches Staatsrecht* involved extensive autonomy for the Bohemian Crown Lands and was a perpetual goal (from as early as 1848) for Czech nationalists of all persuasions.⁷⁷ A new party filled the vacuum thus created, the Czech National Socialists. Regarded by both

⁷³ Beneš, "Socialist Popular Literature", p. 331.

⁷⁴ Beneš agreed these parties never seriously challenged Social Democracy's electoral strength. *Ibid.*, p. 339.

⁷⁵ Whiteside, *Austrian National Socialism*, p. 73.

⁷⁶ Kelly, *Without Remorse*, p. 2.

⁷⁷ Hellbling, 'Die Landesvertretung', p. 244.

Zeman and King as a sister party of the bourgeois nationalist Young Czechs⁷⁸, they developed “a strain of populist nationalism”. “Their angry anti-Semitic and anti-German politics exacerbated tensions between Czechs and Germans and in the imperial parliament, making compromise between the two communities increasingly difficult to achieve.”⁷⁹ Though never a major party, they achieved some success, winning sixteen of the 514 seats in the 1911 election, by far their best performance, when the Social Democrats held 81 seats.⁸⁰ A case could be made that those sixteen seats were the cost in the Czech areas of not striking a sufficiently nationalist note, but that would mean to ignore the multi-national make-up of the Social Democratic Party itself as well as its core objectives. Furthermore, as would be the case in the phosphorus discussion, the National Socialists could be expected, like other opponents, to support measures where they could be convinced it served the interests of their constituents. Thus radical nationalists could be said occasionally to shed their nationalist preoccupations. As Cohen observed:

In general, the radical nationalists, whether German, Czech, Polish, Magyar or Croat, urged maximalist nationalist goals in order to counter the appeals of the liberal nationalists, social Catholics, and the agrarian and social democratic parties. In fact, the radical nationalists typically focused more on competing with rival parties within their own national camps than in combatting their so-called national enemies.”⁸¹

The uproar generated by the controversy over Badeni's efforts at reform made clear to the Social Democrats that they urgently needed to compose a detailed position. At Party Congress in June 1897 at Wimbergers, Vienna, the delegates decided on complete national ‘autonomisation’ of the party, which meant there would be a federation of national units: German-Austrian, Czech, South Slav, Polish, Italian and Ruthenian parties.⁸² Emil Strauß, historian of the German Workers' Movement in Bohemia, termed this arrangement

⁷⁸ Z. Zeman, *The Break-up of the Habsburg Empire 1914-1918* (London, 1961), p. 17; and J. King, *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans: a local history of Bohemian Politics, 1848-1948* (Princeton, 2002), p. 93.

⁷⁹ Kelly, *Without Remorse* p. 3.

⁸⁰ Knauer, *Das österreichisches Parlament*, p. 20.

⁸¹ G. Cohen, ‘Nationalist Politics and the Dynamics of State and Civil Society in the Habsburg Monarchy 1867-1914’, *Central European History*, 40 (2007), p. 267.

⁸² Rottensteiner, ‘Der Kampf’, p. 45. vol. 2 (1889-1914).

'national autonomy and international solidarity'.⁸³

Serious discussion of the nationalities question began among Austrian Social Democrats at the impetus of Karl Kautsky, one of the leading lights of European socialism during the last few decades of the Monarchy. Born in Prague in 1854, he was the son of artists, his father a theatre painter and his mother, an actress and authoress. His education was quite eclectic, starting with a Calvinist private tutor in Vienna's Czech community, including two years at the Benedictine boarding school in Melk and concluding with the *Akademisches Gymnasium* in Vienna. Having been interested in social issues as a young man, Kautsky became a socialist following the events of the Paris Commune. He joined the Social Democrats in 1875 at the age of 20 and during that year became engrossed in Darwin's work but more importantly in Marx's. While studying at the University of Vienna, he began writing and lecturing on socialism, and working on a book about population.⁸⁴ The former brought him to the attention of German socialists, one of whom hired him to edit a periodical in Zurich, a centre of socialist activity due to the restrictions then in force in Germany by virtue of anti-Socialist legislation. Although this truncated his study at university, leaving unfinished a thesis about Thomas Jefferson, it was this job which took Kautsky to London for longer stays, during which he became closely acquainted with Engels and, albeit less so, Marx. His relationship with the parents of Marxism inspired him to devote his life's work to spreading their gospel.

During his time in Zurich, he also developed a friendship with Eduard Bernstein, and the two, with help from other socialists, started in 1883 a periodical entitled *Die Neue Zeit* with the purpose of disseminating Marxist teachings and encouraging their application. From his position as editor of this journal, he became an authoritative voice on issues of Marxist theory and practice throughout Germany and the Habsburg Monarchy.⁸⁵ According to Mommsen, Kautsky had, as early as 1880, urged a federal

⁸³ E. Strauß, *Geschichte der deutschen Sozialdemokratie Böhmens* (Prague, 1926), vol. 2, p. 145.

⁸⁴ Kautsky, K. *Der Einfluß der Volksvermehrung auf den Fortschritt der Gesellschaft* (Vienna, 1880).

⁸⁵ I. Gilcher-Holtey, Ingrid. 'Karl Kautsky', W. Euchner (ed.), *Klassiker des Sozialismus* (Munich, 1991), vol.

framework on the Austrian Social Democratic movement, holding that centralist tendencies were driven by a German nationalist thinking and that a centralist organisation would merely bring nationalist disputes into the party.⁸⁶

In the summer of 1897, as the Badeni controversy was building, Adler lamented in a letter to Kautsky: “We cannot hide the fact that in the nationalities debate we have great buzz-words and slogans for everyday use but no positive programme. Furthermore we aren't in a position to produce one, since we haven't yet worked it out, and that will cause trouble.”⁸⁷ The response from Kautsky was a rather half-hearted attempt to encourage his friend. His suggestion hardly offered a means of seizing the agenda:

The position of the party is highly vexing. We can only persevere and are fated to play a neutral role whereby the masses will follow us not because they are socialist but rather because we and they are not impressed either by the Czechs or by the Germans....I have as little idea as you of a programme for the Austrian language problem....German domination will not be sustainable once the Slavs are in the majority.⁸⁸

As party leader, Victor Adler might have been expected to play a greater role, and it is perhaps not surprising that he stands accused almost unanimously by students of the period as having harboured a lifelong attachment to German nationalism. Certainly, Adler had been active as a young man in the nationalist cause, and indeed, as already mentioned, he and future fellow Social Democrat Pernerstorfer played central roles in composing the so-called Linz Programme of 1882, which called for German hegemony in Austria on the basis of a sort of Greater German platform, but more notably for a list of democratic and social reforms.⁸⁹

Pernerstorfer, son of a tailor who died when he was only four, never forgot his modest beginnings. He shared his friend's early German Nationalist inclination. Having

1, pp. 233-249; and *Österreichisches Biographisches Lexikon 1815-1950* Online-Edition, www.biographien.ac.at (August 2016).

⁸⁶ Mommsen, *Die Sozialdemokratie und die Nationalitätenfrage*, p. 66.

⁸⁷ V. Adler to Kautsky, 21 July 1897, F. Adler (ed.), *Victor Adler: Briefwechsel mit August Bebel und Karl Kautsky* (Vienna, 1954) doc. A41, p. 233.

⁸⁸ Kautsky to V. Adler 5 August 1897, *Ibid.*, doc. K72, p. 236.

⁸⁹ J. Braunthal, *Victor und Friedrich Adler: Zwei Generationen Arbeiterbewegung* (Vienna, 1965), p. 27.

co-published the nationalist periodical *Deutsche Worte* with their leader, Georg Ritter von Schönerer, Pernerstorfer worked with the latter during the 1880s. Despite his connection with the increasingly anti-Semitic nationalists, he became godfather to Victor Adler's son Friedrich, who was born in 1879⁹⁰. From his involvement in the nationalist movement, Pernerstorfer had numerous friendships in bourgeois circles, which he maintained throughout his career. His amiable nature enabled him to get along with all the members of the lower house.⁹¹ An early advocate of direct and equal as well as of women's suffrage,⁹² he was elected to parliament for the constituency of Wiener Neustadt in 1885 and was a member for the rest of his life, apart from a four year absence between 1897 and 1901. Having eschewed all party affiliation in 1891,⁹³ he eventually joined his friend Adler and the Social Democrats in 1896. After the strong showing of the Party in the elections of 1907, he was elected Vice President of the house, a role he filled until his death in 1918.⁹⁴

Both Adler and Pernerstorfer, however, had fallen out with the German nationalists shortly after Linz. Furthermore, from Adler's correspondence it is quite plain that life's experiences altered his views about what was important and worth striving for. In a letter of 21 August 1886 to Kautsky, Adler explained:

Now I will not kid you that I have also in this respect gone through an evolution, that the national struggle was much more prominent in my interest...Apart from anything else it's a purely personal question for me – whether my capabilities for political work, however small or large they may be, would be better applied in the national or the social struggle. And this question I answered years ago.⁹⁵

As his critics have pointed out, he said in the same letter “I regard in any case the preservation of German national identity as worthwhile in itself, and I regard the Slavisation or Czechisation of German children as an injustice to them, as a denial of their

⁹⁰ A. Modl, ‘Die politische Entwicklung Engelbert Pernerstorfers’ (Vienna, PhD dissertation, University of Vienna, 1947), pp. 102 and 124.

⁹¹ J. Sylvester, *Vom toten Parlament und seinen letzten Trägern*. (Vienna, 1928), pp. 35 and 36.

⁹² Modl, “Pernerstorfer”, pp. 131 and 174.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 161.

⁹⁴ *Österreichisches Biographisches Lexikon 1815-1950*. vol. 7 (part 35, 1978), p. 427.

⁹⁵ V. Adler to Kautsky, 21 August 1886, Adler, *Briefwechsel*, doc. A5, p. 13.

way of life, if you will.” It is far from certain that this attitude suffices to deem Adler a lifelong nationalist, since it is more than fair to expect some change in attitudes with the passage of years, particularly those between university and the establishment of a career. Nonetheless, it would be reasonable to label Adler, like many of his fellow Austrians of the day, plainly Germanocentric.

By way of contrast, in May 1899 a group of German opposition parties, including the Christian Socials, published a “National-political Programme” known as the *Pfingstprogramm* (Whitsun Programme), which demanded recognition of the historical place of the German nation, the rejection of all constitutional demands of the other nationalities, a single state unified constitution for Cisleithania, the lifting of all language orders and more.⁹⁶ It would hardly be an overstatement to term this an unequivocally German nationalist programme. Boyer’s view was that Christian Socialist leader and Mayor of Vienna Karl Lueger signed this programme “neither with enthusiasm nor with doctrinaire intent...but in an effort to freeze the German position and thereby prevent it from slipping into further extremism.”⁹⁷ Lueger could also have been conscious that his constituents were overwhelmingly bourgeois Germans, and Boyer did not make clear how the programme might have become more radical but for being ‘frozen’.

Whether, as Boyer implies, support for this programme was yet another example of Lueger’s cynical opportunism and calculation or reflected a genuine commitment, that position stands in stark contrast to the Social Democrats’ Hainfeld declarations, their rejection of Bohemian State’s Right and finally the terms of the Brunner Programme promulgated later the same year and discussed more fully below. Moreover, Boyer’s point that there were many transplanted Czechs among Lueger’s constituents (presumably including those with ‘suspiciously Czech sounding names’)⁹⁸ does nothing to dilute the

⁹⁶ Hasenmayer, H. ‘Die Stellung’, p. 53.

⁹⁷ J. Boyer, *Culture and Political Crisis in Vienna: Christian Socialism in Power, 1897-1918* (Chicago, IL, 1995), pp. 41 and 347-348.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 212-213.

German nationalist message of the Whitsun Programme.

Finally, Boyer attempted to draw parallels between the Christian Socialists and the Social Democrats on a number of counts, the first of which was that both were ‘German parties’. As amply demonstrated above, that is quite wrong. The Social Democrats were a federation which included a German party as well as those of other nations of the monarchy, and they worked together. Boyer claimed that both were centralised, which is also not true in view of the federal nature both of the Social Democrats in their multi-national framework and of their plan for dealing with nationality. Both allegedly ‘had a surprisingly subtle sense of opportunity in regard to the nationality problem’. This is hard to accept in view of the Social Democrats’ forthright position in rejecting Bohemian State’s Right, not to mention their position as set forth in Hainfeld, then in more detail in Brünn, or Renner’s proposals discussed at length below. Supposedly, each was ‘based, in ethos if not in form, in Vienna’ which nods slightly to the multi-national nature of Social Democracy.⁹⁹ However, the reader will no doubt notice that this paper introduces 21 Social Democrat leaders and will not be surprised to learn that of that group, eight were born in Vienna, six in Bohemia, another six in Moravia and one in Silesia.¹⁰⁰ Social Democracy was Viennese in neither form nor ethos, though the Christian Socials were undeniably both. The drawing of parallels between Christian Socialism and Social Democracy is interesting sociologically in the context of the advance of urbanisation and the advent of mass politics. On any other grounds, however, it simply does not work.

Mommsen pointed out that the increasing level of national disturbances were anything but spontaneous occurrences, that “chauvinist groups of all flavours were inducing them systematically. Boundless demagoguery and irresponsible sedition had proven themselves more effective weapons than the appeal to real social and economic interests of the people.”¹⁰¹ Mommsen drew a sharp contrast here. He pointed out that

⁹⁹ Boyer, *Culture and Political Crisis in Vienna*, p. 348.

¹⁰⁰ *Das rote Wien*, Web Lexikon der Wiener Sozialdemokratie, www.dasrotewien.at/weblexikon.html, 2005.

¹⁰¹ Mommsen, *Die Sozialdemokratie und die Nationalitätenfrage*, p. 296.

Social Democrats had, as a modern mass party, also used the demonstration as a tool in the interests of their constituents. At the same time, he made clear the important distinction that their demonstrations were organised not to unleash but rather to discipline the mass, with the aim of convincing rather than merely enraging.¹⁰² This difference was clearly illustrated eight years after Badeni's fall during the *Wahlrechtstag* demonstration in 1905, though on other occasions the approach was to prove more problematical.

For their part, the Social Democrats had little to add to the Hainfeld position, which after all had been a clear enough statement of principles but with no specifics. Mommsen enumerated a number of factors pushing for a more substantive position and more active participation in discussions about the issues. Following their entry into parliament with the introduction of the general curia, they had a platform from which they needed to address matters of supra-national importance, the evolving political situation vis-à-vis the other parties and the growth of their own organisation, particularly in terms of non-German membership.¹⁰³ They had been assuming that the nationalism problem would be dealt with by the inevitable socialist metamorphosis, but they were now concluding that in the case of Austria there would need to be a solution in order to allow the socialists' work to proceed.¹⁰⁴

Following the promulgation of Badeni's language reforms in the Spring of 1897, Social Democrats met in Prague in June and decided the challenge could wait no longer.¹⁰⁵ They gave Josef Seliger responsibility for overseeing the production of a suitable party position. Seliger was the son of a textile worker in a small farm community near Reichenberg. Having started in a two class village school, he moved to live with a Czech family as an exchange and attended a Czech school. After school he went to work with textiles, in which career the traditional *Wanderschaft* (traveling apprenticeship) took him to

¹⁰² Mommsen, *Die Sozialdemokratie und die Nationalitätenfrage*, p. 297.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 266.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 303.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 282.

Silesia, Saxony and the Rhine. Having been attracted by socialist ideas, he joined the workers' movement at the age of 18, where he became active in union causes and journalism as well as the Party organisation.¹⁰⁶ Seliger's premise was that, overwhelmingly, nationality disputes would be carried on at the expense of the workers' interests, as they would distract attention from the demands of the proletariat.¹⁰⁷ Arthur Kogan saw irony here: "There was taking shape a very unusual situation in which a party opposed on principle to the existing state and society began to work out programmes of reconstruction for this very state."¹⁰⁸ In fact, rather than irony, this was another instance of the preference for reform rather than destruction.

Extensive debate and work in committee under Seliger's leadership produced the so-called Brünn Programme, which was adopted at the party congress in that city in September of 1899.¹⁰⁹ At the opening of that conference, the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* re-printed an article by Dr Soukup which had first appeared in the Czech press arguing that it was important for Social Democrats to find a solution to the nationalities strife, since the destructive effects of chauvinism presented the greatest obstacle to social development. František Soukup, born the son of a publican in Stein Lhota in Bohemia, studied law at the Czech university in Prague. He moved in 1896 from the Young Czech movement to the Social Democrats, where he quite soon found himself in leadership roles.¹¹⁰ In Soukup's view the solution might be a federal one, but it should not mean the break-up of Austria into small states, since in the modern economic context, with the marked movement of workers, formation of small states would be harmful to the proletariat.¹¹¹

Speaking at the conference, Seliger justified the Party's interest in the nationalities

¹⁰⁶ *Österreichisches biographisches Lexikon 1815-1950* Online-Edition, www.biographien.ac.at (August 2016).

¹⁰⁷ Strauß, *Geschichte der deutschen Sozialdemokratie Böhmens*, vol. 2, p. 149.

¹⁰⁸ A. Kogan, 'The Social Democrats and the Conflict of Nationalities in the Habsburg Monarchy', *The Journal of Modern History*, 21 (1949), p. 206.

¹⁰⁹ Strauß, *Geschichte der deutschen Sozialdemokratie Böhmens*, vol. 2, p. 150.

¹¹⁰ *Österreichisches biographisches Lexikon 1815-1950* Online-Edition, www.biographien.ac.at (August, 2016).

¹¹¹ *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 24 Sept 1899.

question by pointing out that it was workers who suffered most from national strife and that national conflicts had enabled ruling groups to pit nations against one another rather than against privilege. It was therefore in workers' interests that a solution be devised.¹¹² The programme as ultimately adopted set out pre-requisites for a permanent resolution of the national tensions. These included formation of a democratic federation of nationalities, replacement of the then existing Crown Lands with nationally demarcated self-governing bodies (note the avoidance of the term 'territory'), the various self-governed areas of each nation forming a unified association to attend to their national concerns autonomously, a specific law guaranteeing the rights of minorities and the elimination of national privileges including the state language, with parliament to decide if and to what extent a given language of administration was desirable.¹¹³

In the view of Hugo Hantsch, "the Brünn Party Congress recognised correctly the essence of this situation as a crisis of state, which could not be overcome by purely administrative measures."¹¹⁴ For his part, Rottensteiner thought the Brünn Programme suffered from two shortcomings. First that by postulating the centrality of self-determination it endorsed the right of each nation to its own state. Second that the proposal of national self-governing bodies would restrict trade and inhibit development, for example divorcing cities from their hinterland.¹¹⁵ Even if the difficulties he foresaw were real, the opinion itself misses the separation of the national from the territorial, hardly surprising in this context, as Brünn did not make a major feature of that move.

In that vein, Etbin Kristan, a south Slav delegate from Trieste, argued in support of their alternative proposal that Socialists should not be content to replace one political structure with another that was basically the same. Solutions should be found along different lines: "The principle of a free society finds its parallel in the separation of the idea

¹¹² Kogan, "The Social Democrats and the Conflict", p. 207.

¹¹³ Brügel, *Geschichte der österreichischen Sozialdemokratie*, vol. 4, p. 339.

¹¹⁴ H. Hantsch, *Die Nationalitätenfrage im alten Österreich* (Vienna, 1953), p. 71.

¹¹⁵ Rottensteiner, "Der Kampf", pp. 61-63.

of nation from that of territory.” Creation of ethnographically delimited districts would not eliminate the problems of minorities, since population movement tended to upset any neat scheme designed to separate territories on the basis of nationality. “We have to make it clear that equality of rights is possible only if the nation is defined not as the population living in one territory but as the sum total of all individuals claiming a particular nationality.” The speaker confessed to be unable to outline this scheme in detail, and he pointed to the Catholic Church as an example of an organisation of people divorced from territory.¹¹⁶

When Seliger spoke at the end of the congress, he explained that the committee's proposal had been re-written following the debates. From the changes, it is plain Kristan's views had made an impact, most notably in some of the clarifying statements. For example, the starting point was for “a federal state consisting of self-governing areas delineated to match as closely as possible language boundaries” whereas the adopted version provided for “nationally discreet self-governing bodies, whose laws and administration will be looked after by national chambers chosen by general, direct and equal suffrage”. In another paragraph, the original specified “the self-governing districts of each nation constitute together a national unit which will look after its own national (i.e. linguistic and cultural) business”, while the adopted version replaced 'unit' with 'association'. Finally, mention of German as the common language (*Verkehrssprache*) was dropped.¹¹⁷

As Kogan pointed out, the Brünn party conference was noteworthy not just for the programme itself but also because there had been time and debate lavished on an issue clearly not in the doctrinaire Marxist agenda and because it signified a certain commitment to the existing state. This point is central to the strategy of the Social Democrats. Whatever their Marxist trappings and even rhetoric, their focus was on using the ballot box

¹¹⁶ Kogan, ‘The Social Democrats and the Conflict’, p. 209; also *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 28 Sept 1899.

¹¹⁷ *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 28 Sept 1899; also 29 Sept 1899.

to bring about their reforms. By definition that was a repudiation of violent revolution and a commitment to reformism.

Meanwhile, Karl Renner had entered state employment at the beginning of December, 1895, as an assistant (*wissenschaftliche Hilfskraft*) in the parliamentary archive. His employment here had been following a recommendation from one of his professors at university, Eugen von Philippovich. As a requirement of his position in state service, Renner was obliged to refrain from political activity and from publishing.¹¹⁸ His profile among Social Democrats was quite low from well before the Brünn congress and for the better part of the following decade. However, he was far from inactive. Writing under the pen-name ‘Synopticus’, Renner produced in May of 1899 a brochure, mentioned above, entitled ‘Staat und Nation’ which introduced a new concept: the so-called ‘personality principle’,¹¹⁹ whereby each nation was to be constituted as a legal entity and as such endowed with the appropriate rights and obligations. As reviewed in the press, the proposal was to endow each nation with rights as a collective entity without regard to crown lands or any of the existing territorial institutions. The autonomous nations would of course have geographic definition, just as do religions (for example parish and diocese), but not exclusively in that other nations could share any part of the territory.¹²⁰

This was the first proposal to divorce nation from territory, and it was four months in advance of, and indeed considered during, the Party Congress at Brünn, where Wilhelm Ellenbogen for one appreciated straightaway that this approach would be the only way to accommodate the fluctuating and fluid population of Austria-Hungary.¹²¹ Ellenbogen, a medical doctor, had joined the workers’ movement as a young man. He was active in the Party until the clerical-fascist takeover and ultimately fled to the US where he died in

¹¹⁸ J. Hannak, *Karl Renner und seine Zeit: Versuch einer Biographie* (Vienna, 1965), pp. 63-64; also W. Rauscher, *Karl Renner – ein österreichischer Mythos* (Vienna, 1995), p. 41.

¹¹⁹ The book published under the pseudonym of “Synopticus”, and it was not for another eight years that the author's real identity was established as Karl Renner.

¹²⁰ *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 7 May 1899.

¹²¹ Mommsen, *Die Sozialdemokratie und die Nationalitätenfrage*, p. 330.

1951. He was among the first Viennese doctors to advocate compulsory health insurance.¹²² Renner's proposed solution was further developed in detail with a further publication¹²³ three years later, this time under another pseudonym, 'Rudolf Springer'.¹²⁴

By the time this new work was published, Renner had been working in the parliamentary archives for nearly a decade since receiving his Doctorate in law. He was nearly 35 years old and a family man. The tone of the work reflects a degree of seriousness commensurate with the author's age and status as well as his legal training.

Renner explained his aims and hopes to Victor Adler, in a letter worth quoting in full.¹²⁵

I have sent you six galley proofs of my book: "The Struggle of the Austrian Nations for the State, Part I The National Problem as a Constitutional and Administrative Question", and I ask you respectfully for your views. I am fulfilling with this book a promise made with the publication through Synopticus etc; I hope this will provide the party with a theoretical weapon for the debate with our tiresome bourgeois opponents. To make this possible, the book takes the viewpoint of the state and has been written as scientifically as possible. By scientific, I mean the method – in spite of superficial, so artificially contrived appearance – consists thereof, that I frame the question for myself, starting from the real basis of the given material interests: Which legal structure is appropriate to the play and counterplay of these interests? Nowhere in the book is any existing legal form taken as predetermined. The starting point of the arguments is throughout the pre-legal social circumstances. These however are handled in Part I not from their economic origins but rather as givens. Because Part I is my structural question. The second part is meant to be the basis, the structural setting itself investigated and the proof brought forth, that the national idea, like all others, goes back to economic factors. This part will be useful for agitation, it also logically should precede the first. However, in order to be understood, I had to set aside the banal prejudices and prove the absolute mistakenness of our institutions.

The greatest reward would be if this is useful for the party and puts the Brünn resolutions in the proper light.

I will send you the following proofs as they appear. There should be 12 to 15. With expression of my exceptional admiration,

Renner was therefore working not only in concert with the party leadership but also with the Brünn Programme fully in mind. Furthermore, the latter was explicitly not territorial, pointing clearly to the main feature of Renner's work, the personality principle. Most importantly, the work was to be on a "green field" basis: it was intended to stand on its

¹²² *New York Times*, obituary, 26 February 1951.

¹²³ K. Renner (pseud. Rudolf Springer), *Der Kampf der österreichischen Nationen um den Staat* (Vienna, 1902).

¹²⁴ Hannak, *Karl Renner und seine Zeit*, pp. 89-90.

¹²⁵ Renner to V. Adler, 22 February 1902, *Adler Archiv*, Mappe 147, Tasche 1.

own replacing rather than merely amending the existing arrangements.

In its final form, Renner introduced his work by framing the problem as a struggle for power between the interests of the respective nations and stressing the need for a feasible answer: “The nationalities question is therefore a part of the larger problem of how the relationship between the individual, social groups (professions, classes, associations) and the state are arranged or should be arranged”.¹²⁶ He argued that a political framework would be required, since the law was too static to serve the purpose. He then dealt with the possible political conceptions of nation: purely individual, whereby the individual was directly related to a central state, and on the other hand collective, where the state would function on a federal basis. Which of these concepts was supported depended of course on the advantages to be gained. Furthermore, drawing lines around territories would be impossible in either case, both because the picture at a given time would have been chaotic, but further because populations were constantly on the move.

Against this background, Renner saw promise in separating state issues, like railways, from national issues, like culture. Next, there were both individual and collective aspects to the interests of any nation. In the Austria of that day, Renner explained, nationality was wholly individual and language-defined, and he maintained that excluding any collective content doomed this treatment to failure. Nations clearly had a collective existence, of which language was a good example. He then discussed at some length the issue of language compulsion, both as to the right to learn/speak and the right not to understand, and pointed out that all aspects of this problem could, with increasing literacy and more appropriate representation, be transformed from an object of quarrel – a power question – into a soluble cultural issue. In the words of the author: “The more the mass of the population are able to express themselves, the more appropriate and natural, the more prejudice-free the discussion of this question would be. To expect the solution from the

¹²⁶ Renner, *Der Kampf der österreichischen Nationen um den Staat*, p. 10.

inflamed sensibilities of the intelligentsia is to appoint the mortally ill to be his own surgeon.”¹²⁷ An organic strategy would recognize each nation as a collective whole as well as aggregates of individuals, thus providing a structure for expressing collective as well as individual interests.

From a territorial point of view, the then current arrangement of Crown Lands was plainly not fit for purpose and anyway ignored the mobility of the population. It would be necessary to free people from the coincidence of geographic disempowerment. The next step was to deal with competence, the extent of the rights and state functions to be allocated to the respective nations, and with the principles of federation, the basis on which the nations were to relate to one another and to the whole. National autonomy required the national administration to be “personalized”, while state administration needed to continue on a territorial basis, and Crown Lands were the answer to neither challenge. State territory was not a natural but rather a legal concept, and anyone within the territory was subject to the laws of that state. While the state needed a discrete territory as an administrative necessity, it was possible, indeed necessary, to enable people to have collective interests – privileges and obligations – without regard to territorial considerations.

After all, while the state had a territory, not all the inhabitants were co-nationals. Nor would they be co-religionists, and in the past that caused more than a little trouble, but no longer, since a suitable framework had been developed for accommodating confessional differences. The right of the individual therefore would include the right to select national affiliation, and people could be expected to exercise that right rationally. Renner reminded the reader repeatedly of the need for a legal framework.

How easy nationalist agitation is today! The loudmouths and hooligans lead the nations. They stir up the easily excited crowd against the national rivals, the other nation, with whose members everyone gets on well because they need one another. National cultural work consists mostly of speaking at rallies. Outside these occasions one puts aside the demon's garb and becomes a neighbour once again.

¹²⁷ Renner, *Der Kampf der österreichischen Nationen um den Staat*, p. 26.

Cheap politics is made that way. When the declaration of nationality is no longer leisure amusement along with a Sunday pint, but rather a legal institution with rights and duties, then serious consideration will be needed, then each nationality will have as much attraction to the waverers and remote members as their serious cultural contributions warrant.¹²⁸

Each nation within the state would need to be a bona fide legal entity. The Monarchy had laws and orders. The former applied to individual citizens, while the latter were instructions to organs of government which had no direct impact on the citizenry. Nations were dealt with by means of orders, imposing overwhelming and impossible burdens on the machinery of government, whereas they needed to have legal existence with commensurate rights and obligations. Having discussed thoroughly the legal relationships between individuals and associations on the one hand and the state on the other, Renner turned to a detailed explanation of the new legal nation.

Each nation would have responsibilities to its own members, to the state and to the members of other nations, and that would inevitably mean the nation must be privately and publicly competent (*handlungsfähig und rechtsfähig*). Each nation as a legal entity would necessarily be sovereign in representative terms, in cultural terms, in personal and official terms and partially in financial terms. After a caution that current arrangements not be allowed to prejudice the project, the author looked at the geographic and administrative-technical requirements for dividing up the state, with special reference to the executive and judicial functions, and the shortcomings of the Monarchy at the time in that respect, particularly in the context of the lopsided franchise arrangements and electoral geometry.

There followed several chapters devoted to a detailed review of the impossible tangle of Land and other local divisions of widely varying sizes, differing by function, into which the Monarchy was divided and of the chronology of reforms up to the time of publication. Renner proposed arranging all the machinery of government around the *Kreis*, roughly equivalent to county. He seemed to appreciate the irony of proposing a territorial

¹²⁸ Renner, *Der Kampf der österreichischen Nationen um den Staat*, pp. 67-68.

solution after denying its validity, and he defended himself by stressing the administrative necessity and admitting that there is no perfect answer. The Crown Lands would have to be abandoned; so the state would be a federation of provinces which in turn would consist of all *Kreise* in their respective areas, while each nation within the state would be a federation of all *Kreise* (and partial *Kreise*) of that nation, regardless of their provincial setting. Each province would be drawn to consist of a closed territory conceived on the basis of economics and ease of administration. The author then assessed the Monarchy on the degree of centralization, contrasting theoretical decentralization with actual predominance of central authority filling the vacuum left by overburdened local executive and dysfunctional local legislative bodies.

There followed several chapters of legal-philosophical discussion regarding state organisation including parallels with Germany, being a federation of monarchies in one nation, while Austria was a federation of nations in one monarchy, and the United States, comparing the *Ausgleich* arrangement of 1867 between Austria and Hungary to the short-lived American Confederation of 1783-91, and an exhortation regarding the importance of Austria to the overall picture in Central Europe. “The single possible state mission of Austria can only be: Austria a modern state based on legal and economic principles, inwardly interconfessional and international, focused solely on the material well-being and political freedom of her citizens.”¹²⁹

Renner then proposed the detailed groundwork for his new arrangement, suggesting that a nation have the ability to form a *Kreis* on the basis of that nation's ability to support schooling for their offspring there. Further, all voters from each *Kreis* would elect four representatives for four-year overlapping terms (so one every 1st December) – one national community representative, one national *Kreis* representative, one representative for the territorial diet and the last one for the *Kreis* council, while any local civil service

¹²⁹ Renner, *Der Kampf der österreichischen Nationen um den Staat*, p. 173.

executives, like the *Kreishauptmann*, would need to be approved by all the nations in the respective area. He provided extensive detail on the organs of the autonomous nations, including responsibilities to their diaspora – those of their members living in *Kreise* where their numbers were small – the sharing of school arrangements with the state (the latter dictating truancy laws and minimum standards) and their relationship with the Crown and other nations and on the organs of state unity, including the role of adjudication between nations where necessary. His last four sections dealt with unity – of law making by parliament requiring general, direct and equal suffrage, of execution by the ministerial administration and of the whole by virtue of the new conflict resolution machinery. He added an appendix explaining the proportional voting arrangements at *Kreis* level.¹³⁰

In concluding, Springer cautioned that any solution would likely require decades; so the time to start was right away. He did not claim to have provided the last word but hoped at least to have contributed the first,¹³¹ and he closed with a restatement of the Brünn Programme. His objective in his own words:

It is a matter of steering national competition into sensible avenues, to conduct it on the basis of law, to transform the brutal struggle into peaceful competition, the duel into a trial, the rule of the fist into the rule of law, and further, the struggle of the nations for the state into the competition of the nations within the state.

The entire work contained the occasional reference to the Social Democratic Party, but there was not a hint of Marxist proselytising. As one of Renner's biographers pointed out, “With his proposals for the solution of the nationality question Renner showed himself inspired plainly more by the constitutional project of the Kremsier Reichstag than by Marx and Engels.”¹³² At the same time, he did not pull his punches when calling the existing order to task.

Without the extensive reform proposed, “Unfortunately, we have too much past to entitle us to expect much of a future.”¹³³ Nor was the bureaucracy spared the lash of

¹³⁰ Uncharacteristically, the author managed to confuse himself with his examples in the appendix.

¹³¹ Renner, *Der Kampf der österreichischen Nationen um den Staat*, p. 246.

¹³² Rauscher, *Karl Renner*, p. 51.

¹³³ Renner, *Der Kampf der österreichischen Nationen um den Staat*, p. 78.

Renner's pen: "In truth, the interests of the bureaucracy are those of the state of yesterday, and those of the feudal barons, those of the state of the day before yesterday. The today and tomorrow of state life comes from the economic and cultural existence of the population, which is evolving by the day."¹³⁴ With regard to the immediate reform needs he was equally forthright, and repeatedly so, on the necessity of general, direct and equal suffrage:

Universal suffrage is therefore not the solution to the nationalities question, far from it! However, it is the way to the solution, the shortest and also the only....The state and its needs have been for us the only guiding purpose for our undertaking. We have represented neither workers' interests, nor bourgeois interests nor national interests, and we have kept clear of party demands: solely as a requirement of the state we assert: The general, equal and direct suffrage is the guarantee of Austria's existence.¹³⁵

Despite the occasional and unabashed polemics, this was a work intended for a broader public and especially for one with not only a tolerance for but further an understanding of legal and constitutional issues. At the same time, it was a logical following step from the Brünn Programme. The aim was to transform nation from a question of power to a question of culture.¹³⁶ Now there was not only the party's exhortation to national equality and autonomy, there was also a credible and serious blueprint for achieving that goal.

One of today's leading commentators on Social Democracy, Norbert Leser, put Renner's work in a grander context, referring to the direction as well as the appeal beyond party circles, though with the implication of a misguided hope: "Karl Renner remained true to old Austria right to his grave, not because the monarchy was close to his heart, though he accepted it and never questioned it, but because he was convinced that the multi-national state offered a better next stage to the world state, the greater goal of which he never lost sight."¹³⁷ A recent biographer was even more direct with his lament: "In his

¹³⁴ Renner, *Der Kampf der österreichischen Nationen um den Staat*, p. 95.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 228-229.

¹³⁶ Rauscher, *Karl Renner*, p. 47.

¹³⁷ N. Leser, *Der Sturz des Adlers: 120 Jahre österreichische Sozialdemokratie* (Vienna, 2008), p. 29.

studies of this period it was after all Renner's historic mistake to expect the political development of Europe to forsake the national state for the multi-national."¹³⁸

An interesting contrast is afforded by the next Social Democratic contribution to the discussion, by Otto Bauer. In 1907 his first major work was published, and it dealt with the nationalities subject.¹³⁹ There are several issues of context which warrant consideration. First of all, Bauer had come to Marxist socialism as an adolescent bourgeois convert, which seems to have endowed him with a certain doctrinal zeal. At the age of 24, he was also very young. He was unmarried and freshly minted from university. According to his most recent biographer, he was a very bright young man. In his seminars at university, he had studied Economics with Professor Eugen von Böhm-Bawerk, in whose seminars Bauer was joined by the likes of Ludwig von Mises and Joseph Schumpeter, and he occasionally crossed swords with his classmates and professors on the merits and validity of Marxist teaching.¹⁴⁰ There is a confident optimism which young men of that age radiate; so it is hardly surprising that Bauer's book exudes youthful assurance. Finally, the book was published as part of a series entitled "Marx-Studies: Articles on the Theory and Politics of Scientific Socialism", of which the editors were Social Democrats Dr Max Adler and Dr Rudolf Hilferding, the latter also a fellow student of Bauer's at university.

There was a fundamental difference in content between the two works, in that Bauer's effort could be seen almost as a sequel to the work of his older colleague. While Renner concentrated on the problem at hand and his proposals for addressing it, wasting the minimum of words on the concept of national identity and its historical evolution, Bauer's work was meant to be a comprehensive treatment of nationality, including its nature and background, for students of "scientific socialism", thus placing the issue firmly in Marxist context.

¹³⁸ Rauscher, *Karl Renner*, p. 48.

¹³⁹ O. Bauer, *Die Nationalitätenfrage und die Sozialdemokratie* (Vienna, 1907).

¹⁴⁰ E. Hanisch, *Der grosse Illusionist: Otto Bauer (1881-1938)* (Vienna, 2011), p. 69.

More than twice the length of Springer's book, *Die Nationalitätenfrage* was a work in seven parts: The Nation, The Nation-State, the Multi-National State, National Autonomy, Developing Tendencies of the Nationality Struggle in Austria, Evolution of the Nationality Principle and Programme and Tactics of Austrian Social Democracy.

Part I delved into the nature and origins of national character, the natural and cultural aspects of the nation: “The nation is never other than a community of fate. But this community owes its existence on the one hand to characteristics inherited through the shared fate and on the other hand to the inherited culture.”¹⁴¹ Next was a more specifically German history of nation seen through a distinctly Marxist lens: “Only modern capitalism has created a truly national culture which transcends the boundaries of the village...The fact of exploitation restricts the formation of the nation as a cultural community, since it hinders the inclusion of the workers in that community.”¹⁴²

There ensued a detour into the shortcomings of capitalism, inefficiently producing unneeded items. The cultural aspect of the nation continued to receive emphasis, with repeated reminders that all classes must enjoy access to the nation's culture and have a role in shaping it. The so-called national values were entirely generated by history, according to the author, and “today's bourgeoisie treasures all these historical inheritances, since their dominance of society is based on that heritage.”¹⁴³ The conclusion of Part I was a call for the increased ownership of the nation by all its citizens, particularly including the working class, praising as part of that process the struggle for a shorter work day and for equal suffrage.

In Part II there was first a short early history of Europe then a lengthy explanation of the so-called nationality principle, which holds that every nation should have its own state. For this the underlying assumption was that a nation was somehow natural while a state was synthetic, all furthered by a bourgeoisie interested in preserving their position,

¹⁴¹ Bauer, *Die Nationalitätenfrage und die Sozialdemokratie*, p. 21.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 79-80.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 134.

despite an inability to achieve appropriate benefits of scale and the distorting effects of lopsided taxation, including protective tariffs.

In Part III, Bauer delved into greater detail regarding the modern history of the part of Europe which had become Austria-Hungary, with his first stage ending at the reign of Joseph II, when “Austria was a German state part way through the transition from a feudal agrarian one to a modern capitalist one.”¹⁴⁴ Then industry, commerce and education brought the awakening of the so-called non-historical nations, those whose members had previously been unaware of their national identity. This was one of the countless manifestations of capitalist development¹⁴⁵. Class conflict, inevitable in capitalist development, became increasingly easy to mistake as national conflict, aggravated by the curial franchise, which protected entrenched interests and ruling cliques, some of which felt threatened.

From all this emerges the silliness of the entire petit bourgeois national political scene. The only means to hinder the arrival of foreign workers, to do away with the freedom of movement, is wholly impossible. This leaves the petit-bourgeois with no real goal for their national politics, the only remaining content of which is giving pointless vent to their hate.¹⁴⁶

National hatred was transferred class hatred, and if the petit-bourgeoisie were the carriers, the bourgeoisie were the winners through continued exploitation.

Next Bauer addressed himself to the relationship of the state to the national conflicts, and at this point he wove Springer's work into the his treatment, explaining the personality principle.¹⁴⁷ Echoing Renner, Bauer held that the then current Constitutional framework “transforms the natural striving of nations for cultural fulfilment without harming other nations into the struggle of each nation to prevent the others from reaching that goal.”¹⁴⁸ The final section of Part III dealt with the working class and the national struggles, which Bauer introduced as follows: “The deepest underlying, most self-evident

¹⁴⁴ Bauer, *Die Nationalitätenfrage und die Sozialdemokratie*, p. 186.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 208.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 224.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 238-239.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 245.

impulse of the working class is their revolutionary instinct.”¹⁴⁹ If the reader had missed the Marxist tone to this point, the following few pages provided unequivocal confirmation of the author’s convictions on those lines. The reader learned of naive cosmopolitanism and its evolution into the internationalism of the mature working class, which demanded that no nation rule or exploit another, and found more support for Renner’s ideas.

Part IV dealt with national autonomy in three sections. In the first, Bauer reviewed the territorial principle. This was the basis on which Austria was at the time broken down. Arguably, the lines could merely be redrawn to reflect the regions of the respective nations, but the author explained that this was not a useful approach, not only because, as mentioned above, there was no geographical logic to the picture in the first place, but also because there were many regions, particularly towns and cities, where the populations were mixed. Furthermore, people moved, and they tended not to move just across a line from their own neighbourhood to the one next door but rather across a great distance, for example from a village to a large city. Moreover, capitalist development would only accelerate and deepen that process, making a mockery of any territorial solution. These points were all supported with a wealth of statistical evidence and spiced with more criticism of the petit-bourgeoisie.

The second section addressed the personality principle as proposed by Renner (it was here, at the latest, that the real identity of the author was confirmed).¹⁵⁰ Bauer started by reviewing a recent voting reform in Moravia which seemed to have been based on the ideas of Renner, but this had been only a vote counting scheme, so with none of the important components of the proposed constitutional reform. Following this point, there was an extensive explanation of Renner's reform in layman’s terms rather than the much more technical form of the original. This was without question a full-blooded endorsement of Renner’s proposals. The end of Part IV was a lengthy chapter entitled “National

¹⁴⁹ Bauer, *Die Nationalitätenfrage und die Sozialdemokratie*, p. 263.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 308.

Autonomy of the Jews”.

Part V consisted of two chapters, the first of which attempted to chart the likely developments in Austria based on the analysis in the preceding four parts:

If the Germans, the Poles and the Italians want the machinery of state to work, and if they do not wish to be ruled by the Czechs, the Ruthenes or the South Slavs, so must they too learn to end the striving of all nations for power over other peoples; so that the law constitutes the nations as legally competent entities and provides for them a legal status which protects them against incursions by other nations.¹⁵¹

Bauer concluded the chapter by arguing that “If Austria will survive, it will be with national autonomy.”¹⁵² The second chapter in Part V dealt with the Dual Monarchy and specifically with Hungary, which is outside the scope of this paper. However, there was an interesting view at the end of a string of predictions based on Bauer’s Marxist assessment of the prospects: from a constitutional standpoint the then current arrangement, whereby foreign policy and defence were outside the mandate of parliament, was not acceptable, and the two parts needed to be completely separated; however, there was also an economic aspect to the problem, which was that the splitting of the customs area would likely mean loss of jobs and more expensive food, and therefore the customs area needed to be maintained.¹⁵³

In Part VI, Bauer summarized how he saw the near-term developing in central Europe. In the first chapter of this section, in addition to Marxist speculation about the future of Poland, he also had an interesting question: “Will Austria continue to exist as a self-sufficient state; so that the resources we have learned about can be developed to transform the old Austria into a federation of nations or will the nationality principle destroy Austria?”¹⁵⁴ His conclusions were that the Monarchy would survive any internal threat but could very well be destroyed by foreign powers acting in concert with those who would threaten the empire from within.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵¹ Bauer, *Die Nationalitätenfrage und die Sozialdemokratie*, p. 335.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 351.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 380.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 383.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 386.

The following chapters were young Bauer's explanation of the forces behind capitalism and industrial finance, including the operation of cartels and the effects of protectionist policies. Next came an analysis of the implications of expansionism for the working class, including increased military budgets and the danger of war, especially given the disproportionate burdens working people were called upon to bear in these areas.

The final two chapters in this part dealt with the nationality principle as it related to imperialism and then socialism, the former being an occasion for the author to make some brave assessments and predictions, for example that France was a diminishing threat to Germany in the west due her lower population growth rate,¹⁵⁶ and that, should the German imperialists try to embark on warlike ventures in Asia Minor, they would be resisted powerfully by the German working class.¹⁵⁷ The latter provides a run through the wonderful world which will follow the transition to socialism with investment allocated and populations moving all for the benefit of the common good.

The seventh and final part consisted of four chapters to wrap up this epic treatment. The first was a review of the Social Democratic Party's position on the whole problem, starting with a restatement of the Brunn Programme, then of the Renner proposal and finally qualifying the result with the victory of socialism. Turning to the political organization, Bauer explained the creation of separate parties for the various nations in 1897 broadly as part of the autonomy advocated by so many. He also pointed out that the everyday needs and concerns, not least in linguistic terms, did not lend themselves to uniform direction and control.

The relationship of the nationality question to the trade unions was the penultimate chapter. It started with a review of the history of the movement in Austria. Tensions between members of the various nations were acknowledged, but the reader was reminded that a certain amount of centralization was required to get the financial benefits of scale,

¹⁵⁶ Bauer, *Die Nationalitätenfrage und die Sozialdemokratie*, p. 434.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 435.

particularly with regard to the support of the unemployed and other hardship circumstances; so that required unified finance, administration and political efforts. At the same time, unions needed to engage in recruitment, in education and in agitation, and all of those functions were local and by definition nationally differentiated. The clear parallel with the Springer proposals is unmistakable.

Bauer's final chapter was a rallying cry for Social Democrats. Social-pedagogical efforts were fundamentally important as the process of capitalist development continued. Following a review of the stages involved and Austria's and Germany's position at the time, the work closed with another call for progress with the setting up of the constituent nations as legal entities as advocated by Renner.

The inescapable conclusion must be that Bauer's effort, as thoroughly and unashamedly Marxist as its tone and content surely were, can only be seen as a ringing endorsement of the proposals set out by his fellow socialist four years earlier. The work put into Marxist context the proposals made by Renner. It did not seek to add to them and was certainly not meant to gainsay any of Renner's ideas. Indeed, Bauer's first biographer, Otto Leichter, who knew his subject personally, characterized Bauer's support as "without reservation".¹⁵⁸

In his assessment, Emil Strauß noted that Renner had grown up in Moravia and Bauer had attended secondary school in Bohemia, giving both some very close acquaintance with the issues in practical terms. Strauß judged that both Renner and Bauer had

proven themselves not only as serious scientific pioneers, who recognised the importance of the problem, but also as statesmen, who, on the basis of the then current social and political power relationships, were able to provide detailed answers to the most important questions troubling the Monarchy. These possibilities for the solution of the national problem by means of a complete restructuring of the constitution and administration of the empire however was as much ignored by the ruling powers of 1907 as by those of 1849.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁸ O. Leichter, *Otto Bauer: Tragödie oder Triumph* (Vienna, 1970), p. 71; supported by Leser, *Zwischen Reformismus und Bolschewismus*, p. 253.

¹⁵⁹ Strauß, *Geschichte der deutschen Sozialdemokratie Böhmens*, vol. 2, pp. 215-216.

Of course, Strauß was an active fellow Social Democrat; so his endorsement should be viewed in that light.

The reference to 1849 suggests that Renner's solution was based upon a concept put forward in the wake of the 1848 revolutions, when the *Reichstag* (as it was then), meeting in the small town of Kremsier to produce a new constitution, considered a proposal by Ludwig von Löchner. According his biographer, Löchner suggested a re-ordering of Austria on the basis of the equal rights of nationalities. He advocated elimination of the provincial structure, revision of the *Kreis* scheme to reflect "natural, geographic and ethnographic realities" and finally provision for local self-government under central control.¹⁶⁰ The Czechs opposed the plan because they saw it leading to the break-up of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia. Their posture was therefore contradictory, in that they stressed the nationality principle but for themselves insisted on the principle of historical rights, which made meaningful compromise all but impossible.¹⁶¹ In the event, the treatment of the issue finally adopted at Kremsier was the one proposed by Moravian Deputy Kajetan Mayer. This was another variation on re-dividing the crown lands into ethnic districts.¹⁶² Sutter suggested similar inspiration,¹⁶³ but Bauer refuted any direct derivation very succinctly with his characterisation of the then recent Moravian Compromise, which after all was along the same lines, as a mere change in vote counting.¹⁶⁴

The distinguishing and by far the most important aspect of Renner's idea was the differentiation of the government machinery between the national-cultural, based on personal choice, and the legal-administrative, necessarily territorial, with the two coinciding only at *Kreis* and central levels and in the former context most notably allowing

¹⁶⁰ E. Sieber, *Ludwig von Löchner: ein Vorkämpfer des Deutschtums in Böhmen, Mähren und Schlesien* (Munich, 1965), p. 136.

¹⁶¹ Hantsch, *Die Nationalitätenfrage*, p. 44.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 45-46.

¹⁶³ Sutter, *Die Badenischen Sprachenverordnungen von 1897*, vol. 2, pp. 406-409.

¹⁶⁴ W. Nießner, 'Der mährische Pakt: kühne Fälschung der nationale Autonomie', *Der Kampf*, vol. 10 (1917), No. 10 (Oct), p. 275.

for the co-existence of more than one nationality. All the other proposals had the important flaw of creating for each nation its own national bloc in parliament, which would necessarily give every issue a national flavour, thus increasing the scope for friction and dispute. Sutter further judged that Renner's proposal had its special meaning through the coming succession of Franz Ferdinand to the throne, since the latter could be expected to make far-reaching changes.¹⁶⁵ Hermann Münch, on the other hand, seemed to have a closer appreciation of Renner's suggestion, understanding that authority was to be divided, though he seems not to have appreciated the treatment of territory.¹⁶⁶ Hugo Hantsch called Renner's idea a "two-dimensional federation" which he thought much too theoretical ever to be instituted.¹⁶⁷ Rudolf Schlesinger's view, published in 1945, saw the 'historical failure of Austrian Social Democracy' in "its inability to replace the Habsburg Monarchy by a structure conforming to the demands of the oppressed nationalities".¹⁶⁸

Thus subsequent commentators have missed Renner's most important innovative suggestion, which was to call attention to the possibility of treating nations' rights and interests without reference to fixed territories. This concept is not simply theoretical. French citizens with residence outside France have their own representation in government; so on that basis, France is able to expand culturally without limit, while French territory has been largely fixed for several centuries.

There are commentators, for example Hasenmayer, who have held that a fundamental disagreement arose during the course of the Great War between Renner and Bauer on the national autonomy issue. This view is that Renner aimed to preserve the Habsburg state while Bauer had given up on the monarchy, somehow creating a left (Bauer) and a right (Renner) wing.¹⁶⁹ In fact however, Renner's concern was to salvage if

¹⁶⁵ Sutter, *Die Badenischen Sprachenverordnungen von 1897*, vol. 2, pp. 408-410.

¹⁶⁶ H. Münch, *Böhmische Tragödie: Das Schicksal Mitteleuropas im Lichte der tschechischen Frage* (Braunschweig, 1949), p. 524.

¹⁶⁷ Hantsch, *Nationalitätenfrage*, p.73.

¹⁶⁸ R. Schlesinger, *Federalism in Central and Eastern Europe* (London, 1945), p. 237. This was a particularly interesting assessment coming as it did on the heels of the defeat of fascism in Europe and on the eve of the foundation of the Second Republic with Karl Renner as President!

¹⁶⁹ Hasenmayer, 'Die Stellung', p. 67.

possible not so much the Monarchy, but rather the benefits of the large economic block, not an outlandish aim, while Bauer had clearly given up on the Monarchy as the structure to produce such a result. Both came to believe merging into Germany was the best course once multi-national Austria had come apart. On that basis there was no important disagreement between the two on the essence of the problem or on the need for and desirability of national autonomy. Nonetheless, Hasenmayer's summary of the central point in Renner's idea seems the best: "According to Renner therefore the nation is an association of individual people and the state is a group of territories...which meant Austria was to be arranged on two bases: from territorial and personal standpoints."¹⁷⁰

The Moravian compromise referred to by Bauer took the form of four laws enacted by the provincial diet on 27 November 1905. This was an effort to address the interests of both Germans and Czechs in that Crown Land following debate and disturbances surrounding the establishment of a Czech university in Brünn, then a majority German (63%) city. Early October that year saw Czechs gather for several days of protests in support of the university during which there were disturbances, including one fatality.¹⁷¹ The position of the Social Democrats with regard to the debate was that it was a bourgeois nationalist conflict which their constituents should avoid. The compromise reached among Czechs, Germans and the government provided a new organisation of the province but was best known by the electoral reform for the provincial diet.¹⁷² With the exception of the bishops and the large landowners, all the curiae were divided between Czech and German, with a specified number of mandates for each in each of the divided curiae.¹⁷³ As Bauer explained, this was little more than a vote counting exercise and would have needed constant recalibration in light of population changes. There were reforms agreed in other provinces along the same lines, in Styria, the Italian Tyrol, in Polish Ruthenia, in coastal

¹⁷⁰ Hasenmayer, 'Die Stellung', p. 63.

¹⁷¹ N. Wingfield, *Flag Wars and Stone Saints: How the Bohemian Lands Became Czech* (Cambridge, MA, 2007), pp. 84 to 89.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 104

¹⁷³ Münch, *Böhmische Tragödie*, p. 520.

areas, in Bukovina in 1910 and finally in Galicia in 1914, all illustrative of the Monarchy's willingness to improvise to achieve some semblance of harmony between different groups.¹⁷⁴

During the approach to the war, a similar arrangement was being discussed for Bohemia, with lots of blame to be apportioned for its 'failure' despite the honest efforts of the then Minister President Count Karl Stürgkh.¹⁷⁵ For his part, Mommsen saw in the Bohemian compromise the last hope for any reconciliation in the foreseeable future.¹⁷⁶ While it is reasonable to discuss the 'failure' of the Bohemian project in contrast to the 'success' of some others, that is only in terms of their passage into effect, not their outcome. At the same time, Jeremy King has offered recent support for Bauer's assessment:

The Moravian and Bukovinian Compromises, as well as the failed Bohemian Compromise of 1890, each permitted great landowners and high-ranking religious figures to stand outside and above the national camps, as powerful guardians of more-than-national interests. Such men, those three compromises stipulated, could vote on all issues in the relevant diet. A national representative, in contrast, could vote only on issues defined in advance as affecting either his 'nation' or the territory as a whole.¹⁷⁷

In light of these provisions, Renner's ideas do not seem so complicated as their detractors suggest. The question of local compromise was rendered moot by the war. All the measures, those implemented and those foregone, failed to address, let alone to achieve, the Social Democrats' goal: to put the role of nation in its proper light.

So, against the background of Renner's proposals of 1902 and Bauer's endorsement of 1907, when parliament convened its XXth session in the autumn of 1909, there was soon a log jam of measures, many of which were nationally oriented. By the sixth sitting of the new session, on 24 November, there had been five similar emergency measures proposed having to do with the language or nationality questions in general, and they had

¹⁷⁴ Judson, *Habsburg Empire*, p. 315.

¹⁷⁵ A. Fussek, 'Ministerpräsident Karl Graf Stürgkh' (Vienna: PhD dissertation, University of Vienna, 1959), p. 65.

¹⁷⁶ Mommsen, *Die Sozialdemokratie und die Nationalitätenfrage*, p. 5.

¹⁷⁷ King, *Budweisers*, p. 145.

been wrapped together for treatment by the House. The speakers in the debate were announced, 68 against and 137 in favour! Each of the five was introduced by its leading sponsor:

1. Deputy Karel Kramář, leader of the Young Czechs, whose measure provided for the selection of a 53-member committee to advise on a draft law for the protection of national minorities in the kingdoms and lands represented in Cisleithania,
2. Deputy Kost' Lewyckyj, a Ruthenian National Democrat, whose proposal called for a statutory regulation of national questions for the entire empire,
3. Deputy Eugen Lewickyj, another Ruthenian National Democrat, who wanted the language question for the entire state resolved by imperial statute,
4. Deputy Anton Pergelt, a German Progressive, suggesting the selection of a 52-member committee to advise on the Government draft laws¹⁷⁸ regarding language use in state departments in Bohemia and the creation of *Kreis*-based government in Bohemia, and
5. Deputy Josef Seliger, requesting statutory regulation of relations between nations.

Once the measures had been introduced, debate was suspended to allow other business to be attended to. Following fourteen speeches on the first day of the debate, including one from Minister President Richard Count von Bienerth-Schmerling (Bienerth),¹⁷⁹ Karl Renner was the third to speak the next day.

Renner's speech, which lasted some three hours, was in two halves, with the first half in two parts. Part one stressed that all the time spent debating national issues had been a distraction, that the house had got itself into major confusion, reversing what was really important to the people and what was utterly meaningless. The Austrian people, according

¹⁷⁸ These drafts were nos. 3 and 6 in the Supplements of the *Stenographische Protokolle* for the XXth Session. They were very lengthy and detailed proposals, but the basis was simply a more detailed arrangement of fixed territories, therefore more a bureaucratic re-arrangement than a reform as such.

¹⁷⁹ Bienerth entered the civil service at age 21 in 1884 in the Ministry of Education. His first cabinet role was as head of that Ministry in 1905, after which he was Interior Minister. He became Minister President in 1908, heading a cabinet made up largely of bureaucrats. *Österreichisches biographisches Lexikon 1815-1950 Online-Edition*, www.biographien.ac.at (August 2016).

to Renner, were mainly concerned with their quality of life, which was a matter of living on the best terms with all their fellow citizens, and were little worried about their nationality.

Do they want peace and work or quarrelling and impotence? We wonder how the public would answer. What can possibly be at the end of this continual argument?... For the people of Austria, it is exactly like two parties who go to court, at the outset bitter and sure of victory, but as one day follows another, and one cause follows another, their faces grow longer, and the costs of this presumed justice grow ever greater. In the end they tell themselves: if only we had wanted peace at the outset! It's an old saying: better a meagre settlement than a plentiful trial, NB a trial which only ever fattens the lawyers.¹⁸⁰

The previous speaker, Eduard von Stransky-Greifensfeld, a German Radical, had concluded an enthusiastically nationalist speech by exclaiming “Heil!”. Renner asked the house rhetorically how they would know Stransky was German. His military identity card stated his body weight, an important legal attribute. Other characteristics were displayed in his residence certificate, like eye colour - “sly”^{*} - but he would have to prove somehow that he was German.¹⁸¹ Renner was very good at mixing gentle humour with simple, incontrovertible logic. Having pointed out convincingly that arguments about nationality were a distraction from more important matters, Renner, in the second part, explained their effect on the machinery of government. The obstruction employed by the nationalist blocs was to the detriment not only of their respective opponents, but of democracy itself, since the inability of parliament to get on with real business simply gave the Government a pretext to govern by decree¹⁸² and thus bring about a return to absolutism: “Obstruction is nothing other than the negation of the course of justice, that means the denial of the parliamentary process and the attempt to set force against force.”¹⁸³ During the second half of his speech, which set out the core of his proposal, he began with a simple example, as he had in his suffrage pamphlets a few years before. He reminded his listeners that property

¹⁸⁰ *Stenographische Protokolle des Abgeordnetenhauses, XX. Session, 8. Sitzung, 26 November 1909, p. 509.*

^{*} A word play, since the German for “blue” rhymes with German for “sly”.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 510.

¹⁸² A reference to §14 of the so-called December Constitution, *Reichsgesetzblatt* 141/1867, which provided that the government could govern by decree when parliament was not in session.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 514.

disputes had long ago been settled by force, but that in the meantime courts of law and a land registry had made the whole process cheaper, more efficient and better for everyone. So, while there would always be disagreements between nations, there was no reason why they needed to be resolved with pitchforks:

it is simply empty words and no more to say the nationality question is insoluble. Empty words which will not go away, because they have a kernel of truth, namely that the conflicts and the aggravation are ongoing, but they hide the actual situation, which is that adjudication of the national quarrels, by putting the quarrels before judges for legal resolution would remove them from everyday life.¹⁸⁴

Renner proposed to remove any national content from the Crown Lands and also from the state as a whole by giving nations their own legal existence. The problem was that the Crown Lands had developed associations with nations and thus impetus for their ambitions to dominate.¹⁸⁵ Renner had thoroughly and clearly, not to say extensively, explained the problems and the solution as the Social Democrats saw them in his several books on the subject. The message seems to have sunk in.

As mentioned earlier, the Christian Socialists were the party most diametrically opposed to the Social Democrats. In the words of Christian Social leader Albert Geßmann, “Above all we need to get on with social reform in a big way and be sure that in the new house social-political work takes the place of national quarrelling. Only in that way can we counter the truly worrying danger of Social Democracy.”¹⁸⁶ Having lent their support to the Whitsun Programme in 1899, whether sincerely or opportunistically, they could also be said to support plainly German nationalist proposals. During the course of the Great War however, the support of non-German nations became increasingly important; so the Christian Socials needed to have something more balanced to say on the subject. Accordingly, Msgr Ignaz Seipel, who was to become their party's leader after the war, wrote a book on the nationalities issue.¹⁸⁷ Seipel's ideas seem to have evolved while he

¹⁸⁴ *Stenographische Protokolle des Abgeordnetenhauses, XX. Session, 8. Sitzung, 26 November 1909*, p. 515.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 522.

¹⁸⁶ *Reichspost*, 16 May 1916.

¹⁸⁷ I. Seipel, *Nation und Staat* (Vienna, 1916).

wrote. Near his beginning, in a discussion of the nature of nationality, he felt compelled to deal with the offspring of a mixed marriage:

So when someone's father and mother are from different nations, in the rule his education, his circumstances or even his own tendencies lead to his feeling nonetheless a member of one of the nations, while his feelings toward the other nation, whose language he could be equally good at and whose customs he may be fully acquainted with, would only be friendly and not national. Should exceptionally in fact not feel more a member of one nation than the other, then he is absolutely not dual national, but rather without nation.¹⁸⁸

However, in the course of his appreciation, Seipel managed to strike an increasingly rational posture, and he dealt neatly with the nationality principle like this:

The view that the state in concept is nothing other than the politically independent Nation, that conversely each nation, when its progress reaches a certain point, strives to form a state, is simply stated the nationality principle. This view has found many adherents, among them a few who are able to avoid the other excesses of nationalism, but who have failed to appreciate that the nationality principle is itself a nationalist excess.¹⁸⁹

It seems difficult to reconcile the militant from the start of the book with the rationalist nearer the middle.

In his refutation of the nationality principle, Seipel made his point with Austria. "Austrian history is the proof, that a super-national state can unite several mutually foreign nations into a robust whole. We have not yet succeeded in finding the answer to the other question: how the constituent nations can be fairly reconciled with the super-national state."¹⁹⁰ Following a history of how Austria had been formed, Seipel explained that the idea of simply dividing Austria into several separate nations would never work, except perhaps by force, due to minority resistance, and further that any such solution would only make the problem worse, not better. In a footnote to this premise, he explained, "A pioneer of national autonomy is Karl Renner. But he advocates something, as he himself is forced to admit,... for which the basis has not been prepared, either in the current constitution or in the history of Austria-Hungary."¹⁹¹ Seipel therefore had suggested, in that footnote, that

¹⁸⁸ Seipel, *Nation und Staat*, p. 3

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 72-73.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 135-136.

Renner's idea should be disregarded simply because it had not been tried before. He wrapped up that train of thought by observing that territorial solutions had been unsuccessful. "But then is the territorial separation really necessary? If so, it would be a bad sign for Austria."¹⁹² Next, Seipel proposed the forming of national curia for voting, suggesting that each voter choose his nationality, which he suggested would put the state truly above nationality, eliminating the interest in putting one nation's interests before another's. He called this the personality principle.¹⁹³ It would be reasonable to regard this as an endorsement of Renner's idea by his potentially most vehement opponent, except that Seipel, unlike Renner, had no ideas about the realisation of specific national aims. Not only was Seipel familiar with Renner's proposal, he was publicly so, even if he had been unable to bring himself to acknowledge the fact specifically. Arguably, then, in the view of the Christian Socials, the Social Democrats had 'solved' the nationality question. Boyer provided a condensed summary of Seipel's thoughts, but he did not remark on the important extent to which they accorded with Renner's proposals.¹⁹⁴

Whatever the concrete aims of the Social Democrats, their advocacy was increasingly drowned out by the stridency and insistency of nationalist strife, with the Czechs leading the autonomy campaign, of course on the basis of their solution, and the Germans fighting a rear guard battle to keep as much of their preferred position as they could. Most observers agree the watershed was the Badeni language reforms. As Hans Mommsen summarised this:

In the continual bitter nationality clashes following the Badeni chaos in the Habsburg realm, the Social Democrats embodied the faith in the eventual victory of reason in politics and the concept of the legal-institutional solubility of political disagreements, while the nationalist parties, with the mobilisation of the irrational passions of the peoples, by declaring the national struggle for existence as an end in itself, with their appeal to racist and national sentiments and with the unprincipled power grabbing by small *Führercliquen*, gave impetus to increasingly fascist tendencies.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹² Seipel, *Nation und Staat*, p. 137.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 138.

¹⁹⁴ Boyer, *Culture and Political Crisis in Vienna*, pp. 411-412.

¹⁹⁵ Mommsen, *Die Sozialdemokratie und die Nationalitätenfrage*, p. 7.

Of course, events would distract Austrians from these challenges, as the victorious new international order established after the Great War applied a territorial solution with a minority rights protection regime of sorts intended to address the tensions. Arguably, as both Seipel and Renner foresaw, this did not work out so well. With greater perspective, Sutter's assessment seems surprisingly to have given up on multi-national Europe: "so in the end, through lack of understanding, through hate and blind nationalism, an empire, which had encouraged to such an extent the cultural development of its peoples and which certainly would have been a supernational force for order to preserve peace among the nationalities in the Danube basin, collapsed following its defeat at war."¹⁹⁶ Although Kogan judged the Social Democrats' ideas "condemned by history", he posed the interesting rhetorical question: "Today we may ponder whether the solutions of 1918 have really stood the pragmatic test of historic success much better than the old form which they replaced?"¹⁹⁷ Renner would surely have replied that there had been no real change in form, only a re-allocation of territory.

In answering Kogan with an emphatic "No", one might well suggest that Karl Renner's proposal could be useful in a Europe of shifting and polyglot populations, where the territorial regime increasingly serves cynics keen to amplify tensions. More specifically to do with Habsburg Austria, that Social Democrats' ideas were embraced, if only implicitly, by some of their most vehement critics strongly suggests three conclusions.

First, in terms of the party's response to the issue in their own organisation, the outcome was summarised well by Hasenmayer:

Holding back on the nationalities debate and concentrating on their main enemy, namely the government, protected Social Democracy from national fragmentation and made possible a thoroughly good relationship between German and Czech workers. Nationalism found its expression in emancipatory efforts within the party, in an organic arrangement of the party by national interest groups. From 1897 German, Czech, South Slav, Polish, Italian and Ruthenian Social Democrats had their own self-sufficient organisations, their own party congresses and their own party administrations, but the unified character remained, whereby every other year there was a collective party congress, the overall party leadership and the

¹⁹⁶ Sutter, *Die Badensichen Sprachenverordnungen von 1897*, vol. 2, p. 445.

¹⁹⁷ Kogan, "The Social Democrats and the Conflict", p. 215.

association of parliamentary representatives were shared.¹⁹⁸

It is worth stressing that this view also holds that, shorn of the territorial implications, nationalism became much easier to accommodate.

Second, with particular regard to the wider nationalities issue as it existed in Cisleithania as a whole, Social Democrats' creative and expository resources were effective in producing real life solutions to matters of concern, then explaining those ideas to the public at large. After all, their opponents were, if anything, less inclined than those outside government to appreciate Social Democratic views and proposals. The Social Democrats position consistently and unequivocally supported national autonomy. Furthermore, they alone were able to define coherently what they meant when they used that expression. Nationalists on the other hand, had a message free from substantive content, which is a very good reason why, as Judson observed, they were unable "to keep people in a constant state of excitement about nationhood."¹⁹⁹

Finally, all those in governing circles received, by the outbreak of war, a thorough and convincing demonstration of Social Democratic willingness, ability and even determination to think in legal and constitutional terms. The importance of this is hard to overstate when the Social Democrats were often portrayed as revolutionaries, even terrorists.

With conclusions, including practical success at union level, in mind, it is worth looking at some past assessments. In Hantsch's view: "Although, as could be shown, there was no lack, among the leaders of Austrian Social Democracy, of preparedness to discuss theoretically the Austrian nationality problem, the practical result and the practical influence were small, because the Social Democrats failed to understand the scale of the question."²⁰⁰ Rottensteiner characterised the idea of cultural national autonomy as a

¹⁹⁸ Hasenmayer, 'Die Stellung', p. 52.

¹⁹⁹ Judson, *Habsburg Empire*, p. 316.

²⁰⁰ Hantsch, *Geschichte Österreichs*, p. 80.

'literary invention' and not suitable for solving the national problem.²⁰¹ Wrapping up, he waxed philosophical: "This passionate, and despite all the polemic edge deeply earnest promotion of the proposal, to save the entire state through the realization of cultural-national autonomy suffered the same fate as so many other projects, which do not follow the stream of history but try to divert it, which do not provide a new course but only a backwater which at some point will overflow."²⁰² Our conclusions are convincing refutation of these assessments, which do not square with the facts. Not only had Social Democrats devised practical solutions, their usefulness had been demonstrated quite clearly to those interested in proper evaluation. Further implementation on a broader basis, that is at state level, was rendered moot in the aftermath of the Great War, but abandonment of Renner's idea would, even a century later, be premature.

²⁰¹ Rottensteiner, 'Der Kampf', p. viii.

²⁰² Rottensteiner, 'Der Kampf', p. 136.

Chapter 2. Suffrage Reform & the People's Parliament

From the creation of their modern party, Austrian Social Democrats placed universal direct and equal suffrage at the heart of their demands. To understand the importance of that aim, it is helpful to know something of the background of voting in Austria. The franchise in Austria originated with the Community Law of 1849, which distinguished between the following groups of the population: citizens, inhabitants and strangers. Certain members of the first two groups were entitled to vote. Citizens qualified by their tax payments, while certain members of the second, such as priests, civil servants, officers and teachers were entitled to vote by virtue of their positions. Communities were encouraged to form curiae for the allocation of mandates, and they were left, within the limitations set, to determine their own franchise arrangements. The concept of interest as distinct from individual representation was clearly implicit in this approach, thus the conceptually 'indirect' nature of this format.¹

Representation in central government was established by the February Patent of 1861, which provided for a bi-cameral 'legislature', the *Reichsrat*, made up of an upper house, the *Herrenhaus* or House of Peers, and a lower house, the *Abgeordnetenhaus* or House of Deputies. The upper house was at first populated largely by aristocrats, to be both hereditary, in the case of the 'higher' aristocrats, and for life for the lesser lights. The former were in the majority at the outset, but that changed during the first few years. Of the latter there were two non-aristocrats to begin with: the playwright Franz Grillparzer and the Czech politician František Palacký. Membership in the upper house was awarded for extraordinary service; so eventually quite a broad cross-section of people was represented there.²

¹ M. Seliger and K. Ucakar, *Wien: politische Geschichte 1740-1934* (Vienna, 1985), vol. 1, pp. 297-299.

² A. Gottsmann, 'Der Reichstag 1848/49 und der Reichsrat 1861 bis 1865' in H. Rumpler and P. Urbanitsch (Eds.), *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848-1918*, vol. 7 *Verfassung und Parlamentarismus*, part 1 *Verfassungsrecht, Verfassungswirklichkeit, zentrale Repräsentativkörperschaften* (Vienna, 2000), p. 626.

While with the lower house the concept of a statewide parliamentary body was recognized, selection of the members was by the respective *Landtage*, or provincial diets. If a provincial diet failed to send its delegates to the house, the Crown could insist on the election of a delegation. Consistent with the recognized principle of communal autonomy, each commune and province had its own franchise scheme, though they were broadly similar.³ Because the Imperial Community Law placed the regulation of communal franchise in the hands of the individual *Länder* (provinces) “with due consideration for the interests of the highly taxed”⁴, the dualism of state control and provincial autonomy was on a stable statutory footing – as was the linkage of suffrage with taxation.⁵

There was frequent tension between the centre and the provinces, particularly with boycotting, as by the Czechs. When the Crown tried to force this issue in Bohemia in 1868, the diet relented and selected a delegation, from which the Czech members then declared themselves permanently absent.⁶ Furthermore, though central government consisted of a cabinet which worked in tandem with parliament, the members of the cabinet served not on the basis of legislative mandate but rather at the pleasure of the crown; so the government was not parliamentary in any real sense.

Given liberal pressure and the boycott problems, the case for direct (in this case: by voters rather than by the provincial assemblies) election of *Abgeordneten*, or deputies, became overwhelming. The State Fundamental Law of 2 April 1873 withdrew from the provincial diets the right to send delegates to parliament and provided for the lower house to consist of 353 representatives elected on the basis of the then existing curial franchise in the respective provinces. Should the local rules change, however, that was not to affect the franchise for parliament in Vienna. No notice was taken of calls, for example by Ferdinand

³ K. Ucakar, ‘Demokratie und Wahlrecht in Österreich zur Entwicklung von politischer Partizipation und staatlicher Legitimationspolitik’ (Vienna, Habilitation thesis, 1984), pp. 224-225.

⁴ *Reichsgesetzblatt*, 18/1862, §11 as quoted in Ucakar, “Demokratie und Wahlrecht”, p 174.

⁵ Ucakar, ‘Demokratie und Wahlrecht’, sections 1.2.8, 1.3.3 and 1.3.4

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 218.

Kronawetter, a leading Vienna leftist democrat, to include a broader cross-section of the population or indeed to abolish the curial system; so there was no change in the franchise or in the principle of interest-based representation.⁷ For this stasis the justification offered was that to have attempted any other changes would have doomed the reform.

The next change came with Minister-President Eduard Franz Joseph Count Taaffe, 11th Viscount of Corren and Baron of Ballymote (Taaffe), a Vienna born Irish aristocrat who had been a childhood friend of the Kaiser and subsequently enjoyed a rapid rise during a distinguished career in government service. At age 34 he became Governor (*Statthalter*) of Upper Austria and later the same year Interior Minister!⁸ His 1882 ‘extension’ of the franchise was in fact a change to strengthen the landowners’ role. Tax on land was distinct from tax on buildings, but both served to put a taxpayer in the 1st Curia. The reform provided that 80% must be land tax, thus ‘flushing’ lots of urban landlords into the 3rd Curia,⁹ where their influence was further diluted by lowering the floor from 10 to 5 Gulden.¹⁰ This ‘franchise extension’ enjoyed broad support. Non-Germans wanted more representation; Clericals thought that additional farmers would strengthen their hand, and the ‘democratic left’ supported franchise extensions out of principle.¹¹ To be on the safe side, Taaffe subjected socialists to restrictive measures not unlike those applied by Bismarck in Germany. Thus “the non-national leadership of the monarchy sought to increase the size of the electorate without opening up the political spectrum to include Marxism.”¹²

Later in the decade liberals proposed a workers’ chamber as an electoral body with

⁷ P. Judson, Pieter M. *Exclusive Revolutionaries: Liberal Politics, Social Experience, and National Identity in the Austrian Empire, 1848-1918* (Ann Arbor, Mi., 1996), pp.178-179.

⁸ *Österreichisches biographisches Lexikon Online-Edition*, www.biographien.ac.at (August 2016).

⁹ The 2nd was made up of officers, priests, teachers etc

¹⁰ Ucakar, ‘Demokratie und Wahlrecht’, section 2.2.4.3.

¹¹ W. Jenks, *Austria under the Iron Ring: 1879-1893* (Charlottesville, Va., 1965), p. 106.

¹² J. King, *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans: a local history of Bohemian Politics, 1848-1948* (Princeton, 2002), p. 70.

representation in parliament. They still resisted proposals for general suffrage. Their ideas were not supported by the workers themselves, whose leadership saw it offering only superficial vote reform, leaving the preponderance of power with a privileged minority, and furthermore setting up a government-sponsored quasi-union. Nonetheless, there were signs that the workers' movement was becoming more interested in franchise reform.¹³

In the autumn of 1893, hoping to get a more responsive legislature, Taaffe submitted a bill to a surprised house which would nearly have trebled the number of voters, enfranchising basically every literate male over the age of 24 while retaining the curial structure. The attempt failed because it threatened all the established parties.¹⁴

The government of Kasimir Felix Count Badeni extended the franchise successfully in 1895. Badeni, a Polish aristocrat, was a distinguished career civil servant. His reform introduced universal manhood suffrage by adding a new general voters' 5th Curia with 72 mandates in an expanded lower house. These were to be elected by all males over 23, notably including those who voted in the other curiae and subject to a six-month residency requirement. There was of course no change in the local voting regulations.¹⁵ Also, because of a tax reduction, a number of voters in the 3rd Curia stood to lose their vote; so the floor was lowered to 4 Gulden in direct tax to preserve the preferential franchise for this group.¹⁶

The status of the franchise in 1900 was therefore that the framework of representation was still the interest-based structure inherited from Count Stadion's Community Law of 1849. Though virtually all male citizens were voting at national level, that was not the case locally. In general, despite broadening of the franchise for the *Reichsrat*, the proportion of residents voting at local and provincial levels declined during

¹³ Ucakar, 'Demokratie und Wahlrecht', section 2.2.4.7.

¹⁴ Jenks, *Austria under the Iron Ring*, pp. 295-302.

¹⁵ Ucakar, 'Demokratie und Wahlrecht', section 2.3.4.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* p. 401.

the 80s and 90s. For example, in Lower Austria, which included Vienna, the general voters' curia was only added in 1904, and even then the number of mandates allocated to that curia was limited to half the number for the privileged curiae, meaning they could never have more than a small minority on the local councils. It is worth mentioning that this scheme was designed by Richard Weiskirchner, protégé of Christian Social Mayor Karl Lueger.¹⁷ An illustration of the impact of this arrangement is provided by the observation of Social Democrat Franz Schuhmeier in December of 1909 that for the Christian Socials in Vienna, 110,936 votes had secured 135 mandates in the City Council, while for the Social Democrats, 98,000 votes had won only 7 mandates. Not only were the votes disproportionately weighted, an estimated third of the male residents were still denied the franchise at local level.¹⁸ There was agreement that it was unsatisfactory, but each of the groups which together made up the legislative machinery of government had tactical reason to oppose a change.

Therefore, although 1896 had seen the coming of universal manhood suffrage with Badeni's 5th Curia, voting remained neither direct nor equal. That important step came in 1907, but only for the central parliament. Significantly, responsibility for legislation in many facets of life rested not at the centre, but with more local government – either at province ('*Land*'), district ('*Bezirk*') or communal ('*Gemeinde*') level. For these more local levels of government, suffrage differed in detail but, until 1918, retained Stadion's curial framework. While in most of the Crown Lands the 5th Curia had been added, even that step had not been taken in Bohemia, Silesia or Dalmatia.¹⁹ Consequently, both Vienna and Lower Austria were dominated by the populist conservative Christian Socials until the

¹⁷ Seliger and Ucakar, *Wien*, vol. 2, pp. 737-738.

¹⁸ R. Geehr, *Karl Lueger: Mayor of Fin de Siècle Vienna* (Detroit, Mi., 1990), pp. 167-168.

¹⁹ Malfèr, Stefan. 'Der Konstitutionalismus in der Habsburgermonarchie – siebzig Jahre Verfassungsdiskussion in "Cisleithanien"', H. Rumpler and P. Urbanitsch (Eds.), *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848-1918*, vol. 7 *Verfassung und Parlamentarismus*, part 1 *Verfassungsrecht, Verfassungswirklichkeit, zentrale Repräsentativkörperschaften* (Vienna, 2000), p. 52.

end of the war. The Social Democrats had some success under the curial scheme, for example in the legislative elections of 1897 (i.e. universal but curial suffrage) when they secured nearly half of the mandates in highly industrialised Bohemia. They also won seats in Moravia, Galicia and Styria, but only 14 in all.²⁰

From the unification at Hainfeld the question of franchise reform was a key aim of the Social Democrats. Badeni's reforms in the 1890s introduced universal male suffrage, at least for parliament, but still in the lopsided curial voting framework. While demonstrations took place regularly, most notably every 13 March in memory of the 1848 rising and every May Day from 1890, the suffrage issue itself needed to be put into focus before the public. Speeches, pamphlets and motions before parliament were employed with persistence; so that the twentieth century dawned with the debate claiming attention both in the press and in the corridors of power.

During the first few years of the new century, a constitutional crisis developed in Hungary. Efforts to resolve it dragged on until, in the early summer of 1905, the Emperor asked a senior General, Géza Baron von Fejérváry, to assume the office of Minister President in a minority government. Fejérváry soon concluded that drastic measures were called for and duly proposed suffrage reform. The proposal became public knowledge toward the end of July, when the Minister of the Interior, József Kristóffy, discussed the reform with Social Democrats in Budapest, and it was the subject of a Common Ministerial Council, including the Emperor and Minister President Baron Gautsch among others, at Ischl in August.²¹ Suffrage reform was truly on the agenda.

Social Democrats in the other half of the Monarchy were quick to take up the cause. In a pamphlet entitled *Das Volk steht auf!*, Karl Renner, this time under the

²⁰ L. Brügel, *Geschichte der österreichischen Sozialdemokratie* (Vienna, 1925), vol. 4, p. 308.

²¹ N. Stone, 'Constitutional Crises in Hungary 1903-1906', *Slavonic and East European Review*, vol. 45, no. 104 (Jan. 1967), pp. 172-175.

pseudonym of ‘Josef Karner’, made the case for franchise reform, specifically for general, equal and direct suffrage, simply and convincingly, with a minimum of class rhetoric. This will be seen as a hallmark of the Social Democrats' approach. They focused their reform campaigns on specific results, for which they sought support in ways calculated to generate the broadest possible appeal. Their terms were carefully non-socialist. This was advocacy, not proselytising, and the distinction is very important. The goal was to secure specific reforms, not to recruit members. In this case, the Emperor had not rejected the proposal that general, direct suffrage be introduced in Hungary but on the Austrian side the proposal was being resisted by Gautsch. The latter had convinced Franz Joseph that such a reform would threaten the throne and the church.²² Renner’s framing of the argument dates his brochure from the autumn of 1905, after the proposals of the Hungarians became known on 9 September but before 28 November.

The brochure resembled a catechism, with the important points in bold print, repeating the necessity of general and equal suffrage as a *sine qua non* for legitimate government: “Without true representation of the people there is no true law, no real legality, no real justice in the country.”²³ For the more curious reader, the author offered some enlightening figures:²⁴

<i>Curia</i>	<i>members</i>	<i>representatives</i>	<i>members per representative</i>
1 st – major landowners	5.431	85	53
2 nd – owners of factories and large mercantile establishments	556	21	26
3 rd – so-called craft-masters, actually urban taxpayers	493.804	118	4.200
4 th – farmers (i.e. smaller landowners)	1,585.466	129	12.300
5 th – workers	5,004.222	72	69.500

²² W. Jenks, *The Austrian Electoral Reform of 1907* (New York, 1974), p. 30.

²³ K. Renner (pseudonym Josef Karner), *Das Volk steht auf!* (Vienna, 1905).

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12.

Renner then addressed the direct, property tax-payers' argument by calculating the *per capita* indirect taxes paid by the average citizen and the average family of five. After all, if tax paid were a suffrage determinant, there should be a special voting class for smokers or those who eat more by virtue of their greater tax payments. Were Prince Schwarzenberg to be captured by natives on an excursion in the Congo and disappear for 10 years, his taxes would continue to be paid by his administrator, because all of his workers would continue to produce and the estates, to function. "You are the ones who produce the taxes – the true and final taxpayers!"²⁵ Furthermore, the tax paid in money did not take into account the need to defend the land. In this cause, all citizens are indeed equal taxpayers. "The blood tax – that is general, that is equal...and that is direct!"²⁶ With pamphlets such as this, the Social Democrats aimed to achieve acceptance of their cause even from those who might not have sympathized with expressly socialist views.

Meanwhile, in October, 1905, Victor Adler was finally elected to a seat in the parliament. Barely two weeks later, he was to address the opening meeting of that year's party congress. During this fortnight, events further east were coming to a head. Following Bloody Sunday early in the year, when the Tsar's troops had fired on a peaceful demonstration, discontent spawned waves of strikes. Feeling compelled to give ground, the Tsar issued the October Manifesto, which promised significant reforms. These concessions not only lent impetus and encouragement to the Austrian Social Democrats,²⁷ they also would have reinforced the Monarchy's abhorrence of violent measures. In fact, Pernerstorfer was quite direct in an address in parliament toward the end of September: "Just think, the frightful storm which has for the past nine months raged in Russia, could that not spread to us? And if circumstances continue to develop as they have been, it is

²⁵ Renner, *Das Volk steht auf!*, pp. 13-18.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

²⁷ Brügel, L. *Geschichte der österreichischen Sozialdemokratie*, vol. 4, p. 355.

doubtful we can avoid that.”²⁸

A few days after Pernerstorfer's remarks there was a vote in parliament on several urgency motions with regard to general, direct and equal suffrage. These were supported by a majority of the members, though not enough to reach the two-thirds required in such circumstances.²⁹ This demonstrated to all that broad support had developed for the Social Democrats' suffrage campaign. Christian Social leader and popular Mayor of Vienna Karl Lueger also noted in a preview of his party's strategy that they could accept suffrage reform on the basis of a five-year residency requirement and compulsory voting. The former would keep seasonal workers from voting, while the latter would go some way to counteract the socialists' better party organisation.³⁰

Adler dedicated the 1905 party congress to the cause of franchise reform, reminding the assembly of the long history of the goal for the Social Democrats, particularly of disappointments during the 90s: first the failure of Taaffe's attempt at reform and then the severe shortcomings of Badeni's solution. Victory had become possible for several reasons: the Emperor had approved general suffrage for Hungary (Franz Joseph may not have become an advocate, but he was no longer automatically an obstacle); there was a majority in the lower house, if not in favour of franchise reform then at least not against it; and finally, after years during which the workers had been mostly alone in their advocacy, there was more widespread awareness of the need for the reform. Even though there were still many who would seek to prevent or to dilute it, they no longer believed in their own opposition. This was a vindication of all the advocacy work done in the larger community. Furthermore, recent demonstrations had shown that the proletariat

²⁸ *Stenographische Protokolle des Abgeordnetenhauses, XVII. Session, 349. Sitzung, 27 September 1905, p. 31582.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 355. *Sitzung, 6 October 1905, p. 32272.*

³⁰ J. Boyer, *Culture and Political Crisis in Vienna: Christian Socialism in Power, 1897-1918* (Chicago, IL, 1995), p. 74.

had maintained their dedication to the issue.³¹

On the second full day of the conference, Antonin Němec and Wilhelm Ellenbogen were due to speak on “The Austrian Crisis and the Franchise”. Despite a humble background with very limited education, Němec had become a widely respected journalist as well as a leader in both union and party.³² Ellenbogen delivered a witty address which nonetheless must have seemed endless. He opened with the Habsburgs and their fixation on dynastic interests even at the expense of the governed, moved on to their inability to accommodate the increasing need of the latter for freedom and progress, touched on the class issue by way of reference to the ‘Four Gulden’ voters and had moved on to the situation in Russia, when he was passed a note by Victor Adler. It was a telegram that Adler laid on the lectern in front of the speaker. There were murmurs in the front rows: “News from Russia”, and general commotion in the hall. Ellenbogen called for order and read from Adler’s note the text of the “October Manifesto”. The entire gathering spontaneously stood up. At the end of the reading there was singing and rejoicing. After a break, the conference got back to business and the agenda for the day. The level of enthusiasm had increased, and subsequent addresses mentioned possible violence and the prospect of a general strike.

The following day, Adler again addressed the meeting – this time on proposals for the use of the ‘mass strike’. Adler’s speech clearly reflected his determination not to seem out of step with the increasing enthusiasm for the cause of franchise reform, but at the same time to introduce a sense of proportion to the planning of the campaign for the vote. He characterized the mass strike as a special weapon, not to be discussed so much as to be prepared. He reviewed the decision they had made in 1894 and their reasoning at the time

³¹ *Protokol über die Verhandlungen des Gesamtparteitages der Sozialdemokratischen Arbeiterpartei in Österreich*, pp. 72-74.

³² *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, Obituary 26 May 1926.

and explained that he found such a weapon not well-suited to the task at hand. The goal of franchise reform had become attainable. The establishment had (vis-à-vis Hungary) signalled itself ready to concede. A mass strike would be regarded as a threat to the survival of the Monarchy, and the response would be commensurate with that assessment and a major setback for Social Democracy. He asked that the conference support Resolution 10 – a shrewd solution. The operative and concluding paragraph of the resolution read essentially as follows:³³

The party congress puts in the hands of the *Vertrauensmänner* ... the decision, whether and when ... the use of the political mass strike must be included - in the knowledge that they are as conscious of the weight of their responsibility for such an action as of their responsibility to be sure that no appropriate step is omitted which is likely to help reach the goal of victory in the struggle for workers' rights.

Therefore, the management of the party were known to have at their disposal the mass strike weapon as well as the support of their comrades should they choose to invoke their mandate.³⁴

Building on the enthusiasm of the congress, the Social Democrats held an assembly the next evening, Thursday 2 November, at the *Sophiensaal*, a venue for such events in a district just south of the city centre. The hall overflowed, and the audience heard speeches from several leaders – both inside and outside. After the meeting, the crowd started home. On the Ring, they were attacked by mounted police. There were questions about the level of provocation, but from the accounts in several of the Friday papers, there was at least taunting by the crowd. In their leading article, the *Neue Freie Presse*, regarded by many as an unofficial mouthpiece of the Monarchy, did not hold back: “What the police did was in any case totally out of proportion to the origins and causes.”³⁵ The result was several dozen injured, some severely.

³³ *Protokol über die Verhandlungen des Gesamtparteitages der Sozialdemokratischen Arbeiterpartei in Österreich*, pp. 68-9.

³⁴ *Neue Freie Presse*, 2 November 1905.

³⁵ *Neue Freie Presse*, 3 November 1905, p.m.

On Friday morning there were reports of “rumours” that the Emperor had asked Minister President Gautsch to prepare, for the next sitting of parliament, a franchise reform bill that would include general and equal suffrage for Austria.³⁶ The self-proclaimed ‘independent daily paper for the Christian people (*Volk*) of Austria’ was the *Reichspost*, the voice of the Christian Socialists. It speculated that franchise reform must have been discussed during a one-hour meeting between the Emperor and Gautsch on Tuesday, 31 October. The *Neue Freie Presse* cited Gautsch’s latest comments in the lower house on the subject – from earlier in October – and judged the rumours unfounded.³⁷ In fact, following Thursday’s violence, Adler had sought out members of the government to explain that he and his colleagues were doing their best to avoid an outcome which would be in no one’s interest and urged them to get on with the reform and to make known that they were doing so.³⁸

In the Lower Austrian diet, that morning’s sitting was disrupted by discussions of the previous evening’s events. *Statthalter* (Governor) Erich Count Kielmansegg was a career civil servant who held that position from 1889 until his retirement in 1911 with a short interruption to oversee a transitional Cabinet in 1895.³⁹ There were two questions for him, one from the Christian Socials and one from Deputy Karl Seitz of the Social Democrats. The former is indicative of the Christian Social attitude to the major problems of the day and to the Social Democrats:

Yesterday evening Vienna was the scene of raw excesses which had a bloody conclusion. This sad and repulsive occurrence was brought about by speeches and agitation of the Jewish Social Democrats which were meant to incite a bloody uprising. The participants in this demonstration were also largely Jews, who contrived to remove themselves from danger at the last moment, while members of elements they had duped in some cases suffered injuries and in others arrest and the burden of legal responsibility.... As a result of these events the security of the inhabitants of Vienna – their lives and property – is threatened in the most serious way.

³⁶ *Neue Freie Presse*, 3 November 1905, a.m.

³⁷ *Neue Freie Presse* and *Reichspost*, 3 November 1905.

³⁸ J. Braunthal, *Victor und Friedrich Adler: Zwei Generationen Arbeiterbewegung* (Vienna, 1965), p. 159.

³⁹ *Österreichisches Biographisches Lexikon Online-Edition*, www.biographien.ac.at (August, 2016).

After several uncomplimentary remarks came Seitz's turn. He had distinguished himself earlier in the year in support of the *Verein Freie Schule*, an association dedicated to reducing the influence of the Catholic Church in schools.⁴⁰ Seitz was to be Mayor of Vienna in the 1920s, but in 1905 he was merely a representative of a minority party in the Lower Austrian provincial diet. His question characterized the police action as an attack on unarmed passers-by and suggested that it must have been planned. He said the pretext that the Hofburg had required protective measures was belied not only by the behaviour of the demonstrators up to the onset of the violence but also by the conduct of a similar crowd in front of parliament the day before. Seitz asked the *Statthalter* to justify the violent behaviour of the police and further to confirm the government's guarantee to the house and to the public that such outrageous, even criminal, attacks by the police would not be repeated. The first response from the floor was by a leading Christian Social, Ernst Schneider: "Get the Jews out; that's the best guarantee."⁴¹

The house was unable to maintain the high intellectual tone thus set by Deputy Schneider, and the sitting had to be interrupted to allow calm to be restored. When the house was reconvened, Kielmansegg, with occasional interruptions from the Christian Socials, described the use of police weapons in terms which cast the violence as a result of uncontrolled crowd action. He denied the police conduct had been planned. He further mentioned that ten minutes before the onset of the violence, Franz Schuhmeier, a Social Democrat leader, had come to the police cordon and asked about traffic arrangements. Schuhmeier had been given instructions, had undertaken to act accordingly but in the heat of the moment had failed. Violence would regrettably always be a risk with crowds, because it is impossible to control people on the street, due to problems with leaders

⁴⁰ Boyer, *Culture and Political Crisis*, p. 174.

⁴¹ *Neue Freie Presse*, 3 November 1905 p.m.

making themselves heard, and not being sure of the make-up of the assembled group.

Kielmansegg assured the house that the authorities would continue to do their best to protect the citizens and their property.⁴²

On Saturday morning, the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* announced a meeting on the Ringstraße for Sunday morning and several more the following evening in suburban locations, and there were in the event even more than had been planned.⁴³ The momentum generated by the Congress and the news of the October Manifesto had to be maintained, but the emphasis had to be shifted. The centre of the city would be the focus of the morning march and speeches, but for the evening, the centres of activity would be the suburbs, away from sensitive focal points and involving a fraction of the numbers seen at Thursday evening's meeting.

The Sunday papers reported a communiqué carried in Saturday's *Abendpost*, a semi-official publication. The announcement, following a cabinet meeting, noted the rise in sentiment for far-reaching franchise reform and the influence of developments in "other lands" and affirmed the readiness of the government to work on the project. There were two qualifications: first, there would be no simple formulae for Austria, because many interests had to be considered, and second, that public peace was required, as this undertaking could not be contemplated satisfactorily against a background of rioting and disorder.⁴⁴ This meant that a franchise extension was likely to be conceded, and that violent behaviour could be considered justification for at least delaying the reform. At the same time, general and equal suffrage was not yet to be taken for granted. There were several factors which could have motivated Gautsch's apparent change of heart with regard to the reform. Boyer suggested pressures generated by events in Russia, street violence at

⁴² *Neue Freie Presse*, 3 November 1905 p.m.

⁴³ *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, 7 Nov 1905, and *Neue Freie Presse*, 7 November 1905 a.m.

⁴⁴ This communiqué was reported in all the major papers, including the *Neue Freie Presse*, the *Neues Wiener Tagblatt* and the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*.

the beginning of November, and the Emperor's own views, though he offered no comment on the last.⁴⁵ Whatever the motivations, with the ongoing deadlock in parliament, a change in vote counting and thereby mandate allocation had to be an alluring prospect for the Crown and possibly even for the Cabinet.

That morning, the Social Democrats' demonstration on the Ring was carried out as planned. Estimates of attendance ranged from 20,000 to 50,000, including not only demonstrators but also spectators of all kinds – even ladies on their Sunday promenade. According to the papers, the meeting was entirely peaceful and filled the street for the designated sector. The mood of the day was helped by the sunny weather, and the police were in evidence only to direct traffic. Speeches began on time at 11:15 with Franz Schuhmeier, and there were also short contributions from other leaders, including Jakob Reumann and Karl Seitz, all three Social Democrats of very modest background. Then Victor Adler took the podium, pledging to maintain the struggle to be certain there were no further elections under the existing voting arrangements. He wrapped up the event, urging the attendees to go quietly home.⁴⁶ The dispersal of the demonstrators was without incident.⁴⁷ There were also franchise reform demonstrations that Sunday in St. Pölten, Graz, Klagenfurt, Karlsbad, Teplitz, Pilsen, Brünn, Mährisch-Ostrau, Teschen, Lemberg, Krakau and Triest – all entirely peaceful.⁴⁸ The success of these demonstrations was an important marker – for the government, for the public, for the press, and for the Social Democrats themselves. It re-established the tone which the leadership would seek to maintain until the convening of parliament on a date which had yet to be set officially. Most important, the government and the public had enjoyed a convincing show of 'the acceptable face of the workers' movement'.

⁴⁵ Boyer, *Culture and Political Crisis*, pp. 74-75.

⁴⁶ G. Pollatschek (ed.), *Victor Adlers Reden, Schriften und Briefe*, Part 10: *Victor Adler der Parteimann*, vol. 5: *Der Kampf um das Wahlrecht* (Vienna, 1929), p. 247.

⁴⁷ *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, 6 November 1905.

⁴⁸ *Neue Freie Presse*, 6 November 1905.

Unfortunately, the weekend in Prague had not passed so peacefully. In Bohemia at the time there were two electoral reforms being urged: one for parliament and the other for the Bohemian provincial diet. The latter of course had a nationalist flavour which increased significantly the degree of tension. There had been a position paper from the Social Democrats in mid-September, signed by both Czech and German socialists, demanding national curiae rather than the existing class arrangement. The class based curiae were said to be increasingly inappropriate when the tax burden was to an ever greater extent carried by indirect taxpayers, most notably through tax on beer.⁴⁹ That Sunday's function started quietly, but following the speeches, the crowd, estimated to be as many as 50,000, left Wenceslas Square by various routes. One large group encountered a police detachment. Accounts vary as to the extent to which the crowd constituted a clear threat to the police, but it seems certain that there were taunts and probably some throwing of rocks. The police attacked; there was shooting; crowds were forcibly dispersed; news of the skirmishes got around the city, and the rest of the day saw a series of running clashes between groups of workers and police. The final count was one dead and nearly a hundred injured.⁵⁰ Disturbances, in which several shots were fired, continued on the Monday, but there were no further deaths or injuries reported.⁵¹ Although some of the good work of the day in Vienna and elsewhere was undone, events in Prague provided a counterpoint against which to judge the success of the other demonstrations. The police could also draw useful conclusions from the different outcomes.

The meetings scheduled for Monday evening in Vienna were well-attended and passed quietly, being held in well-dispersed locations. At one such meeting in Favoriten, Speaker Leopold Winarsky was joined at the lectern by Victor Adler, who mentioned the

⁴⁹ E. Strauß, *Geschichte der deutschen Sozialdemokratie Böhmens*, vol. 2 (1889-1914) (Prague, 1926), pp. 120-121.

⁵⁰ *Arbeiter-Zeitung* and *Neue Freie Presse*, 5 November 1905.

⁵¹ *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, 7 November 1905.

previous day's commotion in Prague. Winarsky's father was an upholsterer who died when his son was only three. Leopold and his mother moved to Vienna where she was able to find work as a servant. When he had finished school at 14, he followed into his father's trade. Several years later, young Winarsky developed a speaking talent as a student at the local Workers' Education Club, for which the reward was four months in jail in 1895. He was elected to the Town Council in 1906 and to parliament the following year.⁵² After Winarsky's conference speech, Adler paid tribute to the dead demonstrator and proposed in honour of their fallen comrade to redouble the commitment to achieving suffrage reform. He also re-emphasised that there was to be no unnecessary sacrifice. This was an important point for him to make both to his own people not to be foolhardy, and to those outside, to remind the public and the government that the workers intended to avoid violence, to demonstrate a sense of responsibility. As far as the 'calm' requested in the government's communiqué, this the government could secure themselves by promising to present to parliament at the very next opportunity a law establishing general and equal suffrage. That promise would achieve the calm until the opening of the session, when the Social Democrats would come to convince them the promise should be redeemed.⁵³

The government got their requested breathing spell, and they made the next move, perhaps anxious to reward the calm. On Friday the 10th, Minister President Gautsch met a group of industrialists, whom he had asked to see about traffic difficulties on the railways caused by a work-to-rule. Gautsch also told his visitors:

Franchise reform is a political issue ... to be dealt with in ... parliament. In the first sitting of parliament I will present very clearly the position of the government on this question. Until then I would like to ask that all reports and communications about the planned reform be treated with the utmost caution. *The fact is simply that the government is working, naturally with the agreement of the Emperor, on a franchise reform bill which is based on modern principles and fulfils the requirements of the day.* It will be up to parliament... to bring the project to a

⁵² *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, obituary 23 November 1915.

⁵³ Pollatschek, *Victor Adler der Parteimann*, vol. 5, p. 248.

successful conclusion during this session.⁵⁴

For some time, a meeting had been planned to protest, on behalf of the clerks for the co-ops, against proposals by the guilds for amendments to the commercial code (*Gewerbeordnung* of 1883). This issue was controversial not only because the Social Democrats objected to the terms of the amendment, but also because they thought the law should wait until a new parliament had been elected on the basis of reformed suffrage.⁵⁵ After all, reforms had been urged for more than a decade; so what difference would a few more months make? The answer of course was that the guilds doubted they would get as favourable an outcome in a new legislature.⁵⁶ The meeting was on Sunday, the 12th, at the Rathaus. The agenda included ‘the proposed amendments to the trading regulations and the general, equal and direct suffrage’. Once the appropriate officials had spoken on the first subject, Pernerstorfer and then Adler spoke on the franchise reform. The latter termed the day ‘historic’ – and invoked the memories of the demonstrations in 1869 then 1893 when the Taaffe proposals had held such promise. The government were committed to a franchise reform bill during the current session of parliament.

The Emperor has given his agreement. The government have acknowledged their duty. The third factor, parliament, will meet in a few days, and the deciding factor, the proletariat, will make sure that parliament also recognizes and sees clearly their duty and obligation. We expect you on this historic ground on the day of the opening of parliament, and we are convinced you will come.

Before closing his remarks, Adler recapped the developments of the weeks just passed and cautioned his audience not to think the battle had been won. He repeated the admonition about needless martyrdom: “we are equally obliged to allow no superfluous sacrifice.”⁵⁷

Afterwards Adler went on to speak at another of the big venues favoured by Social Democrats for their meetings. He had the same message for the overflow crowd of 4,000:

⁵⁴ *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, 12 November 1905, emphasis added.

⁵⁵ *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 13 November 1905.

⁵⁶ Boyer, *Culture and Political Crisis*, pp. 81-82.

⁵⁷ Pollatschek, *Victor Adler der Parteimann*, vol. 5, pp. 251-2.

the government was on the right track and needed to be sure they did not get distracted. There were to be no more elections with the then current franchise. To hesitate or delay the process would risk the mass strike.⁵⁸ It was well-known that the Social Democratic leadership had the power to use this weapon.

Another four days of calm, from Sunday evening the 12th, until the following Friday morning the 17th, passed before the date of the opening of parliament was officially announced to be the 28th. That allowed only 11 days, during which all concerned busied themselves with preparations. On Sunday the 5th, the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* had announced a rally to be held on the day of parliament's opening (as proclaimed at the party congress the previous week) and had exhorted the readers to get ready for the occasion. Following that announcement, the protagonists had been staking out positions.

The Christian Socials were developing a position to back the reform, even if not wholeheartedly supported by their members. They were avowedly democratic, at least to the extent the franchise worked for them; so there were three schools of thought concerning reform of the franchise in their ranks: those who thought the existing curial arrangements should be kept, those who believed voting should be arranged in 'chambers' formed from the different interest groups, and finally those who advocated universal manhood suffrage and the abolition of the curial framework.⁵⁹ It was awkward for them to oppose franchise reform directly, but the consequences of giving the vote to the tenants of their constituents, thus threatening their hard-won place in the corridors of power, were not inviting. Who votes and how their votes are counted has of course long been debated in modern, democratic societies, and that is not likely to end soon. Christian Social strategies to minimize the impact of franchise reform were to portray socialists as hooligans to spur the police into violent measures, and to cast the Social Democrats as Jewish to inflame

⁵⁸ Pollatschek, *Victor Adler der Parteimann*, vol. 5, pp. 252-254.

⁵⁹ Ucakar, "Demokratie und Wahlrecht", p. 287.

anti-Semitic sentiment. Christian Socials would have loved nothing better than discreditation of the socialist rabble, ‘forcing’ the government to maintain the status quo or at least to preserve some of the advantages for the Christian Socials. Lueger had let it be known early in October that though the anti-Semitic feeling was against reform, both Catholics and those who saw potential support outside the capital were in favour.⁶⁰ At the same time, all Christian Socials, whether for or against reform, were naturally anxious to derive any possible political capital from problems which might arise during the Social Democrats' big day.

On Wednesday, the 8th, Mayor Lueger wrote to the Chief of Police, Johann Ritter von Habrda. Chief Habrda was a career police officer, mostly in Vienna, and had the distinction of having introduced dactyloscopy during his tenure.⁶¹ From allegedly reliable sources, Lueger had learned that, on the day of parliament's opening, the Social Democrats were prepared to force the stoppage of the trams and planned to demolish any businesses in the suburbs which were open despite Social Democrats' requests that they stay closed. He wanted to bring this to the attention of the police.⁶² That same day, the Chief wrote to the Interior Ministry and the Cabinet. He had no indication of plans to demolish businesses. The question of whether the trams would be running on the 28th had been brought up in a sitting of the Vienna town council on the 3rd. Councillor Reumann had asked the Mayor if he would be giving city employees the day off, and the Mayor had declined.⁶³

Further, on the following Tuesday the 14th, several Christian Social deputies sponsored another interpellation addressed to *Statthalter* Kielmansegg in the Lower Austrian provincial diet. Referring to Winarsky's remarks from a meeting at the Hotel “zur

⁶⁰ Boyer, *Culture and Political Crisis*, p. 75.

⁶¹ *Österreichisches biographisches Lexikon 1815-1950 Online-Edition*, www.biographien.ac.at (August, 2016).

⁶² Police report, which included a transcript of Lueger's letter, police reference 3607/17, *Statthalterei* reference 2784/16, *Niederösterreichisches Landesarchiv*, S-443, R-XIV, Z-220.

⁶³ Police report of 8 Nov 1905, police reference 3607/17, *Statthalterei* reference 2784/16, *Niederösterreichisches Landesarchiv*, S-443, R-XIV, Z-220.

Post” on the previous Sunday that businesses would close voluntarily on the day of the demonstration, the Christian Socials interpreted this as either a threat to the Viennese business world to compel them to bow to the “terror” of Social Democracy or encouragement to the mob to “plunder and devastate” those businesses which chose to remain open. Further reference was made to the “devastation” wrought by the demonstrators on the evening of the 2nd which was carefully set out, presumably for effect:

<u>Description</u>	<u>Estimated</u>
Tram windows	Kr144.25
Damage to 12 gas lights	Kr 101.33
Broken basement windows of a school	Kr 60
Mirrors in 3 coffee houses	Not stated

The Christian Social interpellators argued that the Social Democrats were exhorting their followers to engage in “mass plunder”. What did the government propose to do? What measures would be taken to provide security of person and property on the day?⁶⁴ Any embarrassment of the Social Democrats would be an invaluable tactical gain for the Christian Socials, who saw the workers as a potential constituency and at the same time derived great support from the petit bourgeoisie being so intimidated by the workers’ increasing political confidence. It would be particularly useful if in the aftermath it could be argued that despite Christian Social warnings, the government had taken inadequate measures for the maintenance of order. At the same time, the city's government was in the hands of the Christian Socials; so they had administrative responsibilities. From that standpoint, they were in the unenviable position of needing to make their opponents’ spectacle a success!⁶⁵

The authorities did not need the Christian Socials to alert them to the less attractive possibilities. On the 12th, the *Statthalter* had received a letter from the Interior Ministry.

⁶⁴ *Reichspost*, 15 Nov 1905.

⁶⁵ Boyer, *Culture and Political Crisis*, pp. 75-76.

The letter acknowledged that the suffrage campaign had to date kept within legal limits and had therefore been allowed to take its course. There were concerns, however, about the possible influence of well-known events in Russia. Although calm had been restored there in the meantime, if violence erupted once more, it could spread. While being ready to step in should there appear a tendency to cross over into illegality, authorities should take care not to adopt tactics which could make any situation worse.⁶⁶

On Thursday the 16th, *Statthalter* Kielmansegg spoke to Mayor Lueger on the subject of the planned demonstration. The *Statthalter* had several interpellations to answer, and one of them asked whether it was true that the state railway director in Vienna had given the personnel in the workshops the day off to participate in the demonstrations. He told Lueger that he could answer that state workers in this and other locations in Vienna were not being given the day off. For his part, Lueger lamented that it was not practical to ban the demonstration or even to seize red flags and said that there was great concern among the public. He was particularly worried about the municipal gasworks, for which Kielmansegg offered a detachment of 20 to 30 police. The *Statthalter* then asked about the trams on the day, and the Mayor replied that they would run as long as possible given the potential level of crowding. From this conversation it is clear that Lueger had more or less resigned himself to the coming demonstrations and had come to appreciate that it might be just as well if provocation were held to a minimum. He cannot have been the happiest politician in the land. The reply to the Interior Ministry, dated the 20th, offered reassurance that all arrangements would be made to enable the police to meet any riotous behaviour and reported on the meeting with Lueger.⁶⁷

Under the same date, the police provided the *Statthalter* with their detailed

⁶⁶ Letter from Interior Ministry to the *Statthalter*, Interior Ministry reference 7563, *Statthaltereireference* 2784/19, *Niederösterreichisches Landesarchiv*, S-866, R-XIV, Z-220.

⁶⁷ Reply to Interior Ministry of 20 Nov 1905, *Statthaltereireference* 2876/25, *Niederösterreichisches Landesarchiv*, S-866, R-XIV, Z-220.

assessment: since the recent government statements on the subject, Social Democratic agitation for the reform had become milder, and speeches at the still numerous meetings, more moderate. The press was also calmer. The threat of a mass strike had been de-emphasized. The mass strike would be the *ultima ratio* of the party, in case the government or parliament tried either to delay the reform or to carry it out in a way which would be detrimental to the lower classes.

The demonstrations planned for the 28th, expected to be a holiday in the provinces as well as in Vienna, were currently the focus of all the party's efforts. The Workers' Party had applied to the Federation of Austrian Industrialists among others in connection with their request for a day off, and indications were that the holiday would be granted. Responding to questions, Social Democrats had given assurances that the labelling of individual enterprises would be forbidden. As with employers, businesses would receive written requests to remain closed during the morning of the day, but there would be no further attempt to influence their decisions. Viennese workers would be joined by those from the provinces – delegations from faraway industrial centres and larger groups from nearby cities. This report followed the reply to the Interior Ministry cited above and reflected the very informed state of the police following the embarrassment of the 2nd. Their knowledge was not just from their usual sources; it had been helpfully supplemented by the Social Democrats.

In their determination to avoid repetition of the events of the 2nd in Vienna or of the 4th and 5th in Prague, Adler, Winarsky and Bretschneider visited Habrda on the 18th to provide information about the plans for the 28th. Ludwig Bretschneider, born in a house which was later demolished to make way for the Social Democrat Party headquarters, started work as a sculptor's apprentice and joined the Party having been taken to meetings by one of his elders. Victor Adler later recruited him to work at *Die Gleichheit* and then the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, where he was known as a living address book, knowing everyone in

the Party.⁶⁸

In their meeting with police, the Social Democrat leaders explained that workers would be expected to gather at local branches, whence they would proceed to the district marshalling point then march, in closed ranks with their banners and standards, to the Karlsplatz. Starting at the Karlsplatz, the procession, with the deputation to parliament in the van and arranged by district and town in rows of ten, would proceed along the Ring and past the parliament building in complete silence. The procession would break up on the Maximilianplatz and follow prescribed routes back to their districts.

The delegation of leaders assumed full responsibility for the maintenance of order on the day. Employers would be asked to give their employees the day off, and businesses would be asked to close for the morning. There was to be no retribution for those who declined. As to the processions out of the districts, the marshals would maintain calm. There would be no interference with tram service or with private traffic, and an exhortation to that effect would appear in the press in time for the event. The head of the procession was expected to reach parliament at about 10:30 am. Since the deputation was simply to split off, there was no backing up expected. The procession would carry red banners and standards. The leaders pointed out, in appealing for the suspension of the ban on such flags, that they had been used in processions in many provincial cities, and that Viennese workers should have the same rights as their provincial brethren. Also, an instruction to the participants to turn up without the banners would be unthinkable and in any case would be ignored. An official ban would unnecessarily increase tension. After the procession the workers would be returning to their districts. There would be evening gatherings in the suburbs after the demonstration to discuss the day's events.

During this meeting with the Social Democratic leadership the police did not imply

⁶⁸ *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, obituary, 5 August 1929.

approval of the use of red banners or for that matter of the demonstration itself. The Minister of the Interior received a copy of the report.⁶⁹ This was a very useful meeting for the Social Democrats. First of all, while there was no permission to carry flags and standards, the authorities had been given the opportunity to object. In any case the ban on red flags had been honoured mostly in the breach for some time with the co-operation of the police. For example, a red flag was not legally red if the number of a district was embroidered on it.⁷⁰ More importantly, there would be no surprises on the 28th.

On Saturday, the 25th, the army station commandant in Vienna issued the orders for troop dispositions in preparation for Tuesday's demonstration. Manning levels of infantry and cavalry at many barracks in Vienna were supplemented. Troops were to be issued with light ammunition and to be on alert from 8:00 am on the 28th until further notice. All cavalry and about a third of the infantry were to be on high alert beginning at 10:30 am that day. Police liaison officers were to be introduced in person to their military associates on the Monday.⁷¹ The Monarchy, which was in full control of the army, seemed determined not to be caught out as they had been in 1848 when they had felt the need to leave town with their tails between their legs.

The following morning, Sunday the 26th, there were five meetings held at 10:00 am as part of the run-up to the festivities on Tuesday, and a sixth was held Monday morning. Nearly on the eve of the great demonstration, Adler's speech at the Sunday meeting in Favoriten showed the confidence of a leader whose followers are well-prepared. He noted first the increased support which the cause had gained in the recent weeks and claimed for his party credit for the timing. He regretted the deliberate spreading of rumours by

⁶⁹ Police report by Habrda of 18 Nov 1905, police reference Pr. Z.3683/34, *Statthalterei* reference 2822/24, *Niederösterreichisches Landesarchiv*, S-443, R-XIV, Z-220.

⁷⁰ F. Brandl, *Kaiser, Politiker und Menschen: Erinnerungen eines Wiener Polizeipräsidenten* (Leipzig, 1936), p. 108.

⁷¹ Orders for the 28 Nov 1905 from *kk 2. Korpskommando*, reference 5496, *Statthalterei* reference 2909/37, *Niederösterreichisches Landesarchiv*, S-443, R-XIV, Z-220.

Lueger's party. These lies were encouraging the most far-fetched preparations. The military was being massed, and the Hofburg was "armed to the teeth". He made clear that the Social Democrats had no interest in the Hofburg, with which they were satisfied (for the time being). Fears were superfluous; there would be no revolution. The gentlemen were making fools of themselves with their preparations. The workers for their part would be flattered by the military presence – fitting for the passage of a sovereign – the sovereign people!

On the reform itself, Adler took up the demand of the Christian Socials for a five, or at least three, year residence hurdle. Such a feature would disenfranchise potentially tens of thousands of building and other seasonal workers – i.e. many who travel for other than health or pleasure. Such a feature would be out of the question. He reminded the audience that there would be a struggle over that proposal, and it might very well be that, to protect just such a part of the working class, the struggle would have to be taken to the limit.⁷²

Sunday afternoon, the Christian Socials held their franchise reform rally at the *Rathaus*. The meeting commenced at about 3:00 pm. The police report characterized it as a "large anti-Semitic voter meeting" for which the agenda was the franchise question. In attendance were between 10,000 and 15,000 people, including about 300 Christian Social workers. They filled the hall, the surrounding streets and the Rathausplatz. Signalled by a trumpet fanfare, Christian Social leaders – including many big names in the Party – stood on plinths and tables to hold forth. The speeches were short and included protests against Social Democratic terrorism (Liechtenstein: "republican, Christian-hating terrorists")⁷³ and condemnation of the Government's readiness to condone it. A resolution was moved to advocate general, equal and direct suffrage, with a five-year residence requirement. The

⁷² *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 27 November 1905.

⁷³ *Neue Freie Presse*, 27 November 1905 p.m.

speeches lasted about 10 minutes, after which a youngster burnt a red flag attached to a stick and disappeared.⁷⁴ The tenor of the meeting illustrated the frustration of the Christian Socials at the extent to which the Social Democrats had gained and held the leadership in the campaign.

Tuesday brought a complete vindication of the strategy and efforts of the Social Democrats. The *Arbeiter-Zeitung* published in their morning edition a complete set of directions, a programme for the day and a list of the venues for the evening meetings, where the result of the day's sitting in parliament would be reported upon and discussed. According to the police reports, the day's events went as planned: There were no incidents in the suburbs; the holiday seemed to be general, except state enterprises, where attendance was nearly complete. Just after 8:00 the processions set out for the city centre with banners and standards. The main procession left the rendezvous on the Ring at 9:30, but the head of the procession did not reach parliament until 10:15 because of repeated stopping and starting. Police cordons around the building gave way under the pressure of the crowds, including curious spectators, but their mood and behaviour were perfectly calm. The deputation turned off in front of parliament and entered the building. The workers' procession, arranged by district, carried red banners, standards and placards with slogans about the franchise. The procession past parliament was completed at 2:30 pm. It had lasted more than 4 hours.

The entire event was peaceful to the end. There was an isolated incident, but that was incited by nationalist, not socialist, 'hooligans'. On the ramp at the University German nationalist students taunted other students and Czech workers as they marched by in the procession below. The taunted marchers tried to get onto the ramp, but marshals and police were able to maintain order. Then some of the crowd following the workers decided

⁷⁴ Police report on an 'anti-Semitic voter meeting', Police reference 3808/53, *Statthaltereireferenz* reference 2910/43, *Niederösterreichisches Landesarchiv*, S-443, R-XIV, Z-220.

to take up the fight and started throwing rocks and brandishing sticks. The senior policeman on duty there drew his sword and threatened to use it, drove the students to cover in the auditorium, blocked the ramp and after a while had the situation under control.⁷⁵ The police accounts of the day's difficulties bear witness to the scale of the success.

The total number of demonstrators was initially estimated (by police as well as the *Neues Wiener Abendblatt*) to have been 100,000. The *Neues Wiener Tagblatt* the following morning said the minimum number had been 150,000 and pointed out that other estimates had suggested numbers as high as 250,000 (*Arbeiter-Zeitung*). In any case it was the Vienna's largest ever public demonstration, but even the huge number of marchers was less significant than the result.

The important business was done at parliament. The workers' deputation, numbering more than 20 and sporting red carnations in their buttonholes, was led by Pernerstorfer, Chairman of the Social Democratic contingent in parliament. The deputation was introduced by Pernerstorfer first to the President of the lower house, Moritz Graf Vetter von der Lilie for the official welcome, including a prepared statement by Reumann, then to Prinz Windisch-Graetz, President of the upper house, before coming to Minister President Gautsch, who promised the deputation that he would be addressing the parliament in detail on the Government's reform proposals later in the day. He remained convinced that the best means to promote the reform would be peace and order. After leaving the audience with Gautsch, the Social Democrat members repaired to the gallery to watch the day's proceedings.⁷⁶

As Minister President Gautsch stood to address the lower house that morning, the

⁷⁵ Police reports on the orderliness of the day's proceedings, Police references 3830/64, 3832/68 & 3832/69, *Statthaltereireferenzen* 2934/47-49 and 2935/50, *Niederösterreichisches Landesarchiv*, S-443, R-XIV, Z-220, X-2934/47-49 and S-443, R-XIV, Z-220, X-2935/50.

⁷⁶ *Neue Freie Presse*, 28 November 1905 p.m.

rows of workers filed silently by the front of the building. As an indication of the importance of the issues, Gautsch read his speech, whereas he would normally have been expected to speak without a fixed text. Though there were interruptions during the speech, mostly from the German Nationalists (bearing in mind the Slav majority), they were outnumbered by the calls for quiet. Most importantly, Gautsch committed the government to submitting a bill to the house at the latest during February and acknowledged the principle of general and equal suffrage. A great deal of the speech dealt with the issue of representation of nationalities, using the analogy that the house should be a small scale map of the realm. Of most direct interest to the advocates of the reform, and particularly to the Social Democrats, was his exclusion of literacy as well as means testing on the grounds that they would have the effect of taking the right to vote away from those who already had it, which would contravene the rules laid down during the reform process of 1873.

Deserving of further deliberation were the residence requirement, plural voting and mandatory voting. His lengthy peroration claimed that the government's decision to pursue franchise reform had been instigated by the vote in the house on the 6th of October, whereupon it had become clear that there was a majority in favour of the reform in parliament. While he acknowledged that the tempo of demonstrations had increased in the meantime, he was anxious to persuade the public that reform had already been in the works. Some members were unable to hide their scepticism and took the opportunity to chide Gautsch about his change of heart. The procession outside continued for the entire hour of Gautsch's speech and for more than an hour afterwards.⁷⁷

Social Democrats gathered that evening to review the outcome and to celebrate. As had been the practice since the incident at the beginning of the month, meetings were spread across the city, including four meetings of Czech workers around Vienna. A group

⁷⁷ *Neues Wiener Abendblatt*, 28 November 1905.

leaving one of those meetings reportedly set upon a watchman, who found it necessary to use his sabre to protect himself and ultimately (because of the numbers he faced) to call for help using the telephone in a nearby café. Before reinforcements arrived, the café suffered Kr 2,000 (about £85) worth of damage. There were 4 arrests in what was the most serious incident of the day. Apart from that, all twenty meetings went peacefully. The speakers faulted Gautsch only on the residency requirement and on the timetable, which they found not sufficiently ambitious.⁷⁸

Two days later, Victor Adler rose to address the house for the first time.⁷⁹ His speech was naturally enough devoted largely to the subject of the franchise reform. Adler first took the opportunity to set out some markers. His introduction referred to the fact that the Government did not feel it necessary even to discuss military matters with the house – matters which in many other countries would be the subject of full parliamentary scrutiny. Adler cited this treatment by silence as an indication of the lack of esteem which the house commanded from the Government. As little respect as the house claimed from the people of the realm, it enjoyed even less from the Government. Worse still was that the house enjoyed the least esteem of all from itself. He turned briefly to the Hungarian example, where, as he put it, a clique of nobles ran the supposed representative body. Despite their lack of legitimacy, they deserved credit for ambitious activity, wrong-headed though it may have been.

We Social Democrats have welcomed the Minister President's solemn explanation and binding promise to bring to us the law that will establish general, equal and direct suffrage and his further declaration that the Government would not be worthy of its name, if it did not deliver on that undertaking. If Baron Gautsch appreciates that, it is high time that you do too!

Adler went on to generate a few laughs in the house when he complimented

⁷⁸ Police report on Czech disturbances of 28 Nov 05, police reference 3832/71, *Statthaltereie* reference 2935/51, *Niederösterreichisches Landesarchiv*, S-443, R-XIV, Z-220.

⁷⁹ *Stenographische Protokolle des Abgeordnetenhauses, XVII. Session, 357. Sitzung*, 30 Nov 1905, pp. 32446 - 32459. This was Adler's maiden speech.

Gautsch's learning ability, which was as good as could be expected from an Austrian bureaucrat of the old school. The national and class relationships so often referred to in discussions of the franchise were not as mysterious as many would make them. There were ethnically homogenous and ethnically mixed areas, but not as many of the latter as sometimes suggested. Class relationships, well yes, there were those as well – and class conflicts, but to wait for those to go away might take some time. In September Gautsch had made sceptical remarks about the franchise, and on the 6th of October he had produced an explanation that was indecisive. He was getting closer.

The day before yesterday we heard an energetic, reasonable and clear explanation which was broadly speaking in agreement with what at that very same moment was being demanded just outside the door of this house and in every city in Austria....The demonstrations are the best witness to how right Baron Gautsch is when he says that it is simply out of the question not to carry out the reform.

Adler warned it would be a waste of energy to argue about this reform or for that matter to fool around with distractions and intrigues. Further struggle (i.e. the mass strike) which had become superfluous would then once again need to be taken up. The Government had begun to see reason, but that might be followed by a new onset of political '*Cretinismus austriacus*' as had happened in the past:

It is not for me to try to determine how the Government appreciate their responsibility. You Gentlemen, however, are responsible, and if you up there assume a vacillating posture and seek to use it for intrigue, then you are assuming a very heavy responsibility – each of you personally, and there are those who would hold you personally responsible. This is not a threat, only a statement of fact. Even the most bitter enemy of Social Democracy, having seen the demonstration of the day before yesterday, must have had respect for the spectacle and must have recognized the energy and self-denial of this great mass. The hundreds of thousands who passed by are naturally indignant and angry because they are excluded from this house and because they believe this is the place where their interests must be represented, but are not represented.

Adler noted Baron Gautsch's opinion that the reform would progress best in conditions of calm and order. Gautsch had meant in the absence of demonstrations, which was the only form of calm and order he understood:

He had also said that he was far from allowing the tempo of his political

development to be accelerated by demonstrations. We are certainly completely innocent in this regard, and we actually believe that the Holy Spirit has come over him. We suspect however that this time, for a change, the Holy Spirit has come not from above, but from below.

Adler continued in a similar mixture of lucid exposition and light humour at the expense of the Government and the Christian Socials. He minimised concerns of the nationalists. In response to the points made by Gautsch in his speech two days before, Adler comprehensively demolished the case for residence requirements, logically as well as juridically. The leitmotiv of the lengthy talk was the readiness of the working class to resume the struggle and their preparedness to escalate as the situation demanded. Of course this was against the background of a very convincing display of both numerical strength and organizational discipline.

Berthold Sutter took a rather dim view of Victor Adler's maiden speech before parliament as well as of the suffrage campaign in general. Sutter's article on the subject, about problems of parliamentarianism in post-1848 Austria, began with a lengthy attack on Victor Adler in particular and the Austrian Social Democrats in general. In Sutter's view, Adler's maiden speech was anything but statesmanlike and would have been more appropriate in the pages of the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* than in the house itself. Having pointed out that Adler acquired his seat because Josef Hannich had given it up for that purpose, Sutter used a footnote as the opportunity to mention that Hannich had done good work "...helping the moderates keep the upper hand in his Bohemian constituency, in contrast to Vienna". He thus implied that Adler had led the Viennese party in a radical direction.

Sutter thought the attacks made in Adler's maiden speech lost none of their evil even when considered in the context of the events of the day and party aims. He reckoned the Social Democrats had suffered a severe setback in the election of 1901, when they only got 10 mandates in the lower house out of the total of 425 seats. He also dismissed their claim to be the only party with a suitable answer to the nationalities problem that had

confounded the ‘bourgeois’ parties. For example, he characterised the Social Democrats’ federalisation of their party as their being rent asunder by the nationalities issue. Sutter further reckoned that the Social Democrats had taken the lead in the suffrage campaign because it would obviously be to their benefit and not out of democratic motives. The Social Democrats stand accused by Sutter of using revolutionary events in Russia as a pretext to start a campaign of a very alarming kind, bringing 300,000 demonstrators onto the Ringstrasse on 5 November 1905. Sutter said the campaign was rightly classed as terrorism, though he did not say by whom they were accused or who was being terrorised. Apparently in an attempt to discredit the idea of direct and equal suffrage, Sutter suggested that it only hastened the collapse in the face of the nationalities’ demands.⁸⁰ Sutter’s view, therefore, is that the problems of parliament and the collapse of the old order can only be properly assessed from the standpoint of a thorough appreciation of the treacherous, radical and inappropriate behaviour of the Social Democrats in general and Victor Adler in particular.⁸¹ That is a surprising assessment when Sutter’s major and well-recognised work is a lengthy and detailed account of the Badeni language reforms and their consequences, which certainly included a serious if not mortal injury to parliamentary government in Austria.

⁸⁰ B. Sutter, ‘Probleme einer österreichischen Parlamentsgeschichte 1848-1918’, H. Rumpler and P. Urbanitsch (eds.), *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848-1918*, vol. 7 *Verfassung und Parlamentarismus*, part 1 *Verfassungsrecht, Verfassungswirklichkeit, zentrale Repräsentativkörperschaften* (Vienna, 2000), pp. 541 & 542.

⁸¹ With regard to Sutter’s views as set out above, the author would point out first that there was as a small, peaceful demonstration on the Ringstrasse on Sunday the 5th. There were disturbances on Thursday the 2nd, but the major demonstration was on Tuesday, the 28th, and Adler’s maiden speech was indeed two days after that very convincing show of solidarity. Second, the advent of direct and equal suffrage would indeed benefit the Socialists, and they could not have been expected to choose it as a campaign aim had that not been the case. Third, with regard to the so-called setback in 1901, one could make the same observation as Franz Schuhmeier’s remark above about the local elections of 1909, which was of course precisely what suggested the greater fairness of a direct and equal suffrage. In fact, the Social Democrats won twelve delegates in 1901, two fewer than four years before. In 1907, after suffrage reform, they secured 88. There may be some justice in Sutter’s barb about the nationalities challenge, but it would also be fair to point out that the Christian Socials, whom Sutter went out of his way to praise, utterly failed to produce a helpful idea. The socialists strove consistently to calm the nationalist agitation and indeed had a detailed proposal to answer many of the nationalities’ demands. They were rightly regarded as a party apart from the nationalist clamour, which must have been just as annoying to the Christian Socials at the time as more recently to Sutter.

Whatever Sutter's opinion, Victor Adler clearly enjoyed himself during his maiden speech, and his fellow representatives, whatever their views, can hardly have enjoyed it less. In addition to their pleasure at the success of their efforts, there had been serious lessons learned from the suffrage campaign. First, the undeniable and obvious success of the demonstrations, in terms not only of the numbers involved but also of their orderliness and restraint, had lent valuable momentum to the reform process successfully concluded during the course of the following year. Also important to the conduct of the campaign had been a cultivated understanding of the forces at work, the key players and the sensitivities of their adversaries. Next, their skilful planning, timing and arrangement of the presentation had assured the positive impact which is so often lacking in large public demonstrations. Finally, with regard to the much vaunted mass strike, Adler's assessment that this would be a disproportionate threat to the establishment and likely to provoke desperate countermeasures may have been accurate. More persuasive was the party's illustration that the goal was achievable at a much lower price. Furthermore, leaving the strike weapon unused kept it as a potential escalation should this be required. However much their opponents moaned about their terrorist tactics and Jewish leadership, the Social Democrats continued to demonstrate with the content of their objectives and the tactics they employed that they were ready and able to play a responsible role in the political process. Enabling their constituents to vote was the only appropriate recognition. From a strategic viewpoint, the Social Democratic leadership, and particularly Victor Adler, had long and repeatedly stressed the central significance of the right to vote as the most important component of any real role in the political process. Proper representation was their key strategic objective in the framework of their practical, constituency-based organisation.

In order to work out the details of the reform, the house resolved to form a committee, called the Electoral Reform Committee (*Wahlreformausschuß*), of 49 members

to be voted in by members of the House.⁸² The results of the voting were announced in the house on 28 March 1906, and Victor Adler was the only Social Democrat elected to the committee.⁸³ Under those circumstances, his weight in the group depended not only on the force of his advocacy but also on his backing outside the House, which had been demonstrated, impressively but only in part. The public and the opposition were frequently reminded of the strike weapon. Adler's suggestion that the mass strike weapon was more powerful as a threat than in its application revealed a very sound appreciation of the psychological component of the campaign, perhaps an unexpected dividend from his honeymoon in Paris.

Given preparation, timing is a powerful weapon. In the mid-1890s, Adler had been able to convince his colleagues that the time and circumstances were not right for the all-out franchise reform campaign. As William McGrath has pointed out, "political consciousness was one thing, political passion another, and the degree of emphasis on one or the other depended on the particular political conditions prevailing at the time."⁸⁴ Adler showed his appreciation of the significance of this balance when first the Russian ferment during 1905, second the suffrage angle of the Hungarian Crisis and finally the inconclusive vote at parliament in the early autumn had together convinced him that the time had come. This he duly signalled at the opening of the Party Congress at the end of October. Count Witte and Tsar Nicholas II then obliged by producing the October Manifesto right on cue.

During November's campaign (and afterwards) the Social Democrats did not lose sight of their opponents. The Social Democrats had no control of the army or police – except to the extent that they could make themselves a target. That is why Lueger and the Christian Socials were so vocal in their demands for protection and stern measures by

⁸² Jenks, *The Austrian Electoral Reform of 1907*, p. 53.

⁸³ *Stenographische Protokolle des Abgeordnetenhauses, XVII. Session, 400. Sitzung*, 28 March 1906, p. 35747.

⁸⁴ W. McGrath, *Dionysian Art and Populist Politics in Austria* (New Haven, Ct., 1974), p. 225.

police. No outcome would have served the Christian Socials better than violence which could be blamed on the Social Democrats. This would be proven, graphically and fatefully, following the burning of the Justizpalast some 20 years later. The visit by Adler, Bretschneider and Winarsky to the Police on November 18th and their acceptance of personal responsibility were indications of the importance the leadership placed on the attitude and the response of the police and the authorities they represented.

In theory, the Crown and the Government presented a real danger, since they controlled the army and were not constrained by any scruples. However, as Adler was at pains to point out, the Social Democrats did not regard the Emperor as an adversary in the context of the suffrage campaign. The Crown, after all, had little reason to be hostile given its priorities and objectives, since the reforms, though very important to the workers, were essentially an adjustment for the Monarchy, merely changing the way votes were counted. Furthermore, the bourgeois contribution to the governance of the realm had been increasingly unimpressive. Indeed, according to Zöllner, court and government circles were hoping that a new franchise law would strengthen the ‘confessional’ and socialist mass parties at the expense of the bourgeois-nationalist groups and thereby take some of the steam out of the nationality arguments which had dogged parliament in recent years.⁸⁵ Therefore, the idea of counting votes differently to produce a more ‘responsible’ partner, far from posing a threat, seemed to offer a promising way forward. Finally, it is certain that Franz Joseph was appalled at the prospect of bloodshed on the streets of the Empire’s cities, especially Vienna, quite possibly having been reminded by Black Sunday in St. Petersburg. Given these justifications for holding back, he could be counted on to do so, as indicated by the attitude of the *Neue Freie Presse*, cited above, following the events on the evening of November 2nd.

⁸⁵ E. Zöllner, *Geschichte Österreichs: von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* (Vienna, 1984) (7th edition), p. 434.

The demonstration itself drew heavily from the May Day experience – as well as from 1869, in that the affair was given a reverential tone. Pictures from the day show a respectful and sober mood. The participants were serious about making the right impression, which after all is the purpose of a demonstration. Professor McGrath discerned a use by Victor Adler of quasi-religious symbolism in the Sunday dress and the ‘*Volksfeiertag*’ format used by the Social Democrats and found derivation from the youthful Wagnerian and German nationalist enthusiasms of both Adler and Pernerstorfer.⁸⁶ On a more common sense level, the unfortunate outcome of Thursday the 2nd had indicated the need for greater organisation and sense of responsibility. For the 28th, formal attire lent the occasion a suitable sense of solemnity. Likewise, the silence provided a very striking invocation of the voicelessness of the demonstrators, and it also reinforced the desired discipline. For all demonstrations after the 2nd there were routes, timetables and marshals as well as ‘afterglow’ meetings to draw the crowds away from the centre and disperse them. Finally, there was a beginning and an end to each. No groups of excited enthusiasts were left hanging around with nothing to do but make trouble.

As gratifying as success in the suffrage reform campaign had been for parliament, its victorious conclusion would give way to frustration and disappointment not only on account of nationalist clamour and obstruction but also because of the constitutional framework in Cisleithania. Following the reform, the election at the beginning of 1907 brought great gains for the socialists – to a total of 87 seats. However, they were still in a minority and therefore not in a position to achieve any of their aims on the basis of their own votes alone. This was not lost on many, and certainly not on their leaders. Adler's biographer Julius Braunthal described Adler's own view: “Adler could certainly not have believed at that time that he could see the dawn of a socialist Austria. What he could

⁸⁶ McGrath, *Dionysian Art and Populist Politics*, pp. 222 and 230.

recognise as attainable...were successes in the transformation of Austria into a democratic federation of nations. But even this goal did not appear to him to be immediately at hand.”⁸⁷ While their aim was to keep their entire programme in mind, they would at the same time secure whatever practical progress was possible, as reflected in a letter Adler wrote to Karl Kautsky: “I have the sense that we in Austria are destined for great accomplishments – measured of course on our modest Austrian scale – I certainly will not live to see them, but I will do what I can to prepare the ground for our successors.”⁸⁸ In Adler's view, therefore, the immediate future would be for achieving whatever was within reach, while preparing for a time when greater success would be attainable.

Indicative of the more ambitious proposals in their programme were the first proposals which the party decided to put before the house. These included suffrage reform to give women the vote, reduce the voting age to 21 years and drop residence requirements, abolition of the death penalty and introduction of pension and disability insurance for workers.⁸⁹

The first people's parliament, so-called because it was the first elected on the basis of direct and equal suffrage, would be frustrating in terms of tangible results, but it would afford an opportunity for the Social Democrats to put their programme in practical form, to debate the specifics with members of other parties and to discuss details of implementation with members of the bureaucracy, all in the context of their role as advocates for their constituents. By the same token, while not losing sight of their major aims as enumerated above, they understood the necessity to address other more minor measures along the way. For all the talk of their proletarian exclusiveness, the Social Democrats had shown during the suffrage campaign not only that they understood their opposition, but also that they

⁸⁷ Braunthal, *Victor und Friedrich Adler*, p. 165.

⁸⁸ V. Adler to Kautsky, 18 June 1907, F. Adler (ed.), *Victor Adler: Briefwechsel mit August Bebel und Karl Kautsky* (Vienna, 1954), doc. A92a, p. 478.

⁸⁹ Brügel, *Geschichte der Österreichischen Sozialdemokratie*, vol. 5, p. 48.

were willing and able, by dint of exposition and argument, to bring many of them around to the point where 'they no longer believed in their cause'. Industrial safety legislation was to provide an early and vivid illustration of that ability.

However, before they got down to business, there was the thorny issue of calling on the Emperor. It was routine for the members of each new session of parliament to go to the Hofburg to attend the speech from the throne. It had only been a decade since the first Social Democrats had been elected to parliament. They had just seen their numbers grow from a handful whose presence or absence on a given occasion was not worthy of notice to the largest single party in the house. The question was whether the Social Democrats should attend. They rejected as a matter of principle any support for the Monarchy, and they would therefore be expected to absent themselves rather than effectively to pay homage to the Emperor by attending.

The Party Directorate met at the beginning of June with several practical issues on the agenda. First they decided to have an overall association with subdivisions into national groups. What exactly those divisions were to be called was left for further discussion. Next came decisions about whether to participate in the *Praesidium*,⁹⁰ the collective term for the President and Vice-Presidents of the house, and/or attend the *Thronrede*, the speech from the throne in which the monarch read out the government's legislative programme. There was no unanimity on either point, but they ultimately decided in favour of being part of the *Praesidium* and deferred the question of the *Thronrede*.

Pernerstorfer was later elected a Vice-President of the house and would hold that position until his death in 1918.⁹¹ Adler and he were both in favour of attending the

⁹⁰ *Reichsgesetzblatt* 141/1867, §9 stipulated: 'The *Abgeordnetenhaus* chooses from its midst the President and the Vice-Presidents.' No number of the latter was set, though a 1917 amendment specified eight Vice-Presidents.

⁹¹ *Stenographische Protokolle des Abgeordnetenhauses, XVIII. Session, 117. Sitzung*, 10 Dec. 1908, p. 7864.

Thronrede, but a good number disagreed.⁹² Those who would absent themselves took Kautsky's view that to take part in the ceremony "...is nothing more or less than a demonstration against international Social Democracy and our republican fundamentals."⁹³ Adler, on the other hand, had no interest in the ideological significance of demonstrations, only in the extent to which they brought progress toward the attainable goals of the day, and his view ultimately prevailed. As he explained in a letter to Kautsky the day before the *Thronrede*:

The Christian Socials, and even more the feudal aristocracy, bend every effort to emphasise their role as the saviours from the social democratic flood and to present us as monsters. We do not need to help them. Today, by being a bit smart, we can have some influence and make useful progress, if we do not allow ourselves to be distracted from concrete goals by decorative incidentals.⁹⁴

Adler had set down a clear marker for party members, political opponents, the general public and historians: Social Democrats were in the legislative business and would function as fully-fledged participants in the governing process. It was an illustration of the positive stance of Social Democracy vis-à-vis the state.⁹⁵ Their decision also made clear that potential for real progress was not to be sacrificed on the altar of ideology.

Indeed, Franz Schuhmeier set the logic out at greater length in the autumn when he spoke to the Party Congress of the German Social Democrats. Born the son of a cooper's apprentice in Vienna in 1864, Schuhmeier had been sent at the age of five to live with his uncle, a *Fiaker* (a coachman). He worked during all six years at school and took up an engraver's apprenticeship at the age of 13. He was soon disabled by an injury to his right eye. Thereafter Schuhmeier held a succession of jobs and spent several years on the road, then with his grandmother in Silesia, before returning to Vienna and becoming active as a socialist, first in the more radical groups before the Hainfeld congress, then increasingly

⁹² *Sitzungsprotokoll der Gesamtparteivertretung*, 2 June 1907, *Partei Archiv vor 1934, Sitzungsprotokolle*, Mappe no. 1.

⁹³ Kautsky to V. Adler, 20 June 1907, Adler, Friedrich. (Ed.), *Victor Adler: Briefwechsel*, doc. K127, p. 479.

⁹⁴ V. Adler to Kautsky 18 June 1907, *Ibid.*, doc. A92a, p. 477.

⁹⁵ Braunthal, *Victor und Friedrich Adler*, pp. 166-170.

among those striving for party unity. He was among the very early socialists elected to office, first to the Vienna *Gemeinderat* (city council) in 1900, then to the lower house in 1901 and finally to the Lower Austrian diet in 1910.⁹⁶ A compulsive autodidact and an acclaimed speaker, Schuhmeier had a gift for making difficult issues clear. In this case

The 'Calling at Court' (*Gang in die Hofburg*) was something which was done after extensive deliberation. It was not a matter of paying a visit to the Court, but rather it was part of the process of making clear, once and for all, that we would not allow anyone to stop us from taking part in the first act of parliament, which is the *Thronrede*. as long as the Emperor does not come to parliament, we must have the right to go where this reading happens. If today there are party comrades who will never agree with that, I understand their view, and I am the last to ridicule that opinion, but Social Democrats can no longer allow their politics to be guided by feelings, but rather reason is needed; and by attending the *Thronrede* on this occasion, we acted according to reason and in light of what was necessary under the circumstances...I was strongly in favour of this course from the outset, not so much because I couldn't wait to see the *Hofburg* or to let everyone see how I look in a top hat, but rather because I wanted to make clear that for us reason rather than emotion would be decisive. The reactions and especially the anger of our Christian Social opponents showed clearly that ours was a smart move – that we were free enough on this occasion to go to Court. Austrian Social Democracy is now strong enough that all doors – including those at the *Hofburg* – are open to us. We are never obliged to attend the *Thronrede*. It cannot hurt, but only help, if under other circumstances, for example when someone else is on the throne, we have this weapon at our disposal. We can simply stay away, and this non-appearance will be much more effective than if we had never been there in the first place. The Emperor cannot compromise us, any more than we can compromise him. It is merely a matter of tactics, and our tactics were good and useful to us.”⁹⁷

Adler's and Schuhmeier's assessments were borne out. The *Neue Freie Presse* reported the attendance of the Social Democrats as a natural consequence of the voting reform which had after all been helped along by the Emperor.⁹⁸

In his speech from the throne, Franz Joseph outlined the Monarchy's ambitions for the coming session of parliament. These included improvement of working conditions. The Emperor referred to an international conference in Bern during 1906 which addressed conditions for miners and women working at night.⁹⁹ That same conference had also

⁹⁶ *Österreichisches Biographisches Lexikon Online-Edition*, www.biographien.ac.at (August, 2016).

⁹⁷ Brügel, *Geschichte der Österreichischen Sozialdemokratie*, vol. 5, pp. 49-50.

⁹⁸ *Neue Freie Presse*, 20 June 1907 a.m.

⁹⁹ *Stenographische Protokolle des Herrenhauses, XVIII. Session, Beilage* no. 1, p. 2.

produced recommendations for the problem of white phosphorous. As part of the ambitious programme set out by the Social Democrats, among the first practical goals would be the banning of white phosphorus, which was used during the nineteenth century in the manufacture of matches and other incendiary devices.

The phosphorus match was invented by Johann Friedrich Kammerer, and the manufacture was under way during the 1830s in Ludwigsburg and Darmstadt as well as Vienna.¹⁰⁰ The scientific advantage gained by that early start, along with the availability of cheap wood, made Austria a leading producer of matches during the middle of the century, and growing numbers of jobs came to depend on this industry. Later in the century this advantage began to erode. Nonetheless, areas with cheap wood, like the Böhmerwald, still had factories, and there remained good money to be made in matches. In 1905, Austria exported some Kr3.335.182 worth of matches, a significant contribution to exports, even if roughly half as much as 20 years earlier. The factory census of 1902 indicated that there were nearly 5,000 employed in the industry.¹⁰¹ Ludwig Teleky, one of the very early industrial health experts, pointed out that the 1902 statistics had been compiled in June, when the numbers employed is noticeably smaller than in the winter months.¹⁰² At the turn of the century, the Austrian half of the Monarchy had an industrial population of roughly one million;¹⁰³ so workers in match manufacturing constituted a relatively small part of the work force. However, the banning of white phosphorus was not under discussion because of the numbers of victims exposed to it at work, but due to the severity of its effects for all victims, which were not confined to industrial workers.

It had become apparent that people who worked in the manufacture of matches

¹⁰⁰ L. Teleky, *Gewerbliche Vergiftungen* (Berlin, 1955), p. 146.

¹⁰¹ *Idem.*, *Phosphornekrose: Ihre Verbreitung in Österreich und deren Ursachen* (Vienna, 1907), pp. 11-12, Tabelle I.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹⁰³ R. Sandgruber, *Ökonomie und Politik: Österreichische Wirtschaftsgeschichte vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart* (Vienna, 1995), p. 255, table 20.

were susceptible to some very painful and debilitating maladies, first observed in Vienna in 1838. For a time the effects were attributed to syphilis, as with a case observed in Strasburg in 1844.¹⁰⁴ However, the causal relationship between exposure to white phosphorus vapour and what was ultimately known as phosphorus necrosis became increasingly difficult to deny. As early as 1844, Dr F. W. Lorinser, an orthopaedic surgeon and Director of the hospital in Wieden (an inner suburb in Vienna), had assembled a picture of the process of the disease and ascribed it to white phosphorus.¹⁰⁵ The most obvious manifestations were the dissolution of the jawbone and the appearance of weeping sores. Those interested in industrial safety strove to secure bans on the use of white phosphorus, and they had been able to do so in a succession of industrialised jurisdictions. Among those having banned it were: Finland in 1874, Denmark in 1875, Switzerland in 1900 and the Netherlands in 1901. This may seem at first glance to be a slow response, but in comparison to other hazardous substances, e.g. asbestos and lead, it was impressively rapid.

As early as 1850, chemists in several European countries were developing what ultimately became known as the Swedish or safety match. These use another form of phosphorus, red or amorphous, which is not toxic and has a higher flashpoint (250 rather than 50 degrees Celsius). They were safer to make and to use, even if occasionally harder to strike.¹⁰⁶ It is noteworthy that safe alternative technology had long been available at the time the ban on the use of white phosphorus was being proposed in Austria. Naturally any change in production methods entails expense; so a given production process will generally survive until it is no longer economical. Furthermore, the effect of safety regulations is invariably reduced by industrial momentum, not only because they are expensive for

¹⁰⁴ Teleky, *Vergiftungen*, p. 146.

¹⁰⁵ *Idem.*, *Phosphornekrose*, p. 32.

¹⁰⁶ Falkenhorst, C. 'Only a Match' in *Popular Science Monthly*, September 1895, p. 683.

management but also since they make extra work for the employees themselves, which is effectively the same consideration.

On a more general level, industrialisation had brought rising concern among doctors about safety in factories. Victor Adler, upon becoming a medical doctor, had himself wanted to be a factory inspector. In 1901, the International Association for Labour Legislation met for the first time. This was a so-called 'epistemic community', an association of professionals with expertise and recognition in a given field, in this case industrial medicine, but with no direct political authority as such. This association was a forerunner of the Permanent Commission on Industrial Medicine, formed in 1906, of which Ludwig Teleky was a co-founder. "The aim was to work out drafts of bills, based on exact research, which would be accepted and signed by as many states as possible."¹⁰⁷ Teleky would ultimately become a widely recognised authority on industrial medicine. The son of a doctor, he was a lecturer in Social Medicine at the University of Vienna from 1909 to 1918¹⁰⁸ and an early leader in the study of social hygiene and medicine.¹⁰⁹ At their Bern meeting in 1906, the Commission selected three topics for attention:¹¹⁰ night work by women, the manufacture and use of white lead and the use of white phosphorus in the match industry. The members subsequently composed reports on these concerns: in the case of phosphorus in the Monarchy published in Austria in 1907, and in Hungary, only in 1910.¹¹¹ When the association met in Bern, they failed to agree on an international ban of

¹⁰⁷ L. Teleky, *History of Factory and Mine Hygiene* (New York, NY., 1948), p. 89.

¹⁰⁸ T. Stowell, Obituary for Ludwig Teleky in the *British Journal of Industrial Medicine*, vol. 15, no 1, January 1958, page 71. Dr Teleky left Vienna in 1919 to become the Director of the Post Graduate Academy of Public Health and Industrial Medicine at Düsseldorf, returning to Vienna in 1932 after the Nazis had stripped him of his appointments. Friends eventually arranged his emigration to the US, where he became a lecturer at the University of Chicago in 1939, moving on to the New York State Department of Industrial Hygiene in 1944. A founder member, in 1906, of the Permanent International Commission on Industrial Medicine, he was elected a life member of the Commission in 1951 in recognition of his eminence.

¹⁰⁹ K. Sablik, *Julius Tandler – Mediziner und Sozialreformer, eine Biographie* (Vienna, 1983), p. 66.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

¹¹¹ W. Friedrich, 'Die Phosphornekrose in Ungarn' in *Schriften der ungarischen Vereinigung für gesetzlichen Arbeiterschutz*, No. 4.

white phosphorus, but they also noted that expectations of the disappearance of phosphorus necrosis had been premature and over-optimistic. Furthermore, not only Austria-Hungary, but also Japan and Italy still permitted the use of the substance.

Victor Adler, a physician with some experience of factory inspection regimes, was familiar with the problem, and so was another of the socialist leaders, Wilhelm Ellenbogen, who practised medicine actively until his exile in 1938. The author of the above-mentioned Austrian report on white phosphorus was Dr Teleky himself. That he was subsequently to become Victor Adler's personal doctor¹¹² did not detract from the weight of his testimony on the subject at hand. In his report, Teleky acknowledged the support and co-operation of Anton Schrammel, a union official and a Social Democrat deputy for Aussig in Bohemia.

Anton Schrammel was the son of a railway conductor in Vienna who had been forced by his parents' early deaths to leave school and learn to turn amber and *meerschaum*, hydrated magnesium silicate, used to make tobacco pipes and as a building stone. He spent his youth as a wandering apprentice all over Europe. Upon his return to Vienna he became involved in union organising and was, with Jakob Reumann, a co-founder of the Viennese turners' union. These activities cost Schrammel his job, whereupon he took up editing and publishing, for a succession of union and socialist papers. This had drawn Schrammel into politics, and he was among the first Social Democrats to be elected to parliament in 1897. He moved to Aussig in 1898 but by 1907 had returned to Vienna to become Secretary of the chemical workers' union as well as a member of the *Österreichische Gewerkschaftskommission*.¹¹³ On the basis of his union responsibilities and contacts, he was ideally placed to help Teleky visit the match

¹¹² L. Teleky, 'Der Geist zwingt den Körper', *Victor Adler im Spiegel seiner Zeitgenossen* (Vienna, 1968), p. 202.

¹¹³ *Österreichisches Biographisches Lexikon Online-Edition*, www.biographien.ac.at (August, 2016).

manufacturing facilities, meet any purportedly affected workers and generally see what he needed to write his report.

In the report, Teleky described in upsetting terms, with the help of some very disturbing illustrations, the course of phosphorus necrosis. The disease frequently lasts two to three years, and occasionally as long as a decade. It changes the make-up of the bones, particularly the jawbone, which often dissolves. The mortality is 15% to 20%, and many more become blind. The overwhelming majority of victims of the disease are permanently impaired. Over the years, methods had been devised to protect workers from the harmful vapour to some extent. However, these proved expensive; so smaller factories (known as *Zwergbetriebe*) could not afford the use of such luxuries, and reports from Vienna in the 1880s revealed serious shortcomings.¹¹⁴ A directive of 17 January 1885 instituted extensive regulations for factories using white phosphorus as well as other less onerous ones for those using the less harmful red phosphorus. Unfortunately, these measures did not seem to have the desired effect. For one thing, they were very general in their requirements, leaving their application largely under the discretion of the factory owners themselves. For example: in facilities using white phosphorus, the working rooms “...must be large and high (in accordance with the scale of the factory) with effective ventilation facilities and easily accessible exits and be unconnected to living rooms, kitchens and sleeping accommodation”.¹¹⁵ The scope for interpretation of regulations such as this made them of little practical use. Furthermore, there were ongoing discussions about the staffing levels of the factory inspectorate, where the concern was having adequate resources to enforce the regulations, such as they were. While the number of people employed in this industry was, as shown above, only about half of one percent of the work force, 5,000 seemed a large number of people to be poisoning wilfully.

¹¹⁴ Teleky, *Die Phosphornekrose*, p. 52.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

Furthermore, despite the existence of safer alternatives, Teleky estimated that, in 1905, 80% of Austrian match exports were still made with white phosphorus.¹¹⁶

As explained, Teleky had made his own tour of the match-producing areas with the assistance of the local union organisers, such as Anton Schrammel, and he had been able to examine those suffering with symptoms. It had been alleged that there could very well be doubt about any cases he did not personally see and diagnose.

The objection that in those cases where we did not investigate in person the diagnosis might not be certain is most probably thoroughly refuted by the fact that out of 81 cases where the necrosis had been suggested, I found only one single case in which it appeared doubtful to me that the victim had in fact suffered from necrosis.¹¹⁷

The disease developed following the absorption of phosphorus vapour into the bloodstream, the easiest point of entry being the mouth. There were several reasons for this, for example tooth decay and gum troubles. Teleky's detailed descriptions of the symptoms, including severe inflammation of gums and weeping sores in the mouth and on the face, made it plain that diagnosis was straightforward.¹¹⁸ He concluded that between 1896 and 1905, there had been in Austria 350 to 400 cases of the disease. He was unable to say whether the disease was on the increase.¹¹⁹ In any event, he suggested that the continued problems with the malady indicated the inadequacy of the prophylaxis prescribed to date. He mentioned as well that the practices of the workers had not been the best, which in the context of safety precautions is unremarkable (consider the use of seat belts in motor vehicles). Summing up his survey of the Austrian situation, Teleky judged: "Nowhere, as far as our investigations revealed, has the directive of 1885 been implemented even in the most fundamental of its requirements. In all the premises the provisions fell short, and one or other of the prescriptions had been ignored."¹²⁰

¹¹⁶ Teleky, *Die Phosphornekrose*, p. 29.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

¹¹⁸ Teleky, *Gewerbliche Vergiftungen*, p. 146.

¹¹⁹ *Idem.*, *Phosphornekrose*, p. 87.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

His recommendation from the point of view of worker safety was that a ban on white phosphorus was the only possible solution. He suggested as an alternative to white phosphorus on the matches the use of red phosphorus on the striker, as was being done in Sweden, or the use of phosphorus sesquisulfide, which would allow the match to be struck on any rough surface, and he went through the conversion possibilities.¹²¹

In July 1907, following publication of the report, Schrammel introduced a proposal to the house, including a draft law, for the banning of white phosphorus. In December, it was referred to the Social-Political Committee of the House,¹²² which was expected to produce a report on the subject and the proposal.

Nearly a year later, at the 89th sitting, on 17 June 1908, Adler, Schrammel and others tabled an urgency motion, which was supported by a statement. Deputy Theophil Simionovici (Romanian), Secretary for the occasion, read the statement to the house. It mentioned not only the failure of Austria to sign up to a proposed international ban but also the opinions of competent organisations supporting a ban. Most notable among the latter was the Commission for Accident Prevention. The motion therefore requested that the house direct the government to join the ban by the deadline suggested in Bern, specifically the end of that year.¹²³

During a debate the following week in the 92nd sitting, the Minister of Trade, Dr František Fiedler, chose to comment on the proposal. In 1905 the Ministry of Trade had taken over the Factory Inspectorate from the Interior Ministry. The Trade Ministry had thereby assumed the task of representing industry as a whole, including medium and small businesses, and the interests of the employees of those businesses. Industrial safety would be an important part of that responsibility. Fiedler was now

¹²¹ Teleky, *Die Phosphornekrose*, p. 137.

¹²² *Stenographische Protokolle des Abgeordnetenhauses, XVIII. Session, 50. Sitzung*, 17 December 1907, p. 3570.

¹²³ *Stenographische Protokolle des Abgeordnetenhauses, XVIII. Session, 89. Sitzung*, 17 June 1908, pp. 6017-6018.

creating a social-political section in his ministry, and he mentioned a couple of questions on which they were active at the time, including the use of white phosphorus in the manufacture of matches. Fiedler was a Young Czech who entered the cabinet as Trade Minister in a reshuffle in 1907. He was an expert in economics and a professor at the Czech university in Prague.¹²⁴ He began by reminding the house that Austria had been the birthplace of the match industry and still enjoyed a strong position in the business of exporting matches. Austria had been invited by Switzerland in the name of a group of countries to discuss the possible banning of white phosphorus in the manufacture of matches. There were a number of consumer markets, among them the Balkan states, Egypt and East India, which had made clear that they would not join in a ban, but Austria, to encourage the hoped for result, had made clear that she would participate on the condition that Japan, the most important competitor, also did so. Unfortunately, Japan was not prepared to assent to a ban; so Austria felt unable to support the proposal (Two decades earlier, Adler had noted in his work on factory inspection that foreign competition was often cited as justification for resisting improvements in factory practices.¹²⁵). The outcome was therefore that “only” Germany, France, Italy, Luxemburg, the Netherlands and Switzerland joined the ban.

Although declining to join the ban, the Austrian representatives at the conference had made clear that Austria was committed to the strictest precautionary measures for dealing with phosphorus necrosis. That would mean the adoption of those requirements which had been judged adequate in Great Britain, Sweden and Belgium. Accordingly, the Ministry of Trade, without losing sight of the eventual goal of the complete ban, had assembled an entire complex of protective measures, with respect to both legislative and administrative pathways. On the legislative side, the ministry had already prepared a law

¹²⁴ *Neue Freie Presse*, obituary, 29 January 1925.

¹²⁵ V. Adler, *Die Fabrikinspektion insbesondere in England und der Schweiz* (Jena, 1884), pp. 2-3.

which had been approved by the Chamber of Commerce. This law foresaw the licensing and taxation of white phosphorus users and would accommodate a growth in their numbers. Of course the licenses would be granted only to producers who were in compliance with the regulations, which were to be applied without regard to the size of the firms themselves.¹²⁶ Along with the legislative measure, the enforcement of the Directive of January 1885 would be sharpened up. All this had also received the blessing of the Chamber of Commerce.

Fiedler was interrupted by Deputy Günther, a Silesian German nationalist and prominent factory manager,¹²⁷ who asked what the Commission for Accident Prevention had said. The answer, as everyone knew, was that the Commission had been clear on their view that a ban would be the only satisfactory measure. Fiedler advised the house that his ministry were in the course of soliciting further advice from experts and representatives of all parties concerned, and he assured the house that lives would be considered more important than profits in their deliberations and conclusions.¹²⁸

The ban which had been proposed by Deputy Schrammel came up for debate in the 102nd sitting on 7 July 1908, and the President of the house invited Adler was to speak on behalf of the urgency motion. Adler started by explaining that the motion concerned a matter of only a few hundred working people, though the exact numbers were not known. He reckoned that it was at a minimum 25 persons a year and more likely 70. He explained that these unfortunates died a death of unimaginable misery – such that if a victim of the disease were to come for a visit to the house, the ban would be enacted unanimously.

To help the members of the house, the proposers had arranged for the Teleky report, which, as mentioned above, was well illustrated, to be distributed to each member, and

¹²⁶ *Stenographische Protokolle des Abgeordnetenhauses, XVIII. Session, 92. Sitzung*, 22 June 1908, p. 6197.

¹²⁷ *Österreichisches biographisches Lexikon 1815-1950 Online-Edition*, www.biographien.ac.at (August, 2016).

¹²⁸ *Stenographische Protokolle des Abgeordnetenhauses, XVIII. Session, 92. Sitzung*, 22 June 1908, p. 6198.

Adler urged them to take the time to go through the document. Just to be sure everyone understood, he described for the house the process of the disease and the symptoms of the various stages. It is clear from the records that Adler succeeded in making the members of the house very uncomfortable with this part of his speech. In fact, his fellow socialist Wilhelm Ellenbogen remembered being told by another member of the house after the sitting that he had found it difficult to keep from weeping.¹²⁹ Adler then interrupted the flow with an aside: “It could well be – I don't know if you've eaten yet – that images like this will spoil your appetite. But I am not taking you through this to play on your nerves, but rather to strengthen your will and so to prepare you not to be content with half measures, not to be satisfied with mere tokens, but rather to undertake something decisive and effective.”¹³⁰

He then started with a slightly less graphic assessment of the extent of the problem, where he explained that the industry had been consolidating, with the larger manufacturers having joined a cartel known as 'Solo'. While these larger enterprises were better able to afford the sorts of measures already called for protecting workers against the adverse effects of phosphorus vapour, they were also better able to resist any meaningful reform. Adler made the point that concern to protect the small manufacturer had in effect been concern to ignore the plight of the even smaller worker.

He went on to explain that the danger from phosphorus did not end when the match left the factory. Of course everyone was exposed to the substance. Recently the Viennese Medical Society had reported on the subject to the Government and the house. They had briefly mentioned the industrial part of the problem. The main thrust of their report was to put phosphorus in the context of poison overall. Between 1895 and 1904, Vienna had seen

¹²⁹ W. Ellenbogen, *Menschen und Prinzipien: Erinnerungen, Urteile und Reflexionen eines kritischen Sozialdemokraten* (Vienna, 1981), p. 47.

¹³⁰ *Stenographische Protokolle des Abgeordnetenhauses, XVIII. Session, 102. Sitzung, 7 July 1908, p. 7027.*

1,137 cases of phosphorus poisoning (of whom 332 died as a result) and 1,149 of all other forms of poisoning! It is also significant that a majority of the phosphorus cases involved women, because phosphorus was often used to induce abortions.

Adler pointed out that the main barrier to action to date had been concern to protect exports, and he refuted that by pointing out that match manufacturers were increasingly converting to the use of red phosphorus and phosphorus sesquisulfide. It was therefore not true that to protect the interests of 5,000 workers those same workers would have to run the risk of poisoning.

As an example of the ineffectuality of the regulatory approach, Adler pointed out that then current regulations dictated that workers were only to be in jobs involving direct contact with phosphorus for a month, after which they were to be moved to other non-dangerous roles. This seemed to make sense to the bureaucrat 'at the green table' but was little short of amusing for those in the outside world. Even assuming adherence to that prescription, would a worker with tooth decay volunteer to move to less remunerative work? Often the greatest barrier to worker protection is not the bureaucracy or the employer, but rather the worker himself – and not for lack of intelligence but rather for lack of funds.¹³¹ He then took up Fiedler's promise of 22 June to attach more importance to the lives of workers than to the profits of the manufacturers. He pointed out that the facts so far cited had proven that manufacturers' profits were the only barrier to a complete ban. He asked Fiedler to consign his draft law and the administrative directives to the nearest bin.¹³²

The President then opened the debate on the urgency issue. The first speaker was František Buřival, a Czech National Socialist, who supported Adler's conclusions and re-

¹³¹ *Stenographische Protokolle des österreichischen Abgeordnetenhauses, XVIII. Session, 102. Sitzung, 7 July 1908, p. 7030.*

¹³² *Ibid.*, p. 7034.

emphasised that workers had neither the option nor the will to take the steps necessary to protect themselves under the current regime or any similar one. The only speaker 'against', Roger Baron von Battaglia, a Polish National Democrat, started by conceding that the ban would be passed. His point was to suggest that the industry be nationalised! He allowed that he was socialist enough to realise that certain industries should be run by the state for reasons of public interest.¹³³

Vice President Zacek then gave the floor to Adler to close briefly before putting the urgency to the vote, which succeeded by the required two thirds majority. The debate thus moved on to the merits of the issue, and Minister of Trade Dr Fiedler, who had asked to speak, was given the floor. Fiedler started by referring to his detailed briefing of several weeks before and recapitulated many of the details of his ministry's planned measures. He then went on to say, to the accompaniment of applause from the house, that he had concluded that the government could not stay with these plans. He did point out some difficulties: smaller manufacturers would simply lose their livelihoods; Hungary seemed not to be inclined to have a ban.¹³⁴ Adler then presented the closing argument.

He allowed himself "as a matter of fundamental principle to say that an enterprise which cannot exist without subjecting its personnel to constant danger of poisoning is not entitled to exist".¹³⁵ He then turned to the question of the attitude of Hungary, and he pointed out that Hungary had taken a determined position against accepting certain Austrian goods which contained lead and suggested that they could hardly object to Austria taking a similar attitude on the question of phosphorus. He urged the rapid formation of the necessary advisory council and hoped the minister would help encourage the Social-political committee with their deliberations. With regard to the proposal to take some or all

¹³³ *Stenographische Protokolle des österreichischen Abgeordnetenhauses, XVIII. Session, 102. Sitzung*, p. 7040.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 7042-7043.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 7044.

of the manufacturers into state ownership, Adler suggested first of all that any purchase be after compliance. He argued that the state should be buying only useful businesses and then only at the best price. This was a noteworthy position for Adler to take: it demonstrated neither a compulsion to collectivise manufacturing nor any inclination to engage in confiscation. On the contrary, not only was Adler not taking the bait, he was furthermore making clear that the interests of citizens collectively were the more important consideration – why should a government purchase on their behalf a business which was less than fully functional or pay too high a price? The President then gave the floor to the Spokesman against, Deputy Alfred Schmid, a Christian Social, who said he had nothing to add and urged a vote in favour!

Adler's speech had the desired effect. Speaker after speaker supported the Social Democratic motion, and the house then decided to urge the government to enact a ban and to do so within the period allowed by the Bern convention of nearly two years before.¹³⁶ It is worth pointing out that, had Adler and his colleagues made the phosphorus ban a specifically Socialist issue, they would have created an opposition where, as it turned out, there was none. Once again, the Social Democrats had proved that they were interested in practical progress rather than ideological posturing.

As mentioned above, the proposal was referred by the house to the Social-political Committee for its consideration. This committee consisted of 52 members, representing between them 24 political parties.¹³⁷ At their ninth of fourteen meetings during this 18th Session, a double session on 14 July 1908, they dealt with the proposed phosphorus ban. At a meeting of the committee the week before, Deputy Anton Schäfer, Social Democrat member for Reichenberg, had asked that Adler be invited, and the suggestion had been

¹³⁶ *Stenographische Protokolle des österreichischen Abgeordnetenhauses, XVIII. Session, 102. Sitzung*, p. 7047.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, *Inhalt der Beilagen*, p. 340.

accepted.¹³⁸ The minutes of the meeting¹³⁹ (both parts) indicate that no more than 32 members were actually present for the two parts and that only a small number of those present took an active role in the proceedings. In addition to the members and Adler, this double-session was also attended by *Sektionschef* Mataja and *Ministerialrat* von Gasteiger, both senior officers in the Ministry of Trade. Both parts of the meeting were chaired by Dr Mayr, Professor of History at Innsbruck and a Christian Social member from the Tirol and who later succeeded Renner as chancellor in 1920. Franz Jesser, an author and a German-agrarian member from Moravia, kept the minutes.

Their report was published three days later. It effectively summarised the debate in the house and supported all of Adler's conclusions. Though it recommended a number of amendments to the draft law, none of which were substantive. The report further urged the immediate investigation of a possible state monopoly of the manufacture of matches, the encouragement of Hungary to join the ban and the arrangement of financial assistance for businesses whose survival would be threatened by the ban. The suitably amended law came before the house for the second and third readings at the 124th sitting on 19 December and was adopted along with the resolutions recommended by the Social-Political Committee.

Historians examining the record of the Social Democrats in opposition, not least Knapp, have been uncomplimentary about the slender tangible results. They 'only' succeeded in getting white phosphorus banned. The conclusion however must be that a number of lives were saved by this ban, not only of workers, but also of mothers and their unborn children, and many other lives were unquestionably improved. By contrast, how many lives were saved or improved by the anti-Semitism of the supposedly more 'successful' Christian Socials? Furthermore, the task of a political party in opposition is to

¹³⁸ *Protokoll des Sozialpolitischer Ausschusses*, Meeting of 7 July 1908, Parlamentsarchiv.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, Meeting of 14 July 1908, Parlamentsarchiv.

prepare to govern, since the prospects for immediate success are by definition slim at best. Any actual success along the way deserves appreciation, possibly acclaim, but certainly not derision. Social Democratic leadership would continue to pursue reforms which were clearly in the interests of their constituents, at the same time demonstrating, as a responsible opposition, that they had realistic ambitions and the requisite skills for government. The latter was apparent in their dealings, including the use of their own press, with party members, trade unions, their fellow socialists from elsewhere in Europe, particularly but not exclusively the Germans, the bureaucracy, the Monarchy and their opponents, as such and as partners where that could be effective. These efforts would be rewarded in 1918, and again in 1945.

Chapter 3. Parliament and Social Issues

In their efforts to make use of their new place in parliament, the Social Democrats were active on a number of fronts. Among the most illustrative for this study will be voting rights, social insurance, education and housing. To begin with it will be helpful to explain which levels of government were concerned with these issues.

As early as the middle of the nineteenth century the question of apportionment of roles was addressed. The Local Government Act of 1862 specified that, as a general matter, whatever primarily affected the interests of the local community and could be dealt with within its boundaries and with the means at its disposal fell to the separate responsibility and authority of the *Gemeinde* (city or town, literally community). That responsibility included, among other areas, the erection, maintenance and funding of primary and secondary schools as well as the enforcement of building codes and issuing of building permits. In addition, the *Gemeinde* had delegated areas of responsibility which were those having to do with the administration of central government and provincial matters.¹ The *Gemeinden*, each run by a *Gemeinderat* (local council), were grouped into 17 *Länder* (provinces), each of which had a legislature, called the *Landtag* (provincial diet), responsible to the Emperor.

Members of the *Gemeinderäte* and the *Landtage* were elected. Of course nineteenth century suffrage, with the curial structure inherited from Count Stadion's 1849 Community Law, prevailed at *Land* and *Gemeinde* levels until the birth of the Republic in 1918.² Although there was a reform of the voting scheme in the *Landtag* in Lower Austria in 1908, which was discussed above, the result, described in the *Landtag* itself by Karl Seitz as “suffrage robbery”,³ was of very little help to the Social Democrats. Maintenance

¹ *Reichsgesetzblatt*, No. 18/1862, Arts. IV, V & VI.

² K. Ucakar, ‘Demokratie und Wahlrecht in Österreich zur Entwicklung von politischer Partizipation und staatlicher Legitimationspolitik’. (Vienna, Habilitation thesis, 1984).

³ *Neue Freie Presse*, 28 October 1903.

of the curial franchise was consistent with the view that local government was primarily a matter of administering the assets of the local community and its members. The result was that the proletariat, not owning a noticeable share of those assets, was excluded from representation in local government.⁴ Therefore, while there were Socialist representatives at provincial and local level, their numbers were not large, nor their direct and immediate influence, very great.

It follows that Social Democratic impact would be most strongly felt in the lower house in Vienna. Of course, even there, the arithmetic was hardly encouraging for them. As one of their number pointed out not long before the war during a debate in the House, the Social Democrats were outnumbered 429:87! It is hardly surprising therefore that the balance at the close of the XVIIIth Session,⁵ the so-called people's parliament, was not overwhelming, as Knapp pointed out, in terms of legislative results for the Social Democrats.

However, even the total output of parliament was not impressive. For example, during the entire year 1908 the *Reichsgesetzblatt*, the register of 'laws', contains 268 measures. Of those, 23 were actual laws signed by the Emperor, while the remainder were not voted upon: decrees, edicts and announcements. The latter were over the names of one or more officials or the Emperor. In view of these numbers, a certain frustration with the entire process would not have been entirely surprising.

Furthermore, for the vast majority of socialist deputies, the XVIIIth Session, which convened in June of 1907, was their first taste of business in parliament. To be more exact,

⁴ J. Klabouch, 'Die Lokalverwaltung in Cisleithanien' in A. Wandruszka and P. Urbanitsch (eds.), *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848-1918*, vol. 2 *Verwaltung und Rechtswesen* (Vienna, 1973), p. 283.

⁵ From the suffrage reform of 1907 until the end of the Monarchy there were five sessions of the *Reichsrat*:

- XVIIIth session – 17 June 1907 to 4 February 1909,
- XIXth session – 10 March 1909 to 11 July 1909,
- XXth session – 20 October 1909 to 20 March 2011,
- XXIst session – 17 July 1911 to 25 July 1914 and
- XXIIInd session – 30 May 1917 to 12 November 1918.

in terms of experience in the House, of more than 100 socialist deputies who served there between 1907 and the end of the Monarchy, only a dozen had been members before 1907.⁶ By far the most experienced of them was Engelbert Pernerstorfer, who was first in parliament in 1885 and, apart from a break between 1897 and 1901, represented his Wiener Neustadt constituency until his death in January of 1918. Six others started in 1897, another four in 1901 and finally Victor Adler in 1905. Therefore, for the duration of the XVIIIth Session, after all less than 20 months altogether, more than 70 freshmen socialists were heavily engaged in getting oriented.

It is interesting to note how the socialist contingent was made up in terms of the deputies' occupational background. Of the class of 1911, whose members served the longest during the period, nearly half described themselves as 'writers', 'journalists', 'editors' or 'newspaper publishers'. As will be seen, a good few of these were the autodidact children of workers. Many of the rest were clearly bourgeois, though trade unionists were also well-represented.⁷ Both the bourgeois and the working class members would have had to get adjusted, so to speak, the former to doing business in an assembly setting and the latter to rubbing elbows with the bourgeoisie.

During the sittings of the House, time was consumed by procedural matters, by the introduction of proposals, and most of all by speeches, many quite long. To handle all business in a plenary environment would plainly have been impossible. Fortunately, procedure provided for *Ausschüsse* (committees), the members and leaders of which were selected at the start of each session by a conference of the party leaders in the house and the President.⁸ Proposals were referred to these smaller groups for discussion, and

⁶ O. Knauer, *Das österreichische Parlament von 1848-1966* (Vienna, 1969), pp. 63-194.

⁷ *Stenographische Protokolle des Abgeordnetenhauses, XVIII. Session, Teil I, Abteilung II.*

⁸ G. Schmitz, 'Organe und Arbeitsweise, Strukturen und Leistungen der Landesvertretungen', H. Rumpler and P. Urbanitsch (eds.), *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848-1918*, vol. 7 *Verfassung und Parlamentarismus*, part 2 *Die regionalen Repräsentativkörperschaften* (Vienna, 2000), p. 1356.

Ausschüsse in their turn reported back to the House. From 1907, each had either 26 or 52 members, though most were increased to 27 or 53 respectively for the XXIInd session in 1917. There were 25 committees in 1907, and the number grew to 33 in the penultimate session before shrinking back to 30 under pressure of the war for the last session.

Committee assignments were distributed according to party affiliation. At meetings of party leaders with the President of the house before and after house sittings, proportions were set for each party, and the parties then decided which of their members should serve on the respective committees. These non-plenary meetings were much calmer than the sittings themselves and afforded the opportunity for house members to get to know one another better as well as to discuss matters at hand.⁹ According to the Order of Business, attendance at committee meetings was compulsory, though the attendance sheets reveal that turnout was less than 100%. Between time in the plenary sittings and in committee meetings, not to mention preparation and constituency duties, fulfilment of parliamentary responsibilities was a nearly impossible task for many deputies of whatever party.

A good example from among the socialists would be Wilhelm Ellenbogen. He was one of the more experienced legislators, having entered the house in 1901. In the XXIst Session, the last before the outbreak of war, he had extensive committee duties, serving on seven committees as follows: State Employees, Economic Relations with Hungary, Budget, Railways, Economy, Waterborne Trade and Public Health. Between them those committees met 220 times during the three years of the session and produced 58 reports on matters under discussion, of which Ellenbogen wrote one. In addition, he spoke in the house on a dozen occasions, including five questions for Ministers and a successful measure to have a report on accident insurance for miners brought before the House.¹⁰ Despite heavy work-loads, Social Democrats were extraordinarily active. During the same

⁹ J. Sylvester, *Vom toten Parlament und seinen letzten Trägern* (Vienna, 1928), p. 51.

¹⁰ *Stenographische Protokolle des Abgeordnetenhauses, XXI. Session, Teil I, Abteilung II, Personenregister.*

Session, they proposed fully 56 measures with social ends.¹¹

Whatever the make-up of lower house, it was not an institution likely to produce a stream of legislation. Under those circumstances, all the socialists could do with their roughly one sixth of the mandates was to get their programme in front of their opponents and convince as many as possible of the wisdom, appropriateness and practicality of their proposals. At the same time, they would increasingly be seen as fellow politicians dealing with real problems, of course with different, possibly irreconcilable, views, but nevertheless serious.

The Social Democrats kept the attention and support of their members and constituents not by proselytising, but by delivering practical and demonstrable results. There are several areas where their tactics were revealed, foretold in the first phase of the suffrage campaign and the phosphorus debate above, and carried on with varied results to the launch of the Republic. These include not only suffrage, but also social welfare. Under the heading of social welfare are social insurance, both health and social security, education and housing.

Regarding the first of these, suffrage, from the time of their unification at Hainfeld the question of representation was a top priority for the Social Democrats. Their success at parliamentary level, while cause for celebration, was some way short of the ultimate goal of universal, direct and equal suffrage. There were three areas where franchise arrangements remained unsatisfactory in their view: women's voting rights, elections for other than the lower house of parliament, and residence requirements. During the years of the Monarchy, voting remained a specifically male prerogative in all elections. Adler promised he and his colleagues would continue to support the cause of voting rights for women, a commitment they made at Hainfeld and had emphasized in the house during the

¹¹ J. Weidenholzer, *Der sorgende Staat: zur Entwicklung der Sozialpolitik von Joesph II. bis Ferdinand Hanusch* (Vienna, 1985), p. 330.

debate on the 1907 reform.¹² Moreover, even for men, direct and equal suffrage had been granted in 1907 only for election of members of the lower house of parliament. Social Democrats were conscious, as seen above, that this still effectively excluded them from any voice at more local levels, where issues important to their constituents were discussed, and appropriate measures taken. Finally, by the reform of 1907, voters could register only in the *Gemeinde* where they had been resident for at least a year.¹³ Residence was defined as the “place in which one demonstrably or circumstantially intended to be continuously settled”.¹⁴ Any provision intended to exclude from the franchise those with less than permanent residence as defined, for example seasonal workers, was plainly to the detriment of the Social Democrats. In fact, the one year requirement was more onerous than the previous rule, which had demanded only six months' residence.¹⁵ Victor Adler, as the only Social Democrat in the drafting committee, did well to keep the requirement as low as a year, since there was pressure from Christian Socials to increase it further.¹⁶

The completion of the suffrage reform agenda was therefore an ongoing priority. In the fourth sitting of the people's parliament, on 27 June 1907, Victor Adler and 43 other Social Democrats introduced a proposal in the form of a draft law which, in elections for the lower house, would provide that all Austrian citizens, regardless of gender, be entitled to vote from the age of 21.¹⁷ Ten days later, Pernerstorfer introduced a petition submitted by the Ladies' Union (*Allgemeiner Österreichischer Frauenverein*)¹⁸ requesting that the right to vote be extended to include women¹⁹. Neither Adler's proposed law nor the

¹² W. Jenks, *The Austrian Electoral Reform of 1907* (New York, 1974), p. 104.

¹³ *Reichsgesetzblatt*, No. 15/1917, §7.

¹⁴ *Reichsgesetzblatt*, No. 111/1895, §66, first paragraph.

¹⁵ *Reichsgesetzblatt*, No. 169/1896, §9a

¹⁶ Jenks, *The Austrian Electoral Reform of 1907*, p. 92.

¹⁷ *Stenographische Protokolle des Abgeordnetenhauses, XVIII. Session, 4. Sitzung, 27 June 1907*, p. 115 and *Beilage* nos. 51 and 61.

¹⁸ This was an association formed in 1893 for the purpose of advocating women's rights in general. Though they were nominally non-partisan, the leadership had a distinctly socialist flavour. See www.dasrotewien.at, the 'Weblexikon der wiener Sozialdemokratie', 2016.

¹⁹ *Stenographische Protokolle des Abgeordnetenhauses, XVIII. Session, 7. Sitzung, 7 July 1907*, pp. 544 and

petition of the Ladies' Union came up for debate during the session, but the Social Democrats were on record again with their advocacy of the women's cause. During the next session, there were no proposals for women's suffrage, but at the first sitting of the following session, on 22 October 1909, Victor Adler was back with the same proposal as two years earlier over the names of 47 Social Democrats.²⁰ As on the first try, this proposal never made it either to the debate or to the committee stage. The last attempt during the Monarchy was in the early stages of the XXIInd session. On 14 June 1917, the Social Democrats, this time 23 of their number, once again introduced the amendment of the 1907 suffrage reform to include women – in exactly the same form as on the previous two occasions.²¹ This time the measure was referred to the Constitution Committee but got no further.

Regarding the question of voting for the local representative bodies, as early as the fourth sitting of the people's parliament, 27 June 1907, Karl Renner spoke at length in a debate about the urgency of dealing with the provincial budgets, their increasing deficits and the rise in the indebtedness of the provinces. Renner carefully reviewed the situation, explaining that parliament was responsible only for those issues which concerned the *Landtage* as a group, not for the problems of each *Land*. In this case, the issue was how each of the provinces would balance their income with their expenditure. Each of those legislatures was effectively controlled by agrarian interests which made up a small proportion of the population, and as with the example of Lower Austria, paid an ever-decreasing share of taxes. Therefore the representation was inappropriately lopsided. Further, parliament was being called upon to fix the revenues by raising taxes, while the question of how to spend the proceeds would be left to the *Landtage*. So the second

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²⁰ *Stenographische Protokolle des Abgeordnetenhauses, XX. Session, 1. Sitzung*, 20 and 22 October 1909, p. 12, and *Beilage* no. 188.

²¹ *Ibid.*, XXII. *Session, 7. Sitzung*, 15 June 1917, pp. and *Beilage* no. 277.

problem was that those who spent the proceeds would be disconnected from those who paid the taxes. The only way to resolve both problems would be to introduce general, direct and equal suffrage for each of the respective *Landtage*, and Renner proposed the addition of a third paragraph to the urgency motion under discussion making such a provision.²² The response from Interior Minister Bienerth was that the Government saw no connection between the central and provincial voting rights particularly due to the different areas of focus and responsibility. The house debated Renner's proposal for nearly two full days, but then accepted the measure as originally drafted.²³ This of course frustrated the intent of the Social Democrats, which had been to link the budget debate to the suffrage issue, but they had nevertheless got their case fully discussed by the members of the House. Similar arguments were cited by Deputy Němec several days later, when he pointed out that the then current Order of Business for the provincial diets made them in effect fully under the control of their respective bureaucracies. All this debate was for the sole purpose of getting the arguments clearly framed, since the voting rights issues at more local levels were referred to the bodies concerned, whose members were not likely to vote themselves out of a job. In the context of the Monarchy, this confronted the Social Democrats with an insoluble tangle.

The ultimate solution for all three issues came very shortly after the resolution to form a republic – indeed at the first meeting after the resignation of the Emperor. The first law of the Republic made clear the representational format of the new state: §8 abolished the *Landtage* (along with the *Herrenhaus*) – so the voting details for those bodies were no longer an issue; §9 established voting rights for all citizens regardless of gender and without residency requirement, and §10 stipulated that the same principles would apply for

²² *Stenographische Protokolle des Abgeordnetenhauses, XVIII. Session, 4. Sitzung, 27 June 1907*, pp. 120 – 124.

²³ *Ibid.*, 5. Sitzung, 28 June 1907, p. 281.

any future local assemblies – *Land, Kreis, Bezirk* and *Gemeinde*.²⁴

With regard to social welfare, in the pre-urban context of the early years of the nineteenth century, this was largely the concern of the home or perhaps a guild. However, industrialisation and the growth of cities during the century brought social risk and poverty into sharp focus in Austria as elsewhere.²⁵ Initial concrete remedial measures resulted from the leadership of the conservative elite, and they were directed against capitalists, socialists and, after the crash of 1873, liberal industrialists. Emphasis was on social security and employment protection.²⁶

Despite these efforts during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the socialists thought there was room for improvement. Social insurance invited central direction, and since the *Reichsrat* had already been active in this branch of commerce, Social Democrats had reason to expect support from members of other parties. As early as 1854, the parliament had produced mining legislation stipulating that employers in that branch were obliged to arrange certain provisions for their workers. Specifically, every employer was obliged by this law to set up a *Bruderlade* or to join with other employers to set one up for the benefit of their employees.²⁷ A *Bruderlade* was a form of mutual benefit society which originated in Alpine mining areas to provide support for members during illness, upon disability and to provide, in the event of their death, ongoing support for their widows and orphans. The 1854 mining law was the first formal statutory recognition of these entities.

Some three decades later, inspired by the example of Bismarck's reforms of November 1881 in Germany,²⁸ the Monarchy promulgated the first comprehensive accident and then health insurance provisions in Austria. This provided for a network of

²⁴ *Staatsgesetzblatt*, No. 5/1918.

²⁵ J. Pfliegerl and C. Geserick. *Kinship and social security in Austria: a social history for the twentieth century* (Innsbruck, 2007), pp. 115-120.

²⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 122-3.

²⁷ *Reichsgesetzblatt*, No. 146/1854. The *Bruderladen* provisions were in Part 10, §§ 210-214.

²⁸ W. Rohrbach, 'Technischer Fortschritt und Versicherung in Österreich', *Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, vol. 94 (1986), p. 398.

local enterprises and made membership compulsory for certain sections of the population.²⁹ The law was quite specifically for those in what would at the time have been regarded as more hazardous occupations, meaning people operating machines or working with explosive materials. Not covered were those subject to maritime law, most building workers and farm or other workers not directly exposed to machines. There was a flurry of laws and decrees during 1888 and 1889, the purpose of which was to flesh out in exhaustive detail the setting up of and operating standards for the enterprises taking over the task of meeting these insuring obligations. The issues addressed included premium rates for payroll deduction (both employer and employee contributions); amount of insurance (up to 60% of pay) and duration of benefits; model statutes; specifications for management hierarchies, and detailed requirements for statistical reporting.³⁰ There were separate provisions for accident as opposed to health insurance, an arrangement not peculiar to Austria, though the Austrian mandate for health insurance was directly linked to that for accident cover;³¹ so the two operated in close tandem. All these enterprises were to be operated as mutuals, meaning existing for the sole benefit of and effectively owned by their insureds, and the idea was that they be territorially organised. The framework provided by the health and accident insurance bills remains the basis of that branch of insurance in Austria to this day, of course with important modifications. The initial proposal by Finance Minister Julian von Dunajewski³² was for a state monopoly, but ultimately cover was offered not only by a network of mutual-like, so-called *öffentlich-rechtlich*, entities, but also by private insurers.³³

Of interest here of course are changes advocated after 1907 and any put in place by

²⁹ *Reichsgesetzblatt*, No. 1/1889 and No. 33/1888. Workers subject to maritime law and rural workers were not covered.

³⁰ *Reichsgesetzblatt*, No. 1/1888, §6.

³¹ *Reichsgesetzblatt*, No. 33/1888, §1.

³² Member of parliament from since 1873 and leader of the Polish Club in the *Reichsrat*. Österreichisches biographisches Lexikon 1815-1950 Online-Edition, www.biographien.ac.at (August, 2016).

³³ Rohrbach, W. 'Technischer Fortschritt', p. 399.

the Social Democrats at the start of the Republic – how they had been proposed and explained by their advocates during their time in opposition in the Monarchy. From early in the people's parliament, the Social Democrats showed an interest in this area of insurance. At the beginning of the session,³⁴ on 27 June 1907, Matthias Eldersch introduced a proposal that steps be taken to reform the entire range of health, disability and pension insurance mandated at the time. Eldersch was born in Brünn in 1869, and following the early death of his father, left school to become a weaver's apprentice. He soon joined the workers' education programme, where he played a leading role, before becoming secretary and bookkeeper for the local *Bezirkskrankenkasse*, or district health insurer.³⁵ His ideas on that subject could therefore be regarded as those of an experienced hand. That the motion was over the signatures of Eldersch and 76 other socialist members made very clear where the backing for the measure would start. The proposal was, broadly speaking, in seven parts covering a range of issues.³⁶ The measure first required that every worker should be covered, including groups then still exempt, like smaller entrepreneurs and agricultural workers. Next, coverage was to be 100%, and the benefits adjusted to suit local circumstances. Third, disability benefits needed to reflect the earnings of the disabled, up to 120% for worker rendered completely helpless. Premiums were to be adequate, and the costs borne by the employers. Further, pensions were to be sufficient without recourse to poverty relief. *Bruderladen* required examination to confirm the adequacy of their provisions, and any shortfall was to be made good by employers. The various entities were to be combined into unified funds, while remaining under the auspices of their members. *Krankenkassen* (health insurers) should be able to form associations with like organisations. Accident and disability insurers should be combined.

³⁴ *Stenographische Protokolle des Abgeordnetenhauses, XVIII. Session, 4. Sitzung, 27 June 1907*, p. 115.

³⁵ *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, obituary on 21 April 1931.

³⁶ *Stenographische Protokolle des Abgeordnetenhauses, XVIII. Session, Beilage no. 57*.

Regulation should fall to a *Reichsversicherungsamt* (Imperial Insurance Office), and tribunals were to be set up to deal with coverage disputes. The self-administrative nature of the insurance business was to be preserved as the industry was put on a firmer footing. The sixth section dealt with a miscellany of issues including postage costs, the legal treatment of payroll deductions, the status of premiums for those in military service and the question of assuring the adequacy of benefits. Finally, the proposers judged that this reform would make sense only alongside tax reform.

Nearly a year later, the house had not yet got to the measure; so Eldersch tried, on 17 June 1908, to get the matter back into focus by bringing an urgency motion.³⁷ The urgency was debated in two sittings the following month, followed by two days' discussion of the merits, whereupon the draft law received its first reading in November and was referred to the social insurance committee (*Sozial-versicherungsausschuß*). There was no further progress before the end of the session.

Following the lack of legislative success on social insurance in the XVIIIth session, Jakob Reumann introduced, at the first sitting of the XIXth session on 10 March 1909, a less ambitious proposal regarding accident insurance for construction workers.³⁸ Reumann, having apprenticed in several trades starting in his thirteenth year, became active as a young man in socialist politics and was the first *Obmann* (president) of the *Genossenschaftskrankenkasse* (union health insurer) for his trade. He and Schuhmeier were the first socialist Vienna *Gemeinderäte* (town councilmen), and Reumann played a very senior role in federal and Viennese politics and administration during the first few years of the First Republic. On this occasion his proposal was referred to committee less than a week after its introduction,³⁹ following which Anton Schrammel authored the

³⁷ *Stenographische Protokolle des Abgeordnetenhauses, XVIII. Session, 89. Sitzung*, 17 June 1908, p. 6017.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, XIX. Session, I. Sitzung, 10 March 1909, p. 11.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 5. Sitzung, 16 March 1909, p. 234.

committee report.⁴⁰ No sooner had Reumann commended the measure to the house for urgent attention, than the XIXth session ended, meaning they would have to start all over again.

Reumann was back, in the first meeting of the next session on 22 October 1909 with his proposal, identical in every respect.⁴¹ It was referred to the same committee a week later,⁴² and returned to the house with a report again written by Schrammel and signed by both him and Ellenbogen as *Obmann* of the committee. The report was a detailed and well thought out appreciation of the issue, which seems not very complicated in light of what might be expected of a government.⁴³ As mentioned above, the accident insurance law of 1888 had made many workers the subject of compulsory accident insurance, but many had also been exempt, including building workers who were not really on site or worked on simple commercial or residential buildings. Reumann's proposal was to clarify what seemed to have been the original intent of the law following several conflicting and confusing decisions by the Administrative Law Court. When the draft returned to the house, slightly amended in committee, it received its second and third reading without difficulty just about two months after being introduced for the second time.⁴⁴

However, there was no progress after that; so in the following session, Dominik Löw introduced the same measure for the third time.⁴⁵ Löw was the son of a bricklayer, who, having learned his father's trade, became involved in the workers' movement. He formed the West Bohemian Construction Workers' organisation and was elected to parliament in 1907.⁴⁶ Following re-introduction of the proposal to the house in July 1911,

⁴⁰ *Stenographische Protokolle des Abgeordnetenhauses, XIX. Session., Beilage* no. 617.

⁴¹ *Ibid., XX. Session, 1. Sitzung*, p. 11; *Beilage* no. 181.

⁴² *Ibid., 5. Sitzung*, p. 323.

⁴³ *Ibid., Beilage* no. 473.

⁴⁴ *Ibid., 19. Sitzung*, 21 December 1909, pp. 1211-1217 and *Beilage* no. 697.

⁴⁵ *Stenographische Protokolle des Abgeordnetenhauses, XXI. Session, 3. Sitzung*, 21 July 1911, p. 158.

⁴⁶ *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, Obituary on 15 February 1931.

it was referred yet again to the same committee in December.⁴⁷ Based on the committee's report,⁴⁸ this time by Stefan Licht, a “German Progressive” lawyer,⁴⁹ the house gave the bill its second and third reading again on 27 March 1912,⁵⁰ and it became law the following month.⁵¹

Meanwhile, back in the XXth Session, Laurenz Widholz had been able to bring before the house a measure in the first sitting which seemed to strike a more responsive note. Widholz, whose mother was an unmarried Moravian farmworker, came to Vienna as a carpenter's apprentice, having attended a two-class village school, and became involved in organising the carpenters. Apart from union work, his area of interest was particularly in social insurance and specifically the *Krankenkassen*. He was elected to parliament in 1907.⁵² His proposal in 1909 was to make permanent the committee concerned with social insurance, which is to say able to continue their work after the house had been dissolved and during the break before the next session. In view of the ongoing work on reform, admittedly so far unproductive, this must have struck the members as sensible. The idea was accepted as urgent and approved after discussion of its merits in the fifth sitting, at the end of October, 1909. The agreement from the upper chamber and the Imperial assent came before the end of the next month.⁵³

While these efforts had for the most part not produced the desired result, the proposals of Eldersch, argued at length in several sittings of the XVIIIth Session, had made clear the basis of the Social Democratic social insurance aims – both as to content and in terms of feasibility. Furthermore, the change proposed by Widholz had clear support not

⁴⁷ *Stenographische Protokolle des Abgeordnetenhauses, XXI. Session, 39. Sitzung*, 7 December 1911, p. 1960.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, Beilage no. 1206.

⁴⁹ *Österreichisches biographisches Lexikon Online-Edition*, www.biographien.ac.at (August, 2016).

⁵⁰ *Stenographische Protokolle des Abgeordnetenhauses, XXI. Session, 63. Sitzung*, 27 March 1912, pp. 3091-3109, Decision: Beilage no. 1274.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 78. Sitzung, page 3810; *Reichsgesetzblatt*, Nr 96/1912.

⁵² *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, obituary, 20 November 1926.

⁵³ *Stenographische Protokolle des Abgeordnetenhauses, XX. Session, 1. Sitzung*, 22 October 1909, p. 31; 5. Sitzung, 29 October 1909, pp. 313-318; 6. Sitzung, 24 November 1909, p. 343 (Imperial assent).

only in the lower house but also in the upper house. Following their extensive advocacy, the results in the First Republic however were not impressive. This must be seen as an indication of both the morass of technical details involved and especially of the foundations laid by their opponents in the years before 1900. The Social Democrats were able to consolidate the industry to some extent by combining smaller players as well as including family members in the coverage provided. After the war, against a background of chaotically shifting monetary values, time and effort was devoted to premium rates and benefits, while little more was achieved along the lines of the objectives outlined by Eldersch in 1907.⁵⁴

In contrast to social insurance, responsibility and authority for primary and secondary education in the Dual Monarchy rested with local government, as stipulated in the Local Government Law of 1862.⁵⁵ There were reforms of education in the Habsburg Empire during the nineteenth century at both primary and secondary levels. The *Volksschulgesetz* of 1869 set the basis of primary education in Cisleithania, though it was amended in 1883 and more extensively in 1905. Secondary education was overhauled following the revolution in 1848, though the implementation of the reforms took some decades. Also, from the early 1870s the Catholic Church's supervisory role in primary and secondary education was passed to the local authorities.⁵⁶ Of course with the ascendancy of the Christian Socialists, the Church was able to regain some voice in local education decisions, both direct by having officials serve in the *Schulräte* (school councils) and indirect through their influence within the party.

There were two major issues which defined much of education policy discussion from the passing of the 1869 law until the end of the Monarchy. The first was the running

⁵⁴ *Staatsgesetzblatt*, no. 86/1919.

⁵⁵ *Reichsgesetzblatt*, no. 18/1862, *Das Reichsgemeindegesezt*, Article V.

⁵⁶ Schmitz, 'Organe und Arbeitsweise, Strukturen und Leistungen', p. 1458.

debate about the place of religion, specifically the Catholic Church and its dogma, in education, and the second was control of personnel, which of course included the question of academic freedom. The debates were largely conducted on a local basis, where the Church was most actively involved, and the growing influence of the Christian Socialists made itself felt in higher education as well after the turn of the century. Parties to the larger discussion included a combative ideology known as ultramontanism, which posited the ultimate primacy of the Pope. Indeed, in his pamphlet on papal infallibility, Bishop Francis Joseph Rudigier of Linz claimed that any state laws contradicting God's laws were non-binding on Austria's Catholics.⁵⁷

In the Social Democrats' camp there were several in addition to Victor Adler who took a prominent role in their contributions to discussions of education, but foremost among them were Engelbert Pernerstorfer and Karl Seitz. Pernerstorfer, introduced briefly above, had moved ever closer to the Social Democrats and joined the party formally in 1896. While never losing his German nationalist leanings, he became the art and feuilleton editor of the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* as well as the first Social Democrat Vice President of the lower house of parliament.⁵⁸

Also Viennese, Karl Seitz was the son of a timber merchant. His father died when he was only eight years old. Seitz's mother tried to carry on in the family business but was unable to keep it going and found herself reduced to taking in sewing. She ultimately was unable to support her six children, and Karl was consigned at the age of twelve to a municipal orphanage. Much is made, particularly in socialist literature, of Seitz's rise from orphan to prominent political leader, but it would be much fairer to see him as a bourgeois youngster who, as a result of pure misfortune, spent his adolescence and secondary

⁵⁷ Judson, *Habsburg Empire*, p. 286.

⁵⁸ *Österreichisches biographisches Lexikon 1815-1850* Online-Edition, www.biographien.ac.at (August, 2016).

education in the company of children who had been less fortunate than he in their selection of parents. From a very early age then, Seitz had seen both sides of the social divide between bourgeois and proletariat in the most close-up and intense way. In any event, though he was apprenticed to a tailor at the age of fourteen, Seitz had attracted the attention of a liberal Vienna city councilman who managed to get him a place in teachers' college in St Pölten. By all accounts he was a very effective speaker. Moreover, even as the valedictorian at his graduation from teachers' college, he placed himself squarely in opposition to the conservative authorities. In a Vienna increasingly controlled by the Christian Socialists, Seitz's outspoken support of radical causes kept him in constant difficulties with authorities.⁵⁹

In the people's parliament the socialists set out their education agenda at the beginning, but not in such a coherent way as with social insurance. Victor Adler repeatedly introduced a proposal for a new minimum pay scale for teachers.⁶⁰ This measure was finally moved, after its fourth introduction, to the Instruction Committee, which produced a report for the House, but it made no further progress. Pernerstorfer took up the anti-clerical portfolio, demanding on several occasions in the XVIIIth session that schools and churches be separated then proposing at the start of the next session that seminaries be made private and revisiting both issues in subsequent sessions.⁶¹ Karl Seitz directed his attention to the curriculum, particularly in the *Volksschulen* and *Bürgerschulen*.⁶² The latter two came back to those aspects of the education debate every session until the end of

⁵⁹ *Österreichisches biographisches Lexikon 1815-1850* Online-Edition, www.biographien.ac.at (August, 2016) and R. Spitzer, *Karl Seitz – Waisenknabe, Staatspräsident, Bürgermeister von Wien* (Vienna, 1994).

⁶⁰ *Stenographische Protokolle des Abgeordnetenhauses, XVIII. Session, 93. Sitzung; Beilage* no. 1028, XIX. Session, 1. Sitzung; *Beilage* no. 109, XX. Session, 1. Sitzung; *Beilage* no. 184, and XXI. Session, 3. Sitzung, *Beilage* nos. 48 (draft) and 1691 (report).

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, XVIII. Session, 40. & 41. Sitzung, 4 and 5 December 1907, pp. 2948-2963 and 3053 then XIX. Session, 1. Sitzung, 10 March 1909, p. 6 and *Beilage* no. 107 (draft law).

⁶² There were eight years of school required by *Reichsgesetzblatt* Nr. 62/1869: five years of *Volksschule* and three years of *Bürgerschule*. Though that law was heavily amended in 1883 and 1905, the basic structure and truancy ages remained unchanged.

the Monarchy. In the XIXth Session, Luděk Pík, Czech Social Democrat first elected to parliament in 1907,⁶³ introduced the idea of co-education, but given the tone of the other parts of the debate, that can only have been getting the idea on record. However meagre the results of their efforts in the fields of schools and instruction, no one could have been unclear in 1918 on what the Social Democratic education policy would be.

Aside from the forum offered by parliament, several of the socialist leaders, most notably Karl Seitz, had become active in the *Verein "Freie Schule"*. This organisation was founded in 1905 by a group who shared concerns about the influence on schools of the Catholic Church. According to their statutes, they were a "non-political association with the aim of founding schools and educational facilities... free from any political or confessional tendency..." At the time, the *Zentralverein der Wiener Lehrerschaft*, led by Seitz and dominated by the Social Democrats, had withered under the pressure of the Christian Socials, having declined to only 87 teachers (men and women).⁶⁴ The new *Verein "Freie Schule"* took up the struggle. The latter was very bourgeois, appeared Liberal and appealed for support to all anti-clericals regardless of social position or party affiliation. For example, among their initial supporters were Emil Fey, hardly a socialist (eventually *Heimwehr* leader in the 1920s and 1930s), Franz Exner, youngest son of the architect of the 1848 reform of secondary education, and Ernst Mach, mathematician and physicist (whose name is of course associated with the speed of sound) along with many other prominent citizens and academics, including socialists like Seitz, Pernerstorfer and Schrammel.⁶⁵ Despite being led by Social Democrats, the movement had grown to 216 local branches and toward 15,000 members by 1910.⁶⁶

⁶³ Knauer, *Das österreichische Parlament*, p. 145.

⁶⁴ Spitzer, *Karl Seitz*, p. 20.

⁶⁵ 'Freie Schule', Vienna, 1905.

⁶⁶ H. Engelbrecht, *Geschichte des österreichischen Bildungswesen*, vol. 4, *von 1848 bis zum Ende der Monarchie* (Vienna, 1988), pp. 126-127.

It was at one of their events that Professor Otto Wahrmund delivered a lecture which particularly upset the Catholic establishment, simultaneously bringing into sharp relief the issues of academic freedom and the role of the Church as well as the status of its dogma. Wahrmund's lecture, entitled “*Katholische Weltanschauung und freie Wissenschaft*” (the Catholic View of the World and Freedom of Science), sounds only mildly controversial by today's standards, but at the time it caused great excitement, for example casting some doubt on the likelihood of virgin birth.⁶⁷ Seitz's biographer Spitzer related that few knew what the fuss was about. Though the lecture was made a pamphlet, this was confiscated as soon as it appeared. There ensued a sort of cat and mouse game, with liberal members of parliament trying to read the speech in the house but being blocked. Ultimately, Seitz was able to get the speech from Wahrmund himself and read excerpts in parliament, which were then reported in the papers, including the *Reichspost*. The Papal Nuncio demanded the dismissal of Professor Wahrmund, but the Minister of Culture and Instruction, Gustav Marchet, a liberal, was unwilling to take that step. Professor Wahrmund was ultimately transferred from his position at Innsbruck to Prag, not least thanks to pressure from Archduke Franz Ferdinand, then heir apparent.⁶⁸ The lecture, even before the contents were generally known, sparked protests and some violence on both sides, and, according to Cohen, this was one of the rare occasions on which a professor lost a position due to politics.⁶⁹

During the war the Social Democrats brought no proposals before the House, and indeed there was little opportunity for them to do so. Upon the establishment of the Republic then, one would expect the socialists to produce a torrent of provisions, and that they did, but little to deal with the debates which had raged before 1914. There were

⁶⁷ L. Wahrmund, *Katholische Weltanschauung und freie Wissenschaft* (Munich, 1908), p. 5.

⁶⁸ Spitzer, *Karl Seitz*, pp. 30-31.

⁶⁹ G. Cohen, *Education and Middle Class Society in Imperial Austria 1848-1918* (West Lafayette, Ind., 1996), p. 111.

nearly three dozen measures passed between 1918 and 1920, most of which dealt with teachers' pay, which redeemed the repeated attempts of the Social Democrats to establish minimum standards in that area.⁷⁰ Provision was also made for the appointment of local school inspectors, to be approved by the Ministry of Culture.⁷¹ In the area of academic freedom, university students had their right of assembly confirmed.⁷² Finally, central government undertook the construction of teachers' colleges – six at the outset with more intimated.⁷³

Like education, housing was a local government matter in Austria. As people flocked from the countryside to the factory jobs and other opportunities and to the attractions of city life, urban centres everywhere struggled to provide housing. Cities in Austria faced that challenge. For example, from the birth of the Dual Monarchy until the outbreak of the Great War, Vienna and its near suburbs saw population more than double.⁷⁴

Year	Civilian Population		
	Inner (incl Favoriten)	Outer (ex Favoriten)	Total
1869	607,514	235,437	842,951
1880	704,756	385,363	1,090,119
1890	817,299	524,598	1,341,897
1900	984,762	663,573	1,648,335
1910	1,095,260	832,346	1,927,606
Increase	80.3%	253.3%	128.7%

Viewed as a whole, the building industry seems to have kept pace and even to have gained ground very slightly relative to the population challenge.⁷⁵

⁷⁰ Most notably *Staatsgesetzblatt*, nos. 571 & 572/1919. These dealt respectively with basic pay and supplements for HFE (571) and primary and secondary (572).

⁷¹ *Staatsgesetzblatt*, no. 291/1919.

⁷² *Ibid.*, no. 460/1919.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, no. 542/1919.

⁷⁴ P. Feldbauer, *Stadtwachstum und Wohnungsnot – Determinanten unzureichender Wohnungsversorgung in Wien 1848-1914* (Vienna, 1977), Tabelle 2, p. 39. The author explained that the growth is slightly less lopsided with Favoriten counted as inner. Also note, the suburbs were absorbed into Vienna proper in 1890. None of the above includes Floridsdorf, which was not absorbed until 1905.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, Tabelle 14, page 314. Note that I have translated *Bestandteile* as room, whereas strictly speaking that

<i>Year</i>	<i>Civilian population</i>	<i>dwellings</i>	<i>rooms</i>	<i>Rooms per dwelling</i>	<i>Persons per dwelling</i>	<i>Persons per room</i>
1869	842,951	166,390			5.07	
1880	1,090,119	230,000			4.74	
1890	1,341,897	308,185	920,579	2.99	4.35	1.46
1900	1,648,335	373,497	1,164,131	3.12	4.41	1.42
1910	1,927,606	479,577	1,417,538	2.96	4.02	1.36
1914	2,072,556	519,258	1,534,170	2.95	3.99	1.35

However, rising property prices favoured the more salubrious parts of the city; so investment in those areas was more attractive. A slowdown in the building business came toward the end of the 1880s, characterised by a falling level of construction employment and tightening credit conditions. In such an environment, with less capital available, the downturn was more pronounced in the suburbs; so the divergence between sought-after and less attractive areas became more pronounced.⁷⁶ The credit squeeze was not made gentler by the transition to the Gold Standard, begun in effect during the 70s but formalised in 1892. The wisdom of the day prescribed tightening the money supply to stabilize the currency.⁷⁷

At the same time there were a number of social developments affecting residential life, particularly the increasing preponderance of discrete family households as distinct from those which included non-family members, like staff and apprentices as well as domestic servants. The more modern family, however, often found it helpful, perhaps necessary, to take in lodgers to help pay the rent. A much more quaint feature of the time were lodgers known as *Bettgeher*, who would avail themselves of beds when the latter were not in use by 'normal' members of the household. Although numbers of *Bettgeher*

might be slightly misleading, since the German word would include hallways and closets. Nevertheless, the picture of crowding is clear.

⁷⁶ P. Feldbauer, *Stadtwachstum und Wohnungsnot*, pp. 93-99.

⁷⁷ F. Butschek, *Österreichische Wirtschaftsgeschichte von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart* (Vienna, 2011), p. 159.

and other non-family residents were reducing as the Great War approached, they were increasingly concentrated in the poorer parts of the city. The implications of this trend are clearer when the small dwellings are separated from the total, as in the following table of “Changes in Dwelling occupancy during the *Gründerzeit*”.⁷⁸

<i>Column</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>2x4</i>
<i>Year</i>	<i>people per dwelling</i>	<i>Index</i>	<i>% small dwellings</i>	<i>Index</i>	<i>Weighted occupancy</i>
1857	5.3	100%	32.4	100%	100.00%
1890	4.4	83%	43.1	138%	110.39%
1917	4.0	76%	49.6	153%	116.28%

By this assessment there was a 16.28% deterioration in the occupancy of small dwellings. Therefore, during the last six decades of the Monarchy, smaller dwellings were becoming steadily more crowded even as the overall housing situation was on average improving.

This problem did not go unnoticed. In 1894 Professor Eugen Philippovich surveyed Ottakring, Favoriten and Brigittenau and published a study in which he highlighted not only the problem but also some of the predictable deleterious effects in terms of public health and mortality. Philippovich was a prominent and highly respected member of the faculty at the University of Vienna and the author of an economics textbook which was popular long after his passing in 1917. A member of the Fabian Society, he was interested in the practical application of economics.⁷⁹ Following his tour of a number of small dwellings in the course of his survey, Philippovich commented:

One can go from one dwelling to the next, and they are all missing everything we are used to regarding as the basics for a healthy bourgeois life. The dwelling is merely a protective cover from the vagaries of the weather, a night-shelter, which due to the way people are crowded together, and due to the lack of peace and air and cleanliness, can never become a place of rest for the exhausted body. These dwellings offer no comfort and no refreshment. They have no attraction for those tired from work. Whoever has descended into them, or been born into them, must

⁷⁸ H. Bobek and E. Lichtenberger, *Wien: Bauliche Gestalt und Entwicklung seit der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Graz, 1966), table 7, p. 60.

⁷⁹ *Österreichisches Biographisches Lexikon* Online-Edition, www.biographien.ac.at (August, 2016).

physically or spiritually fade and waste away or go wild.⁸⁰

He pointed out that to close the sub-standard accommodation would only increase the pressure of demand for the rest, and he questioned whether construction of suitable substitutes would represent a worthwhile investment opportunity. In conclusion he called upon public bodies to encourage remedial action. Specific proposals included increasing the number of parks and granting tax concessions.⁸¹

The legislative response to these conclusions was some time coming, and while well-intentioned, it was not effective. In 1902 a law was promulgated which was designed to address the problem by means of tax concessions. The offering was a 24-year tax holiday, and the law was quite specific about the nature and size of buildings eligible, whether as new construction or as conversions, as well as to the prospective tenants, to be sure they would be workers. There were strict standards as to the minimum size of the accommodation. The oversight of the scheme fell to the Interior Ministry.⁸² Unfortunately, the legislation proved a complete failure.⁸³ In fact, there were a mere 498 homes provided under the terms of the law, as revealed 1910 debate concerning its subsequent extension and expansion.⁸⁴

This very lengthy exchange of views dealt largely with the general problem of inflation and in particular the issue of tariffs and restrictions on the import of meat; so it was only nominally about the provision of dwellings for workers. The measure under consideration was ultimately carried, though there were Social Democrats on both sides of the issue. Those in favour were convinced that a measure which could provide more

⁸⁰ Bobek and Lichtenberger, *Wien: Bauliche Gestalt*, p. 60.

⁸¹ E. Philippovich von Philippsberg, *Wiener Wohnverhältnisse* (Berlin, 1894).

⁸² *Reichsgesetzblatt*, no. 144/1902.

⁸³ W. Ogris, 'Die Rechtsentwicklung in Cisleithanien 1848-1918', A. Wandruszka and P. Urbanitsch (eds.), *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848-1918*, vol. 2 *Verwaltung und Rechtswesen* (Vienna, 1975), p. 642.

⁸⁴ *Stenographische Protokolle des Abgeordnetenhauses, XX. Session, 66. Sitzung*, 24 November 1910, pp. 3891-3897, speech by Abg. Horsky.

dwellings as well as jobs for construction workers was worth supporting, even if it was lacking in some respects. That group included Seitz and Pernerstorfer. On the other side were those, like Glöckel and Renner, who thought the proposal was inadequate and beside the point. Indeed the report of the Inflation Committee noted that the sums contemplated for the first decade of the project were less than the amount being allocated that very year in the same way to the much smaller city of Budapest for the same purpose.⁸⁵ In any event the 1902 law, as well as its several successors and amendments over the next several years, only provided funds for loans and further the ability to guarantee loans. As long as government was largely in the hands of ‘taxpayers’, which is to say present or prospective property owners, there was little hope of meaningful legislation to address housing shortage. Why would those interests support an increase in supply?

Moreover, it is clear that the central bureaucracy was in unfamiliar territory dealing with construction of housing. In the spring of 1911, right after the new Housing Fund was created, the Ministry of Public Works and the Interior Ministry struggled to find the basis for implementation. Public Works wanted a dedicated new authority to exercise strict oversight, since they thought the relevant law on co-operatives did not provide a satisfactory structure, even though on a case-by-case basis the articles of any co-op applying for public assistance were required to allow for possible state supervision. A conference was arranged by the two ministries, which sat on three occasions during that month.⁸⁶ Both Jakob Reumann, in his Town Councillor role, and Karl Renner, as Library Assistant, were at the final sitting, the former participating in the discussion, both about editorial matters, in this case ‘elastic terminology’, and substantial ones, being possible restrictions on the co-operatives themselves. The conference discussed every provision of

⁸⁵ *Stenographische Protokolle des Abgeordnetenhauses, XX. Session, Beilage* no. 921 (report).

⁸⁶ Memo of 10 April 1911 from Ministry of Public Works to Interior Ministry, *Allgemeine Verwaltungsarchiv*, ref. 1911/12458.

the new law in turn, the result being a slightly amended version which was announced in June of that year.⁸⁷ While the results of this measure itself were ultimately not impressive, Social Democrats had earned and were making use of positions in the deliberative and executive machinery of government.

Against that rather modest background, an important item in the order of business after the war was dwelling space. The first measure to that end empowered (and obliged) the *Gemeinde* to fill all the available dwelling units.⁸⁸ As their next step, the new Provisional Government renewed the *Wohnungsfürsorgefond* to replace the old one (in liquidation) to be run along the same lines.⁸⁹ But in the straightened circumstances of post-war Austria, a measure which had not been terribly successful before the war would struggle to make any major impact. Furthermore, in practical terms, as well as in the political and administrative experiences of all concerned, dwellings were a local matter. Interestingly, the Socialists' principal opposition, the Christian Socials, had made a start on another approach before the war. They were enthusiastic municipal socialists, like city governments elsewhere in the world at the same time, and one of the programmes they started in a modest way was the construction of city-owned housing, *Gemeindewohnungen*. It had taken the Christian Socials a long time to come to that point, and indeed it was not promising for them, given their backing from bourgeois property owners, but they presided over the construction of 250 small dwellings for larger families just before the outbreak of the war.⁹⁰ For their part, the post-war Social Democrats reached back to 1878 to build on their opponents' idea. In that year, the Monarchy had promulgated a law to promote the construction of railways.⁹¹ The provisions in question dealt with the reasons for the

⁸⁷ *Stenographische Protokolle* of a sitting at the Ministry of Public Works, 27 April 1911, *Allgemeine Verwaltungsarchiv*, ref. 1911/16495.

⁸⁸ *Staatsgesetzblatt*, no. 22/1918.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, no. 45/1919.

⁹⁰ Bobek and Lichtenberger, *Wien: Bauliche Gestalt*, pp. 56-57.

⁹¹ *Reichsgesetzblatt*, no. 30/1878, §§2 & 3.

compulsory purchase of land as well as the provision of easements necessary to make the purchase effective, all based on the pertinent provision of statutory law.⁹² The Social Democrats' new law merely amended the old one from 1878, giving the local administrative authorities and certain associations the authority to use the compulsory purchase procedure for obtaining land, provided the property in question was committed to small dwellings and to remain such for at least 50 years.⁹³

It is clear from the foregoing that the Social Democrats were able to use their first several sessions of participation in the legislative process, not only to sharpen their rhetorical and procedural skills, but also, and more importantly, to bring before all their opponents in the ruling elite a coherent case for each of their proposals. Revolutionary rhetoric was at a minimum; rational and careful advocacy was in clear evidence. The results during the first years of the Republic offer clear continuity with their efforts in the last years of the Monarchy, even if they seem not to have carried through all their proposals.

Outside parliament, from the earliest May Day procession in 1890, the Social Democrats had been at pains to be sure their public demonstrations were orderly and peaceful. The purpose of their demonstrations was to call attention to issues, and it was important for the Social Democrats that the best possible public impression be made. As Judson noted:

Social Democratic mass rituals, especially the carefully choreographed annual Mayday celebrations, became a critical focus of party attention. Such festivals were the only times when a broad range of people could enact their participation as a popular collective. Austrian leaders like Adler also treated the annual Mayday celebrations as an opportunity to emphasize worker maturity, respectability and dignity in public spaces like Vienna's Ringstrasse, sites not normally occupied by workers.⁹⁴

⁹² *Allgemeines bürgerliche Gesetzbuch*, §365.

⁹³ *Staatsgesetzblatt*, no. 82/1919.

⁹⁴ Judson, *Habsburg Empire*, p. 372.

It will be helpful to review why this was so, since they also portrayed themselves as a revolutionary movement. In theory revolutionaries should not be interested in peace and order, let alone eager to impress the bourgeoisie, but there are very good reasons why the practical tactics were different. To begin with, from an ideological standpoint, starting with Hainfeld, the Social Democrats in Austria were united and clear that they were promoters of democracy and furthermore that they saw in the ballot box the means of achieving their aims. For this reason, their top priorities always included direct and equal suffrage. When that goal had been reached for male voters in parliamentary elections, they had followed with proposals to reform provincial and local franchise along the same lines and for women's suffrage. There was no lack of continuity in the direction or focus of Social Democrats' suffrage proposals or of their other aims, particularly their commitment to parliamentary democracy, and all their objectives were clearly not necessarily meant to be sequential. As a practical matter, it was obvious to the Social Democrats that they did not have the numbers to make any immediate progress without the support of non-socialist voters or their party representatives. Disorderly behaviour would only discourage the needed support.

Social Democratic leaders were driven by the realistic appreciation of their practical position. Political opponents had most of the wealth, and the authorities were able to use armed force. If either or both felt unduly threatened, it would be to the detriment of the Social Democrats and particularly of their constituents. This was the basis for putting the friendliest possible face on demonstrations, just as it was the grounds on which the party leadership had been unwilling to consider use of the general strike in support of their suffrage demands. Ultimately, the events of 15 July 1927 would fully and unequivocally vindicate that cautious stance, but there was to be an early learning opportunity.

While parliament debated unproductively following the elections of 1907, prices

were rising, making life very uncomfortable for large sections of the population. In his work on the economy of the Monarchy, David Good surveyed the changes in the cost of living, and his analysis provides a good picture of the process.⁹⁵

<u>Year</u>	<u>Index</u>	<i>% change</i>		
		<u>annual</u>	<u>Rolling 3 year</u>	<u>Rolling 5 year</u>
1897	77.8	0.8		
1898	78.4	0.8		
1899	80	2	3.6	
1900	80.4	0.5	3.3	
1901	78	-3	-0.5	1.0
1902	78.6	0.8	-0.2	1.3
1903	79.9	1.6	-0.6	1.9
1904	81.4	1.8	4.4	1.8
1905	85.6	5.1	8.9	6.5
1906	86.8	1.4	8.6	11.3
1907	90.3	4	10.9	14.9
1908	90.8	0.5	6.1	13.6
1909	91.8	1.1	5.8	12.8
1910	95.4	3.9	5.6	11.4
1911	99.5	4.3	9.6	14.6
1912	100.8	1.3	9.8	11.6
1913	101.2	0.4	6.1	11.5
1914	100	-1.2	0.5	8.9

When Social Democrat leader Karl Seitz addressed the house on the subject in the summer of 1909, he cited some specific price comparisons, among them the cost of flour, which had risen from 26 *heller* (Kr 0.26) in 1895 (according to the Statistical Report of the Vienna Magistrate) to between 40 and 48 in March of 1909.⁹⁶ This was an increase of between 54% and 85%, compared with David Good's index change of slightly less than 20% between 1897 and 1909. It is not unreasonable to suppose that the difference is accounted for by the fact that food, in this case flour, is only part of the cost of living.

⁹⁵ D. Good, *The Economic Rise of the Habsburg Empire 1750-1914* (Berkeley, Ca., 1984), Table 29, pp. 170-171.

⁹⁶ *Stenographische Protokolle des Abgeordnetenhauses, XIX. Session, 35. Sitzung, 23 June 1909, p. 2198.*

Moreover, the role played by food in the overall budget will differ by income level. For the working class, according to Erich Bodzenta, expenditure was as follows (including much more recent data for illustrative purposes):⁹⁷

<i>Expenditure in Vienna Workers' Households</i>		
<i>Component</i>	<i>% share</i>	
	<i>In 1910</i>	<i>In 1977</i>
Nutrition	59.2	27.2
Rent	14.2	7.7
Heat & light	4.5	5.3
Domestic supplies	1.3	6.7
Clothing	8.8	8.9
Miscellany	12	44.2
Total	100	100

It is neither difficult nor surprising to see that increases in the price of food were especially burdensome for working class households. During his speech to the House, Seitz acknowledged that some of the increases were due to market forces, thus not in the control of governments, but he argued quite strongly that government policy was also a big factor. The Social Democrats made the case insistently that tariffs and import restrictions were largely to blame for the crisis, and the impact of those factors would only become more marked as inflation moved on. In fact, Seitz had suggested as early as 1906, in a debate about the sugar tariff, that duties might be designed to fall more heavily on suppliers than on customers and to sink when the base price of the goods in question increased materially.⁹⁸ This latter proposal, offered as it was just before the end of a debate, came to nothing.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ E. Hanisch, *Der lange Schatten des Staates: Österreichische Gesellschaftsgeschichte im 20. Jahrhundert* (Vienna, 1994), table 14, p. 77, citing source: Bodzenta, Erich. 'Änderungen der österreichischen Sozialstruktur in der Ersten und Zweiten Republik' in E. Zöllner (ed.), *Österreichs Sozialstrukturen in historischer Sicht* (Vienna 1980), p. 161.

⁹⁸ *Stenographische Protokolle des Abgeordnetenhauses, XVII. Session, 435. Sitzung, 5 Oct 1906*, p. 38686. This was in a debate on the sugar tariff.

⁹⁹ Spitzer, *Karl Seitz*, p. 46.

Not only had the large landowners in Cisleithania long enjoyed a voice in government out of proportion to their numbers, even if that had recently been reduced in parliament, but furthermore the same interests were more predominant in Hungary. As a result, trade policy was at least very conscious of, if not heavily influenced by, agrarian interests. Importation of meat and grain was severely restricted, or even forbidden altogether.¹⁰⁰ In Brügel's opinion, this was the consequence of Hungarian dominance of the Monarchy's foreign policy as a whole, including trade policy. While it was easy for Brügel and contemporaries to blame Hungary, it would not be unfair to point out that the latter had the ability to block or at least slow any changes in the Dual Monarchy which would be to their detriment.¹⁰¹ In this instance, that was all the control they needed. During the last decade before the war, that trade policy and the further effect of the annexation crisis on relations with Austria's neighbours to the southeast severely damaged the Monarchy's trading position. Whatever the broader implications, the immediate impact was on the wallets and the diet of the city residents in the Empire, particularly among the Social Democrats' core constituency.

While the rising prices first affected grain products, the pressure spread during 1910 to meat as well. By autumn, the trend had become more broadly appreciated. On Sunday, 2 October 1910, several hundred thousand took to the streets to give vent to their frustration in a demonstration organised by the Social Democrats:

The day was sunny and temperate, the crowd in a good mood, the parade filled with colourful banners and signs denouncing Weiskirchner as a tool of the agrarians and displaying other appropriate themes. Unlike during many Ringstraße demonstrations sponsored by the socialists, the police had no trouble this day, but the theme of the parade and its enormous popularity could hardly comfort the ruling elites in the Rathaus. For not only had the parade enjoyed the joint sponsorship of the Social Democrats and the local *bürgerlich* liberals, but the sidewalks lining the Ring were filled with thousands of men and women cheering in support.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ L. Brügel, *Geschichte der österreichischen Sozialdemokratie* (Vienna, 1925), vol. 5, p. 15.

¹⁰¹ T. Otte, *July Crisis: The World's Descent into War, Summer 1914* (Cambridge, 2014), p. 61.

¹⁰² J. Boyer, *Culture and Political Crisis in Vienna: Christian Socialism in Power, 1897-1918* (Chicago, IL,

It had, indeed, been a successful day for the Social Democrats, even if Boyer seemed to think that uncharacteristic. The *Neue Freie Presse* commented the following day:

Bourgeoisie and workers, the representatives of the most varied parties, the advocates of wholly contradictory convictions and world-views, found themselves together on this occasion. The political significance of the resistance to the ongoing deterioration of living conditions caused by state actions went far beyond the momentary worry about daily meat. When many years ago the struggle for agricultural tariffs began, triggered by Prince Bismarck, speakers in the parliament, responding to warnings about artificial increases in the price of food, asked dismissively 'where is the consumer?'. Yesterday the consumer could be seen in the Ringstraße. He came in his hundreds of thousands, hardly concerned about the political leanings of his neighbour but no longer willing to tolerate the heavy pressure of agrarian trade policy.¹⁰³

The paper judged that the numbers taking part were at least as large as, if not larger than, the number involved in the *Wahlrechtstag* event of 28 November 1905. As on that occasion, the presence of ushers at street corners wearing red armbands was noted.¹⁰⁴

There was little police presence, and then only to direct the traffic, an effort which ultimately proved futile, whereupon the streets were closed. In fact, there were 1,200 police on duty along with first aid and medical assistance provisions at several locations in the Inner City, but they had only to deal with some taken ill from standing in the heat for long periods.¹⁰⁵ The day's events were also covered in the *Reichspost*, but of course not in such glowing and enthusiastic terms and then only at the foot of page three. The article made out that the event was almost entirely a social democratic production, trivializing the role of other groups apart from Jews, and bemoaning the lack of any attribution to the latter of responsibility for the crisis.¹⁰⁶

The following month, Social Democrat Jakob Reumann introduced in parliament another proposal to remove the restrictions, now both as to time and amount, on the

1995), p. 268.

¹⁰³ *Neue Freie Presse*, 3 October 1910.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ *Reichspost*, 3 October 1910.

importation of meat from outside the Monarchy, the focus being on Argentina. Jakob Reumann, introduced briefly above, was born out of wedlock to a working girl and a doctor in Vienna in 1853 and first worked as a sculptor's apprentice before becoming a turner in a *meerschäum* pipe factory. From very early he became active in union work and as a Social Democrat. During the 1890s he worked toward better pay for home workers with the ultimate aim of eliminating that way of life. He was an early editor of the then weekly *Arbeiter-Zeitung* along with other roles in union and co-operative circles, and he established himself in the course of these activities as an exceptional political agitator. Reumann would eventually become the first socialist Mayor of Vienna in 1919, in which capacity he oversaw the establishment of the successful community housing programme. Less well-known was his engagement and support of Hugo Breitner which ultimately put the finances of the city on a sustainable footing.¹⁰⁷

In advocating the lifting of import restrictions, Reumann argued along three lines: need, facilities and restrictions with regard to Hungary. He initiated the debate on 29 November and wound it up two days later. The contents of his case are worth summarising, particularly as they are not the least Marxist, either in tone or in substance. As early as 1869, he argued, the government had become aware that the supply of meat was not growing as rapidly as the population, and there had been no sign of either side of this equation changing in the interim. The result was that the shortage had got to alarming proportions, had brought predictable effects on the price of meat and would certainly not be a momentary phenomenon. Moreover, Austria found itself in the midst of a Foot and Mouth epidemic, which only served to aggravate the problem. This would take two years to run its course. In terms of facilities, ship owners would have to equip vessels to provide refrigerated cargo capabilities, and that would require an investment which would not be

¹⁰⁷ *Österreichisches biographisches Lexikon*, vol. 9 (part 41, 1984), p. 96.

justified by a small number of shipments. The answer to both these facts was that importation of meat should be unrestricted. In that case the shippers were prepared to take a chance on the quantities. From the standpoint of protecting domestic producers, Reumann pointed out that they would in any case have a competitive advantage by virtue of their much lower costs; so that if domestic production were to reach adequacy, Argentine products would cease to be an issue by virtue of the cost of delivering them. Finally, he took issue with the notion that Hungary's permission had to be sought and obtained to allow imports from Argentina. He pointed out that the applicable clause in the *Ausgleich* treaty was only for situations in which there were veterinary considerations, and he called into question the efficacy of import bans in light of the arrival of Foot and Mouth from Romania despite such a ban. He further argued that Argentina would certainly have rigorous procedures to protect their most valuable export product.¹⁰⁸ Trade Minister Weiskirchner's response was unconvincing, and two days later Reumann delivered a forceful and considered rebuttal, but his proposal was nevertheless defeated by the Christian Socials and the German Nationalists.¹⁰⁹ It is difficult to gauge the public view of the specifics in the trade debate, since the newspapers had their own unabashed slant. However, based on the turnout for the demonstration, one can conclude that rising prices of certain foodstuffs, and particularly meat, had the attention of not only the press, but also the public and their representatives.

Meanwhile, there was more demanding government attention than food prices and nationality issues per se. One of the coalition partners supporting the government was the Polish Club, whose deputies were determined to secure the construction of an expensive canal in Galicia. With the budget requiring attention, a reform of the Order of Business

¹⁰⁸ *Stenographische Protokolle des Abgeordnetenhauses, XX. Session, 69. Sitzung*, 29 November 1910, pp. 4051–4057.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 71. Sitzung, 1 December 1910, pp. 4244–4253.

under consideration and the trade agreement with Serbia being negotiated, Minister President Bienert asked if he could count on Polish support most notably for the budget. He was unable to get a satisfactory answer; so on 11 December he tendered the resignation of his entire cabinet to the Emperor,¹¹⁰ who in turn asked that they carry on to allow the opportunity to deal with urgent matters while efforts were under way to put together another government.¹¹¹ By the end of the week, having to an extent come to their senses, parliament had attended to the most urgent matters, if only temporarily.¹¹² At the end of March, the Emperor adjourned parliament, then dissolved it and announced new elections to be held on 13 June (with run-offs a week later where required).¹¹³

The elections could not have come at a better time for the Social Democrats, with their heavily urban, industrial constituents. The inflation issue was quite important for them, and it offered a bridge from their working class supporters to the less well-off bourgeoisie. Their most direct opposition, the Christian Socials, were in a difficult spot as well. Their founding father and most important leader, Karl Lueger, had died in March of 1910. Lueger had tried to arrange a succession, but the process proved less than straightforward and resulted in prolonged infighting. Moreover, some Christian Socials were ministers in Bienert's government, most notably Trade Minister Richard Weiskirchner, a seasoned and close confidant and protégé of Lueger, and arguably the anointed successor as Mayor of Vienna (In the event the job went to partially deaf Josef Neumayer, long-time Vice Mayor.).

From the time of his accession to the post of Trade Minister, Weiskirchner had unavoidably been heavily involved in the controversy surrounding the increases in the

¹¹⁰ *Neue Freie Presse*, 11 and 12 December 1910.

¹¹¹ *Stenographische Protokolle des Abgeordnetenhauses, XX. Session, 78. Sitzung*, 13 December 1910, p. 4608.

¹¹² *Neue Freie Presse*, 17 December 1910. This included a 3-month provisional budget, a 6-month extension of the bank franchise and 1-year extension of reform discussions for the Order of Business.

¹¹³ *Reichsgesetzblatt*, no. 62/1911 of 8 April 1911.

price of grain and then meat. By the time he took office, the trade relations with the Balkan states were a complete muddle.¹¹⁴ He was unable during his time in office to separate himself from the agrarian, especially Hungarian, interests best served by minimizing imports of foodstuffs. When he finally secured an agreement with Serbia in July of 1910, it allowed the importation of a derisory amount of meat: 15,000 cattle and 50,000 swine, but no live animals.¹¹⁵ The problem with Serbia on the livestock front was the result of the ‘Pig War’ which began when Austria decided in 1906 to stop the importation of Serbian livestock. The aims of that measure are not important here, but it was part of a souring of relations between Austria and Serbia. The effect was to put pressure on the supply of meat within the Dual Monarchy, much to the delight of its resident farmers, and to encourage Serbia to find other customers, which they did with great success. More important for Austrian consumers however, negotiations with Serbia to recommence meat imports were difficult.¹¹⁶ As a consequence, the Social Democrats were able to identify their opponents directly with a major failure. As early as December of 1910, they had called attention to the very modest accomplishments of the government. The score after the better part of two years in office was not impressive. At the start of 1910, parliament had empowered the government to negotiate trade agreements with a number of foreign governments, subject to parliamentary ratification. Only one agreement had been negotiated, that with Serbia, and it was not brought before the house for ratification. There was no sign of other agreements.¹¹⁷

The Social Democrats made the best possible use of the adverse effect on the everyday lives of their constituents thanks to the policies of the existing government. The day the new elections were announced, Party Secretary Ferdinand Skaret wrote to party

¹¹⁴ C. Mertens, *Richard Weiskirchner: der unbekannte Bürgermeister* (Vienna, 2006), p. 91.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 94-95.

¹¹⁶ F. Bridge, *The Habsburg Monarchy among the Great Powers, 1815-1918* (New York, NY., 1990), p. 262.

¹¹⁷ *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 3 December 1910.

workers in the form of a bulletin that work needed to be started immediately with the compilation of a voter list – party members and potential supporters – and the building of an election fund.¹¹⁸ Skaret, born in Reichenberg in 1862, was the son of a weaver's assistant. Following his apprenticeship and a period as a journeyman, he came to Vienna as a carpenter's assistant in 1880. His union duties started as Secretary of the Carpenters' Union, and he was ultimately a leading figure among the Social Democrats in Prague as well as of the *Gewerkschaftskommission*. Skaret was elected to parliament in 1907.¹¹⁹ Karl Seitz announced in a subsequent circular the formation of information points to supply answers to election questions, including status of parliamentary work, behaviour and activities of the parties and of individual members, their voting records and the work of parliamentary committees. He also appealed to former members to get involved in the campaign.¹²⁰ They highlighted the unpopular economic *Ausgleich* of 1907 with Hungary, tax increases, rejection of numerous Social Democrat proposals for improving worker protection and conditions and for pay deals with post and railway workers, the deteriorating meat supply and of course the rapidly increasing food prices.¹²¹

As election day neared, the voters were faced not only with that sad record but also with the quarrels between the various wings and interest groups in the Christian Social Party including corruption and enrichment scandals and accusations involving their leading party personalities.¹²² It was not just the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* poking fun at the Christian Socials. The *Neue Freie Presse* was equally robust in their attacks. Not two weeks before voters would be going to the polls, it led an evening edition with ridicule of Christian Social constituency chaos and spokesmen contradicting one another,¹²³ and on the 12 June,

¹¹⁸ Bulletin from Party Secretariat dated 30 March 1911, *VGA Partei Archiv vor 1934*, Mappe 49.

¹¹⁹ *Österreichisches biographisches Lexikon 1815-1950 Online-Edition*, www.biographien.ac.at (August, 2016).

¹²⁰ Party circulars from April 1911, *VGA Partei Archiv vor 1934*, Mappe no. 49.

¹²¹ Mertens, *Richard Weiskirchner*, p. 114.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 113.

¹²³ *Neue Freie Presse*, 1 June 1911.

the leading article was entitled: “On the day before the elections – the Bitterness against the Christian Socials”. The entire top of the front page called the Christian Socials to account for selling out their urban constituents in their desire to build a coalition between their city and their country – that is agrarian – supporters. When the votes had been counted, and the run-offs completed, the result was a solid but not unqualified success for the Social Democrats. They lost some support to radical nationalists in Bohemia, as mentioned above, but came away with 19 of the 33 mandates in Vienna, where the Christian Socials lost 15 seats, leaving them with just three and one independent associate.¹²⁴ The Bohemian result triggered a certain amount of incredulity and searching for evidence of cheating by opponents, of course to no avail.¹²⁵

This was a clear affirmation of the Social Democrats’ strategy: appealing to a group wider than their core constituency, and even then their numbers were not quite enough to win a majority of the popular vote. Their share of the vote in the general election had been nearly 43%, a very impressive effort indeed in the last *Reichsrat* election before the war, and as it turned out for the Monarchy. Naturally, that result did not bring a commensurate number of seats in the House. Boyer's assessment of the election was that the Christian Socials had lost significant support amongst the modestly paid white collar workers and government employees either to the Social Democrats or the liberal or nationalist factions. The numbers suggest the Social Democrats were the chief beneficiary.¹²⁶

Sadly, the early summer of 1911 saw a further deterioration in the meat supply situation. The import of frozen meat from Argentina was not a big success because of high tariffs, which, combined with shipping costs, more than doubled the price of the meat. Furthermore, butchers were reportedly not keen to get involved with the red tape required

¹²⁴ Mertens, *Richard Weiskirchner*, pp. 115 – 117.

¹²⁵ Circular of 24 June 1911 from Party Secretariat, *VGA Partei Archiv vor 1934*, Mappe 49.

¹²⁶ Boyer, *Culture and Political Crisis*, p. 273.

for the sale of frozen meat and were able to turn the customers against the product.¹²⁷ On the other hand, Alois Maresch, Imperial Counsellor and Director of the *Erster Wiener Konsumverein* (First Vienna Consumers' Association) made clear that news of the cessation of the imports was very upsetting for the public, particularly since experts were warning of further shortages and commensurate price increases in the autumn. Although the initial shipment from Argentina had not appealed to Viennese tastes due to the presentation, subsequent shipments had been improved in that regard and had been well-received. Some agrarian spokesmen had referred to the Argentine meat as 'reject meat' which was wholly inappropriate since the product was well-regarded throughout the world. Having been led to expect 10,000 tons, there had only been 4,000, which was disappointing. Since the domestic cattle population was not expected to be adequate, continuing imports would be important, and in addition, they offered consumers significant savings – up to *Kr* 1 daily.¹²⁸ The day of that report in the *Neue Freie Presse*, the leading article again clarified that the terms of the economic *Ausgleich* allowed Hungary to prevent imports of meat to Austria only on veterinary grounds, but alluded to a 'secret' undertaking Weiskirchner had given in 1909 which was to seek Hungary's agreement to any imports from outside Austria-Hungary.¹²⁹

Both the Social Democrats and, not to be outdone, the Christian Socials organised assemblies on the following evening, 24 July, to rally support for the free importation of meat. According to police reports the Social Democrats attracted more attendance, but police also reported disturbances after the meeting, when a portion of the crowd tried to march to Parliament along the Ringstraße. The problems were confined to jeering and rock throwing,¹³⁰ but it would have been useful to note the ease with which the evening got out

¹²⁷ Mertens, *Richard Weiskirchner*, pp. 101-102.

¹²⁸ *Neue Freie Presse*, 22 July 2011.

¹²⁹ *Neue Freie Presse*, 23 July 2011, p. 7.

¹³⁰ Police report to the *Statthalterei Präsidium*, 24 July 1911, police ref. 2334 and *Statthalterei* ref. 2672,

of control. The police report seemed mild compared to the detail the following morning in the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*.¹³¹ The *Reichspost* covered the Christian Social assembly in detail, but it did not mention the Social Democrats' event nor did it comment on the troubles which seem to have followed the latter.¹³² This less than typical response could well have reflected the unease in Christian Social ranks about their prominent role in government at a time when their policies were unhelpful for their Viennese constituents.

Meanwhile, parliament had reconvened after the elections on 17 July but only met eight times before breaking up for the summer holidays on the 29th. During those few sittings, the inflation issue was most prominent in house debates, with the importation of Argentine beef being the main focus of contention. Ministers, including not only Agriculture Minister von Widmann but also Trade Minister Viktor Mataja,¹³³ cited veterinary, protectionist, and treaty reasons for denying entry to Argentine beef. Those in the house representing urban constituencies were outspoken in their criticism of the government and their Hungarian counterparts. In a lengthy speech, Deputy Schuhmeier criticised the former in the strongest terms. He pointed out that the modest quantity of imports permitted the previous year was not even enough to offset the decline in the domestic supply. He further reminded the house that, as early as 1904, Christian Socials had strongly advocated the importation of meat to help with scarcity and price pressure, but they had since become an agrarian party.¹³⁴ The conclusion of the day's debate was that a group of proposals was sent to the Inflation Committee with a request to come up

Niederösterreichisches Landesarchiv.

¹³¹ *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 25 July 1911.

¹³² *Reichspost*, 25 July 1911.

¹³³ Economist and civil servant, twice Minister of Trade (not to be confused with younger brother Heinrich, Christian Social Abg and eventually liaison between Seipel and the Heimwehr). *Österreichisches biographisches Lexikon 1815-1950 Online-Edition*, www.biographien.ac.at (August, 2016).

¹³⁴ *Stenographische Protokolle des Abgeordnetenhauses, XXI. Session, 6. Sitzung*, 27 July 1911, p. 324. Note Schuhmeier referred to a speech by the "now politically deceased" (i.e. since the election in June) Dep. Kunschak, tentatively suggesting it had been 20 June 1904, but that could not have been, since parliament did not meet between May and November that year, and anyway Kunschak was not a member until 1907, but the comment stood.

with a verbal report within 24 hours.¹³⁵ This was a bit ambitious, since the Inflation Committee was not even constituted until the next day. Nevertheless, the committee took up the issue in their first sitting and gamely produced a report within 24 hours of their formation. Both Widmann and Mataja were at the committee meeting. Deputy Leopold Erb, German People's Party, delivered the report, which included proposals by both Reumann and Ladislav Čech, a Young Czech, to the house the following day. Erb simply read the proposals to the House: first for the government to approve the import of frozen meat from overseas without reference to the Hungarians and second to enter into negotiations with Serbia with a view to altering the existing trade agreement to allow an increase in the imports of live cattle and meat. Minister President Gautsch spoke immediately after Erb and, on behalf of the government, rejected both proposals out of hand, the first on the basis that it would violate the treaty relationship with Hungary and the second because it would risk making Austria dependent on the importation of American meat.¹³⁶

Social Democratic leaders were keen to contrast their position with that of the government. Toward the end of August, they decided to employ a combination of leaflets and assemblies, followed by a demonstration, all against the rising price of meat.¹³⁷ Pursuant to that resolution, Social Democrats arranged, at the beginning of September, a series of protest meetings at various locations throughout Vienna and in the provinces about the general subject of inflation, at which party members and supporters were urged to “appear in masses”.¹³⁸ A leading article in the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, addressed to “Working and Starving People”, reminded readers that the ships had been turned away at Triest

¹³⁵ *Stenographische Protokolle des Abgeordnetenhauses, XXI. Session, 6. Sitzung, 27 July 1911, p. 347.*

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 8. Sitzung, 29 July 1911, pp. 509–510.

¹³⁷ *Sitzungsprotokolle der Parteivertretung und niederösterreichischen Landesparteivertretung, 24 August 1911, VGA Partei Archiv vor 1934, Mappe 49.*

¹³⁸ *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 2 September 1911.

because of the Christian Social and German Nationalist majority in parliament allowing the prohibition of further imports on the false pretext of an undertaking with Hungary.¹³⁹ The following Monday, the paper announced yet more protest meetings all around the city. Police subsequently noted that the speeches on these occasions had been directed against the government generally and the Christian Socials more particularly, especially Minister Weiskirchner. On their way home, groups gathered to jeer at the homes of Christian Social politicians.¹⁴⁰ Things did not go so well on Tuesday. Most of the meetings that evening were orderly, but the one in Ottakring got out of hand when the attendees started home. There were rocks thrown, windows broken, police injured and five arrests.¹⁴¹ There is no indication in the party archives that the leaders were concerned about the signs of violent and destructive behaviour, nor indeed that they took any notice.

A few days earlier, the Directors of the Party had met along with union leaders and resolved that a demonstration should be organised by the local party to take place on a Sunday in the centre of Vienna.¹⁴² The date selected was virtually the next possible, less than two weeks later. Even if the weather co-operated, the timing could have been better from a political point of view. The new *Statthalter* of Lower Austria was none other than Bienerth, who had finally stepped down as Minister President following the electorate's unequivocal rejection of his government in the June elections. He wanted to “show he was tough”.¹⁴³ After all, for the past four years the Social Democrats had been insistently calling attention to the failures and shortcomings of the Bienerth government. As his predecessor, Erich Count Kielmansegg later reflected:

Since soon after Bienerth's becoming *Statthalter*, the weak Mayor of Vienna, Dr

¹³⁹ *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 3 September 1911.

¹⁴⁰ Police report to the *Statthalterei Präsidium*, 4 September 1911, police ref. 2334/2 and *Statthalterei* ref. 2672/2, *Niederösterreichisches Landesarchiv*.

¹⁴¹ Police report to the *Statthalterei Präsidium*, 6 September 1911, police ref. 2334/3 and S/H ref. 2672/3.

¹⁴² *Sitzungsprotokolle der Parteivertretung und niederösterreichischen Landesparteivertretung, der Versammlungsreferenten und der Vertreter der Gewerkschaftskommission, 4 September 1911, VGA Partei Archiv vor 1934*, Mappe no. 49.

¹⁴³ Spitzer, *Karl Seitz*, p 47.

Neumayer, gave way to the wily Dr Weiskirchner, Bienerth's former fellow Minister. Bienerth could make his own life easier by sending difficult matters to the Mayor and leader of the Christian Social Party. That had the twofold advantage for him: not only could he save himself difficult decisions, he could also be sure of the protection and support of the governing party in Lower Austria.¹⁴⁴

Unfortunately, the demonstration was announced for the first time in the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* only on Tuesday the 12th, allowing a mere five days' notice for anyone not already aware that it was to take place. This was not a recipe for attracting anyone who might have made plans; so the invitation was effectively for those who had nothing better to do the following weekend! That day's leader in the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* referred to the hardships resulting from the policies of Weiskirchner and Bienerth, and carried on by Gautsch, the new Minister President.¹⁴⁵

If the party leaders did not appreciate the potential for violence, the police were more perspicacious. They noted that to allow freedom of movement there would be no marshals and that the Social Democrats expected bourgeois participation. Their assessment was that the lack of unified leadership and the greater freedom of action meant they could not rule out serious disturbances.¹⁴⁶ Based on that concern, the police asked for the help of the army, since they needed more manpower for certain districts and potential targets.¹⁴⁷ They were promised six battalions of infantry and 16 squadrons of cavalry.¹⁴⁸ Police noted that the Party aimed to maximise mass participation, to get passion into the affair. Demonstrations were to be against rises in meat and food prices and directed against the government, against the Christian Socials and the agrarians but also in some areas against excessive rents and in support of grievances of railway workers and in

¹⁴⁴ E. Kielmansegg, *Kaiserhaus, Staatsmänner und Politiker: Aufzeichnungen des k. k. Statthalters Erich Graf Kielmansegg* (Vienna, 1966), p. 363. In fact, Weiskirchner did not replace Neumayer until December of 1912, while Bienerth had become *Statthalter* in June of 1911; so Kielmansegg's memory seems a bit vague in terms of timing.

¹⁴⁵ *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 12 September 1911.

¹⁴⁶ Police report to the *Statthalterei Präsidium*, 12 Sept. 1911, police ref. 2334 and *Statthalterei* ref. 2672/5, *Niederösterreichisches Landesarchiv*.

¹⁴⁷ Police report to the *Statthalterei Präsidium*, 12 Sept. 1911, police ref. 2334 and *Statthalterei* ref. 3121/6.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 14 Sept. 1911, police ref. 2334 and *Statthalterei* ref. 3121/7.

support of certain pay demands. Social Democrats were very focussed on general discontent with inflation, and mass participation was to be expected. Rumour had it that processions through the city would ignore street closures.¹⁴⁹

Whatever the arrangements, the day itself did not go well. The police were posted around the city, backed up by the army. Units of the latter were attached to police squadrons and assigned to buildings or districts. Each detachment of soldiers had a police official to be sure their deployment was appropriate.¹⁵⁰ 100,000 demonstrators gathered in the Rathausplatz to hear the speeches, which were completed by 11:00 in the morning. When most of the crowd started for home, trouble broke out almost immediately, with all sorts of projectiles being thrown at police and buildings. Police managed to disperse crowds, but they merely re-grouped. While Social Democrat leaders were in some cases able to calm the situation, that was not always the case, and Representative David was injured by protestors early in the aftermath.

Anton David was one of the old guard among Social Democrats, already 62 on the day of the demonstration. He and his father were both soap boilers, and young David arrived in Vienna as a journeyman in that trade. His education was with the Workers' Education Club, and he developed an expertise in food supply, particularly with respect to meat. He was elected to parliament in 1907.¹⁵¹

When the Social Democrat leaders and the police could not control the crowds, the soldiers were called upon. Sabres were employed, and, eventually and inevitably, shots were fired.¹⁵² There were four deaths, many injured, including soldiers and police, and there was widespread damage to property, not only the Rathaus and the Justizpalast, but

¹⁴⁹ Police report to the *Statthalterei Präsidium*, 15 Sept. 1911, police ref. 2334 and *Statthalterei* ref. 3121/8.

¹⁵⁰ F. Brandl, *Kaiser, Politiker und Menschen: Erinnerungen eines Wiener Polizeipräsidenten* (Leipzig, 1936), p. 111.

¹⁵¹ *Österreichisches biographisches Lexikon 1815-1950 Online-Edition*, www.biographien.ac.at (August, 2016).

¹⁵² Police report to the *Statthalterei Präsidium*, 17&18 September 1911, police ref. 2761/6&7 and *Statthalterei* ref. 3121/9 and 3122/10, *Niederösterreichisches Landesarchiv*.

also numbers of shops and cafes as well as schools.¹⁵³ According to the *Neue Freie Presse* coverage, witnesses had said the rioters seemed not to be interested in the object of the day's protest but rather to be using the event as a pretext for mischief. That impression seems to be confirmed by the make-up of the group arrested: of a total of 253, 152 were under 25, and 197 were unmarried.¹⁵⁴

Whatever the conclusion from this line of thought, the demonstration had been arranged by the Social Democratic Party; so any fallout would be to their detriment, even if the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* suggested that the authorities had provoked the crowds with their heavy-handed response. According to Albert Sever, one of the leading Social Democrats in attendance, the trouble had only started after the formal speeches and the call for going home, when the police had tried to hurry demonstrators along.¹⁵⁵

Sever was the son of a civil servant who died when Albert was quite young. Having moved to Vienna at age nine, he grew up in the poorest circumstances. Following a butcher's apprenticeship, he found employment as a manservant and later stores manager with Goppold & Schmiedel, where he met Franz Schuhmeier. Sever became active in the Social Democratic Party, where he was credited with arranging district parties into sections and catchments so creating the outlines of a modern mass party.¹⁵⁶

Sever's version of events might have been expected from the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, but a moment's reflection on the casualties, 89 injured, of whom 22 were police and four, soldiers, would indicate, particularly in view of the balance of armament, that the police and army acted with admirable restraint. Of those killed, three were by ricochets and the fourth by bayonet as he sought safety in the Ottakringer Arbeiterheim.¹⁵⁷ In Boyer's

¹⁵³ *Neue Freie Presse*, 18th September 1911.

¹⁵⁴ Boyer, *Culture and Political Crisis in Vienna*, p. 282.

¹⁵⁵ C. Klusacek and K. Stimmer, *Ottakring: vom Brunnenmarkt zum Liebhartstal* (Vienna, 1983), p. 113.

¹⁵⁶ *Österreichisches biographisches Lexikon 1815-1950 Online-Edition*, www.biographien.ac.at (August, 2016)

¹⁵⁷ W. Maderthaner and L. Musner., *Die Anarchie der Vorstadt: Das andere Wien um 1900* (Frankfurt, 1999), p. 32.

assessment, “the extensive damage done to property (350 private shops were attacked, with considerable losses from plundering) made it difficult for the socialists to escape responsibility.”¹⁵⁸

This is something of an understatement, since it was the Social Democrats’ event. The planning was rushed and the notice given, much too short; preparation was inadequate; co-ordination with authorities was foregone; there were few or no helpers on the day; no account was taken of the likely mood of the authorities nor for that matter of the demonstrators themselves. In short, all the lessons learned during the previous two decades were disregarded. Furthermore, rather than a demonstration in support of a defined and positive goal, the occasion was just to dramatize a laundry list of complaints and grievances. Had the war not intervened, it could well have taken the Social Democrats a long time to live down the memory of 17 September 1911. While clearly embarrassing for the Social Democrats, it is interesting to note that the violence and vandalism of that day received only the most fleeting mention four days after the fact, with no further commentary, in the diary of Josef Redlich, a prominent German Progressive politician, prolific diarist and observer, and certainly not a man of few words.¹⁵⁹ It would be fair to ask where Victor Adler was during all this excitement. Correspondence indicates he was in Bad Nauheim in Hesse, taking a cure during August and much of September, and there is no sign he attended party meetings during that time.

By the evening of the day of the demonstrations, the leadership had awakened to the seriousness of the situation. Twenty-three of them met starting at 23:15! Karl Seitz proposed the authorisation of a flyer (100,000 to be printed) aimed at calming the situation, while Reumann suggested that the leaders go themselves to Ottakring to try to restore

¹⁵⁸ Boyer, *Culture and Political Crisis in Vienna*, p. 282.

¹⁵⁹ Redlich diary, 21 September 1911, F. Fellner and D. Corradini (eds.), *Schicksalsjahre Österreichs 1908-1919 Das politische Tagebuch Josef Redlichs*, 3 volumes (Vienna, 2011), vol. 1, p. 385.

calm. Both resolutions were adopted, and another meeting was scheduled for the next day at 14:00, when arrangements were begun for the funerals of the victims. Meanwhile, there were outbursts of violence and vandalism for three days after the demonstration itself.¹⁶⁰ On Wednesday, after Victor Adler had returned from his cure, leaders of the Party met and resolved to provide legal protection without exception for those arrested who were politically or socially organised, with other cases to be examined each on its own merits. They also agreed there should be greater control of assemblies organised by the local parties!¹⁶¹

The lower house reconvened on 5 October, two-and-a-half weeks after the riots. Its first sitting, the 9th of the XXIst session, was to be one of the more bizarre even in the strange history of the Austrian parliament. Members arrived in the house expecting a day of parliamentary housekeeping, but they were soon joined by crowds of mothers with their children, who proceeded to get out their breakfasts and make themselves comfortable. This was all part of a demonstration on behalf of a Czech school which had been closed by the authorities on allegedly flimsy grounds. When one of the members of the house took exception and tried to remove the demonstrators, a brawl commenced, with screaming mothers, crying children and fighting among members of the house and of the public. It required an extended effort by President Sylvester to restore calm.¹⁶² The sitting then opened with a rundown of the parliamentary business, but Karl Seitz interposed to ask that, in view of the concerns voiced by citizens, the house focus on the several proposals to deal with the issues of food prices and scarcity. He was supported by long time Deputy and German Progressive Gustav Groß, by Young Czech (and former Trade Minister) František

¹⁶⁰ Police report to the *Statthaltereil Präsidium*, 19, 20 & 21 September 1911, police ref. 2761/9,10&11 and *Statthaltereil* ref. 3122/11,12&13., *Niederösterreichisches Landesarchiv*.

¹⁶¹ *Sitzungsprotokoll der Parteivertretung der gemeinsame Sitzung der Reichs- und niederösterreichischer Landesparteivertretung*, 20 September 1911, *VGA Partei Archiv vor 1934*, Mappe 49.

¹⁶² *Neue Freie Presse*, 6 October 1911.

Fiedler and by Czech Socialist Antonín Němec. The suggestion was accepted, and after a short break to re-arrange the day's speakers, the sitting resumed at noon.

The debate was led off by Victor Adler, who started by mentioning the many threats to the peace troubling the Monarchy but got quickly to the issue of food prices and scarcity as being much more pressing problems. He digressed momentarily into theorizing about the inevitability of inflation in a capitalist environment but conceded that anyway the Government had no control over world price levels. They did however have control over the policy of the Monarchy, and they had failed to take any of the measures available to them to help the dire situation. Meanwhile there had been an outburst of desperate frustration, and now the Minister of Justice Viktor Ritter von Hochenburger was presiding over the dishing out of wildly lopsided justice. Apparently Hochenburger was seen to make mocking and disrespectful gestures at this point in Adler's speech.¹⁶³ Nikolaus Njeguš, a 25-year old carpenter's assistant from Šibenik in Croatia, took umbrage at this behaviour, drew a revolver and fired several rounds in the direction of the Government bench, narrowly missing Hochenburger. The weapon then malfunctioned, ejecting an unspent round, which landed in the lap of Victor Adler's wife, Emma, sitting in the gallery below the shooter's vantage point.¹⁶⁴ Having thus spent his ammunition, Njeguš shouted “Long live the revolution! Long live international Social Democracy!” before allowing himself to be led quietly away.

The sitting was resumed, and the inflation debate was in fact prioritised. A bit later in the proceedings, Gautsch attempted to return some of Victor Adler's fire by quoting a speech the latter had made the day before in Favoriten, a Viennese working class neighbourhood, allegedly inciting his constituents to seek revenge. Gautsch's effort was

¹⁶³ *Neue Freie Presse*, 6 October 1911.

¹⁶⁴ Spitzer, *Karl Seitz*, p. 51.

rebutted a few minutes later when Ignacy Daszyński, the Polish Social Democrat,¹⁶⁵ intervened to read the rest of Adler's speech, which clearly proved Adler's urgings had been the opposite of what Gautsch had attempted to argue.¹⁶⁶ Although their opponents tried very hard to use the outburst to discredit the Social Democrats, it quickly became obvious that the incident was the work of a sole, possibly unbalanced, perpetrator and had nothing directly to do with the Party.

Njeguš had arrived in town two days before. A Social Democrat for some years, he had recently received an inheritance and had decided to enjoy life a bit. His travels from his native Dalmatia had led him to Vienna, where an acquaintance, a young Social Democrat who had met Njeguš while traveling on behalf of the party, showed him some of the sights and also arranged through Deputy Widholz to bring Njeguš to the gallery of the house.

The proposal which the Social Democrats placed before the house that day was a lengthy amalgam of specific suggestions they had made in the past, including Reumann's proposal discussed above suggesting that the importation of meat be unrestricted as to both time and amount but also calling for community housing and measures to control the milk, iron and sugar cartels.¹⁶⁷ On 17th October, following the lead of Karl Seitz and with bipartisan support, nineteen anti-inflation proposals were referred to the Inflation Committee of the house for discussion and reporting.¹⁶⁸ That committee met the very same evening and six more times before reporting on the 27th. These meetings were very well-attended, not only by the members themselves, but also by 'guests' from the government. The meeting on 5 October was attended by Minister President Gautsch, Interior Minister

¹⁶⁵ Ultimately leader of the Polish Socialist Party and Premier in the first cabinet in post-war Poland. He had first been elected to the Reichsrat in 1897. *New York Times*, obituary on 1 November 1936.

¹⁶⁶ *Stenographische Protokolle des Abgeordnetenhauses, XXI. Session, 9. Sitzung*, 5 October 1911, pp. 617, 621-622.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, *Beilage* no. 552.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 15. Sitzung, 17 October 1911, p. 981.

Count Wickenburg, Finance Minister Dr Meyer, Agriculture Minister von Widmann, Minister of Trade Dr. Mataja and Railway Minister Dr von Röhl, as well as by numerous other government representatives.¹⁶⁹ Gautsch, Widmann and Mataja were present at nearly all the meetings in October; so it is plain that inflation and possible ameliorative measures had the full attention of the government.¹⁷⁰ During the 10 days of committee meetings Renner took the lead with support from Reumann as well as members of other parties, including Anton Jerzabek, Christian Social and newly elected member, son of a landlord and property owner. Outside the house, Jerzabek was a doctor for the City of Vienna. An enthusiastic anti-Semite, he would be the sole Christian Social to vote against *Anschluß* in 1918.¹⁷¹ Renner pressed the government about the extent to which Hungary could determine the nature and extent of food imports to Austria, and Gautsch confirmed Hungary could not, and further that had always been the case. When he put before the committee a proposal urging the house to make that plain, the motion was carried with broad bi-partisan support by a vote of 22 to 18. Among the 22 voting for Renner's proposal were members of the Italian Liberal, Czech National Socialist, Christian Social, German Progressive, German Nationalist, Old Czech and other groups as well as Czech and Polish Socialists. Later in the same meeting, Agriculture Minister Widmann insisted on the need for strict veterinary oversight, suggesting that measures taken elsewhere were inadequate, but he also was able to confirm authorisation of some meat from Serbia.¹⁷²

Two days later, Gautsch opened discussion for the government by telling the committee they would be sending veterinary inspectors to Argentina. Renner termed this a well-prepared comedy. He stressed the need for the process to be open, with both sides

¹⁶⁹ *Teuerungsausschuß Protokoll*, meeting of 17 October 1911, *Österreichisches Parlamentsarchiv*.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, meetings of 17, 19, 20, 24, 25 and 26 Oct 1911.

¹⁷¹ H. Dvorak, *Biographisches Lexikon der deutschen Burschenschaft*, vol. 1: *Politiker*, part-vol. 3 (Heidelberg, 1999), pp. 20-21.

¹⁷² *Teuerungsausschuß Protokoll*, meeting of 17 October 1911, *Österreichisches Parlamentsarchiv*.

being heard. Instead, two Austrian vets were going to a country four and a half times the size of Austria-Hungary including Bosnia to observe and study the export of meat to Austria. It would be much cheaper and faster to ask the English what their experience had been. Gautsch took issue with Renner's view but had no specific answer.¹⁷³

The meeting of the 24th dealt once more with the alleged veterinary worries, and Reumann countered that veterinarians had repeatedly inspected Argentine meat and found no cause for concern and further that the shortage of meat in Vienna had been so severe in July that meat from contaminated sources had appeared in the market, concluding that smuggled meat was much more dangerous than routinely imported goods. When Christian Social Deputy Schoepfer voiced concern about the effect of imports on Austrian farmers, Renner pointed out that imports had not ruined English farmers.¹⁷⁴ The following day Renner's and Jerzabek's views prevailed, and Czech Agrarian Josef Špaček added the proviso that the veterinary report on the Argentine mission be made public immediately.¹⁷⁵

On the 26th, the report for the house was adopted with broad bi-partisan support. In their report the committee of course stressed that there were neither treaty nor veterinary grounds for any hindrance or restriction of the import of frozen beef from Argentina; so both Renner and Jerzabek prevailed in the discussions. Moreover, the committee found no evidence of a threat to farmers' well-being from imports. They cited a reduction of 300,000 in the national cattle population during the preceding decade and proposed help for farmers to rebuild their herds. Observing that all segments of the population were suffering, they urged immediate measures. Further, Hungary's obstruction, tolerated and even supported by the government, could not be countenanced if further political and economic danger for Austria were to be avoided. Unfortunately, the conflict between Italy

¹⁷³ *Teuerungsausschuß Protokoll*, meeting of 19 October 1911.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, meeting of 24 October 1911.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, meeting of 25 October 1911

and Turkey could hinder or block the modest import authorised from Serbia. The 1.8 metric tonnes of frozen meat already under way from Argentina to Trieste could be turned away under the existing circumstances, which would be a bad idea. Finally, the report quoted a resolution of the previous November from the (heavily agrarian) Upper Austrian provincial assembly which had urged the measures proposed in the report.

When the report was presented to the house, on 22 November, Renner's proposals were voted upon. The house agreed that the government had full authority to authorise the import of meat and animal products from those states without veterinary problems as well as the import of frozen meat from Argentina. However, his proposal for the indefinite lifting of all restrictions on the importation of meat from overseas was soundly defeated, although the vote count of 267 to 190 clearly demonstrated that there was significant support from outside socialist circles.¹⁷⁶ Furthermore, whether their parliamentary colleagues supported them or not, it was plain to all that Social Democrats were able to present reasoned practical arguments to back their proposals and were willing to work with other groups in parliament in pursuit of their objectives.

At the end of October, Gautsch resigned. At least two factors conspired to bring an end to his government. While the unproductive debate about inflation and the meat shortage had mercifully pushed some nationalist bickering off the parliamentary agenda, the former had triggered the riots in September. The Emperor was very sensitive to this sort of disturbance, especially in Vienna, and he was reportedly inclined to place responsibility with the government of the day.¹⁷⁷ Further, it was becoming increasingly clear that Gautsch's efforts to get Germans and Czechs to work together would come to nought. His successor was Karl Count von Stürgkh¹⁷⁸, who, in the view of one friend and

¹⁷⁶ *Stenographische Protokolle des Abgeordnetenhauses, XXI. Session, 33. Sitzung*, 22 November 1911, p. 1712.

¹⁷⁷ E. Plener, *Erinnerungen von Ernst Plener*. 3 volumes (Stuttgart, 1921), vol. 3, p. 411.

¹⁷⁸ A. Füsseck, 'Ministerpräsident Karl Graf Stürgkh', Vienna, PhD dissertation, University of Vienna, 1959,

prominent observer, had prepared the ground carefully, having chosen his ministers beforehand and been careful not to ruffle feathers during the replacement process.¹⁷⁹ The new Minister President was supported in parliament by a small majority consisting of German Nationalists, Christian Socials, Poles and Italians. Stürgkh's biographer judged him a conscientious servant of the state who took his constitutional obligations seriously. The new cabinet presented a cross-section of the realm's nationalities, consisting as it did of four Czechs, three Poles and thirteen Germans. Of this group, a dozen were civil servants, one was a soldier and one, a lawyer (and a former parliamentarian); so it certainly leaned toward the bureaucracy.¹⁸⁰ Unfortunately, his cabinet was notable for its lack of ministerial experience.¹⁸¹

Sadly, violence seems to have gained a foothold on the Austrian political scene, arguably as a logical sequel to the ever sharper terms of public debate, and if Njeguš's act had been a reflection on the Social Democrats, the score was about to be equalized in the most grizzly way. Among the speakers on the day of the 'Hunger Riot' had been Franz Schuhmeier, a local hero in Ottakring, the centre of the proletariat neighbourhoods in Vienna. A Freemason, he had been on the City Council since 1900 and in parliament since the following year. His speech on the unfortunate day in 1911 called for annual demonstrations in the autumn, since people had more important things to do than come out in protest every time they wanted another ton of meat imported. Like the other speakers, he stressed that the police were suffering under the same conditions as everyone else; so there was no quarrel with them.¹⁸² Little more than a year later, on the evening of 11

pp. 15-26. Stürgkh studied Law at Graz, started in the bureaucracy in 1881 in the office of the Governor of Styria before moving to the Education Ministry, where he was until 1911. He had two spells in the lower house, where he opposed the 1906 suffrage reform. He was not re-elected in 1907, whereupon he was elevated to the *Herrenhaus*.

¹⁷⁹ Plener, *Erinnerungen*, vol. 3, p. 413.

¹⁸⁰ A. Czedik, *Zur Geschichte der k. k. österreichischen Ministerien 1861-1916*, 4 volumes (Vienna, 1917-1920), vol. 4, pp. 340-342.

¹⁸¹ Fussek, *Stürgkh*, pp. 44-47.

¹⁸² *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 18 September 1911.

February 1913, Schuhmeier, then 48 years old, spoke at a large campaign meeting in Stockerau, to the northwest of Vienna, in support of a party colleague. As Schuhmeier made his way out of the station following his return to Vienna, a man jumped from the crowd and, yelling “This is my revenge!”, shot him in the back of the head, killing him instantly. The murderer was Paul Kunschak, a metalworker who had been out of work for the previous 18 months but also the older brother of the prominent Christian Social politician Leopold Kunschak. The elder Kunschak explained to the authorities that he held the Social Democrats' organisation responsible for his inability to find a job.¹⁸³ The *Reichspost* had a more lengthy explanation, of course not an excuse: about a decade before the murder Kunschak had been driven out of the Vienna workshop in which he was employed by the Social Democrat organisation on account of his Christian Social convictions and thereby deprived of his living. He brought legal proceedings against his dismissal, and the ruling was in Kunschak's favour. Thereafter, the Social Democratic organisation hounded Kunschak out of one job after another.¹⁸⁴ Other accounts of Paul Kunschak's background indicate that he had been a Social Democrat and in fact had been in a stenography class led by Schuhmeier in the *Ottakringer Arbeiterbildungsverein* (Ottakring Workers' Education Club). He then went overseas to seek his fortune, ultimately returning to Vienna and joining the Christian Socials.¹⁸⁵ Regardless of any extenuating circumstances, Paul Kunschak was tried, found guilty and sentenced to be hanged. The Schuhmeiers had long been opposed to capital punishment. Fittingly then, there was an appeal for mercy, supported by Schuhmeier's widow, Cäcilie, pursuant to which the sentence was reduced to 20 years' imprisonment.¹⁸⁶

The day after Schuhmeier's death, the Directors of the Social Democratic party

¹⁸³ *Neue Freie Presse*, 12 February 1913.

¹⁸⁴ *Reichspost*, 12 February 1913.

¹⁸⁵ Klusacek and Stimmer. *Ottakring*, pp. 118 & 119.

¹⁸⁶ H. Schmidt and F. Czeike, *Franz Schuhmeier* (Vienna, 1964), p. 94.

organisations held a *Trauerkundgebung* (funeral procession and demonstration) at which Pernerstorfer spoke on behalf of the party. The arrangements for the funeral itself had of course to be made in a very short time. With the hunger riots fresh in the memory of the leadership, in the four days between the death and the funeral, while a hundred thousand mourners filed past Schuhmeier's coffin at the Ottakringer Arbeiterheim,¹⁸⁷ plans were put in place for what would be among the largest demonstrations Vienna had ever seen. The funeral procession covered a distance of some seven kilometers, and along the route were crowds which were estimated to be close to 500,000 people. There was no disorder, despite the vast number of mourners, the occasion and the many hours of standing. Of course, the *Reichspost* attributed the calm to the keeping of the peace by the heavy presence of security personnel.¹⁸⁸ Both it and the *Neue Freie Presse* noted there were lots of *Ordner* (ushers), distinguished by their red arm bands edged in black. In fact there were 2,600, organized for the occasion despite the short notice by the local Social Democratic organisation.¹⁸⁹ At the end of the long procession, and following speeches by a good many party colleagues, Schuhmeier was laid to rest directly opposite three of the dead of the hunger riots.¹⁹⁰

The few years following the death of Mayor Lueger were a time of opportunity for the Social Democrats, and they were able to make some use of that. They proved during the worst of the inflation that they shared interests with many of their erstwhile bourgeois opponents, and that worked to their benefit in the elections of 1911. At the same time, they allowed their opponents, most notably the Christian Socials, to portray them as dangerous rabble by not having properly prepared and having failed to control the September 1911 demonstration. The affinities of Nationalist politicians of all colours and those of their

¹⁸⁷ Schmidt and Czeike, *Franz Schuhmeier*, p. 95.

¹⁸⁸ *Reichspost*, 17 February 1913.

¹⁸⁹ Maderthaner and Musner, *Die Anarchie der Vorstadt*, p. 176.

¹⁹⁰ *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 17 February 1913. (Franz Mögerbauer, Franz Joachimsthaler and Otto Brötzenberger)

voters would be very important in any balance of power calculation. Although it is tempting to think of the Nationalists as fellow conservatives of the Christian Socialists, there were important areas of agreement between the former and the Social Democrats, as with education and phosphorous.

Furthermore, the Social Democrats made good progress cultivating sympathy or respect in the bureaucracy, as was attested by the regular, if not invariable, co-operation with the police on the occasion of demonstrations. The support of prominent civil servants like Professor von Philippovich, introduced above, was evident not only in his help for the young Karl Renner but also in connection with the housing problem. It was not just sympathy for some of their specific causes which made an impression on the bureaucracy. Retired senior police official Franz Brandl remembered the influence of Victor Adler: “Among the authorities he was feared on account of the irony he deployed against their superior attitudes, and this smoothed the path of compromise, because the authorities wanted to get along with him peacefully”.¹⁹¹ Adler himself would have made the point that the threat of ridicule is often more effective than that of violence. Laughter is after all a powerful weapon.

Nearly a decade passed between *Wahlrechtstag*, 28 November 1905, and the outbreak of the Great War. The Social Democrats had seven years from the opening of the people's parliament to make their mark in the legislature, among their opponents and peers, and in public. As war approached they were taken seriously by the Monarchy, by the bureaucracy and certainly by their opponents, because of the appeal of their proposals, because of the manner of their promotion and by virtue of the quality of their advocacy. The Hunger Riots set them back, but not by much, since the damage was mostly in their own neighbourhoods. More significantly, they lost one of their best team members with

¹⁹¹ Brandl, *Kaiser, Politiker und Menschen*, p. 115.

Schuhmeier's death. Finally, they had yet to overcome the bias of the system, with regard both to the curial franchise for all but the *Reichsrat* and to constituency boundaries for the latter, where ever vigilant Christian Socialist politicians did their best to minimize the impact of growing Social Democrat voter numbers.¹⁹² Although this could only act as a brake on general trends, it gave the Christian Socials time to develop their national strategy to the detriment of the Social Democrats.

¹⁹² Kielmansegg, *Kaiserhaus, Staatsmänner und Politiker*, pp. 410-411. Kielmansegg bore witness to the shrewdness and daring of Albert Geßmann, the prime architect of the Christian Social metamorphosis from a largely Viennese to a national party, relating how Geßmann realised quite early what a danger general and equal suffrage was for the Christian Socialists and made it his business first to get the most favourable possible electoral geometry and then to exercise maximum influence on the compilation of voter registers.

Chapter 4 – The Great War

The Social Democrats successfully built a political presence based on their hard won position in parliament. They became one of the largest parties in the Monarchy in a short time, having received more than a million votes and 87 mandates in the people's parliament in 1907. It was also true however that parliament was becoming ever less effective, due in part to the obstructionist tactics of nationalist groups. The Bienerth cabinet was content to use the latter as a pretext to adjourn parliament or cut sessions short, whereupon government was continued on the basis of the infamous §14 until "necessity" dictated a recall of parliament, however brief: "It was not just the nationality conflict which weakened the legislative process; what is mostly overlooked is that there were ample opportunities for the Government to block the work of the house by means of adjournment or premature closing of a session."¹ Indeed Cohen has suggested that obstruction was just another form of day-to-day business:

The boycotts and obstruction of various provincial diets and the two parliaments attracted much public criticism at the time, and historians have used these episodes to demonstrate the failings of parliamentary development in the monarchy. These episodes, however, must be viewed in context. Not just radicals, but a range of political interests used parliamentary boycotts and obstruction as tools. Typically, they did so to achieve practical political goals. In most cases they wanted to return to normal legislative business as soon as they won suitable concessions and rewards, and that is what often happened.²

The adjournments as well as the dates of the sittings were on the authority of the Minister President. These were announced in the *Wiener Zeitung*, the official organ of the government, sometimes, though not always, with explanation. When, for example, parliament was adjourned for the last time before the war, it was following a sitting on Friday, 13 March 1914, wherein the date of the next sitting had been set for the following

¹ R. Ardelt, *Vom Kampf um Bürgerrechte zum "Burgfrieden": Studien zur Geschichte der österreichischen Sozialdemokratie 1888-1914* (Vienna, 1994), pp. 42-43.

² G. Cohen, 'Nationalist Politics and the Dynamics of State and Civil Society in the Habsburg Monarchy 1867-1914', *Central European History* 40 (2007), p. 270.

Tuesday. In the event, Monday's *Wiener Zeitung* announced the adjournment with immediate effect. The reason given was that obstruction would prevent the house from dealing with important state matters.³ In fact, a large number of Czech members of the house had asked to speak before commencement of the day's business, which included recruits for the army and railway construction.⁴ Stürgkh's biographer characterised the Minister President's attitude as follows: "If the government could work with parliament, then everything was fine. If the relationship deteriorated, if something was needed and no improvement was expected, all very subjective admittedly, work could carry on without parliament."⁵ This view is in effect that Stürgkh was content to deal with parliament as long as the latter did nothing to make governing difficult. It is very hard not to agree with Renner's opinion that there were challenging issues to be dealt with, like those mentioned above, and it was 'comfortable' to have bloody-minded obstruction 'chase the prey into the trap'.⁶

This tactic on the part of cabinets further handicapped an institution under strain from organisational work, the preparation of speeches and the setting of agendas, all necessary for the orderly running of a legislature. The combined effect was that sittings of parliament were not frequent. Six years and nine months (2,462 days) elapsed between the opening of the people's parliament following the election of 1907, on 17 June 1907, and the last adjournment of parliament before the war, on 13 March 1914. During that time, the house sat only 479 times, which was less than six times each month, slightly more than once a week! When Stürgkh adjourned the house in March of 1914, Karl Renner published a withering condemnation of the situation:

Parliament adjourned, the representatives locked out, the legislative machinery idled, the people's will ignored and absolutism the sole ruler! A coup d'etat! The

³ *Wiener Zeitung*, 17 March 1914.

⁴ A. Fussek, 'Ministerpräsident Karl Graf Stürgkh' (Vienna, PhD dissertation, 1959), p. 50.

⁵ *Idem.*, 'Minister Präsident Karl Graf Stürgkh und die parlamentarische Frage', *Mitteilungen des österreichischen Staatsarchivs*, vol. 17/18 (1964/5), p. 340.

⁶ K. Renner, 'Das Regime des Leichtsinns', *Der Kampf*, vol. 7 (1913/14) no. 7 of 1 April 1914, p. 290.

system of the division of public power has been destroyed, the basic concepts of the constitution disregarded. The entire people, its classes, its professions and its parties, is called upon by the sacred Basic Law to work together, to decide together and to pull together the people's will in the sacred and impregnable 'majesty of the law' – that is the life's work of our fathers and forefathers: no recruits, no taxes and no credits without the agreement of the people! No, after all, Stürgkh rings for his secretary, asks her to fetch a couple of sheets of paper out of the drawer and type: “In accordance with §14...” and the drawer replaces the entire populace, the typist, the 516 people's elected representatives. A violation of the constitution! A desk drawer, a typewriter and a couple of pieces of paper – that is the newest government structure in Austria!⁷

This rendered the Social Democrats' legislative strategy utterly ineffective. It also deprived them of the basis for most of their connections with bureaucracy and government, since the latter were largely in the context of parliament. Furthermore, when the parliament was not sitting, Social Democrats lacked a valuable platform. They had been able to smuggle controversial material, like the Wahrmund lecture, into public view by putting it in the parliamentary record, where it was not subject to censorship. That way it could appear in the news the following day.⁸

Therefore, as the Social Democrats worked successfully to increase the number and skill of their deputies, the usefulness of the parliamentary process was diminishing. The accelerating deterioration put in stark relief the lack of any significant representation at provincial and local levels thanks to the survival of the curial franchise. This was particularly frustrating since so much of the day-to-day governance was carried out away from the centre. The combined result of these factors was that the Social Democrats' reform agenda was increasingly stalled, and their voice, less audible.

At the same time, the Monarchy's foreign policy became ever more adventurously assertive. This was under the guidance first of Foreign Minister Count Alois Lexa von Aehrenthal and, following Aehrenthal's death in February of 1912, of his successor, Leopold Count Berchtold in the Stürgkh cabinet. The handling of the annexation of

⁷ Renner, 'Das Regime des Leichtsinns', p. 289.

⁸ Ardelt, *Vom Kampfum Bürgerrechte zum Burgfrieden*, pp. 55 & 56.

Bosnia-Herzegovina by Aehrenthal towards the end of 1908 was indicative of the more forceful stance deemed appropriate for the Monarchy's Balkan policy. The *Arbeiter-Zeitung* expressed the Social Democrats' disapproval of the step, in which the editors saw needless provocation not only of Serbia, but also of Turkey and Russia. The paper thought the annexation wholly motivated by concern about *Hausmacht*, meaning the standing of the House of Habsburg among the leading powers of Europe and the world, with any other justifications offered being mere pretexts.⁹ This has been highlighted for example by Felix Höglinger, biographer of Heinrich Graf Clam-Martinic, later Minister-President. Höglinger pointed out to his readers that Clam-Martinic, as a member of the Delegation discussing the situation in the Balkans, “again and again urged the peaceful approach, certainly not at any price but rather on a basis consistent with the standing and repute of the Monarchy.”¹⁰ The latter qualification was the reservation which confounded all efforts to avoid the war.

Karl Renner's view of the annexation was: “We are governing Bosnia by means of the bayonet, and for the time being by virtue of the violation of the law rather than in the name of any law.”¹¹ In fact the Austrian position in the Balkans and her relationship with Russia deteriorated sharply from the annexation, and war would be the ineluctable result of that process.¹²

Those in leading positions of the government had the possibility of war firmly in view. Stürgkh made clear on numerous occasions from the start of the Balkan Wars in 1912 that he reckoned the Monarchy should be clearly willing to go to war. Moreover she would ultimately need to do so to achieve a satisfactory relationship with Serbia. The question of the prestige of the Monarchy in the Balkans was important to decision

⁹ *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 8 October 1908.

¹⁰ F. Höglinger, *Minister-Präsident Heinrich Graf Clam-Martinic* (Graz, 1964), p. 56.

¹¹ *Stenographische Protokolle des Abgeordnetenhauses, XVIII. Session, 122. Sitzung*, 17 Dec 1908, p. 8129.

¹² F. Bridge, *The Habsburg Monarchy among the Great Powers, 1815-1918* (New York, NY., 1990), p. 335.

makers.¹³ During 1912, Baernreither, large landowner in Bohemia and prominent member of the upper house,¹⁴ suggested that Serbia be allowed their own access to the Mediterranean to bring them into the international community and improve relations. Stürgkh was “horrified by this proposal” and disregarded it.¹⁵ At a cabinet meeting on 5 October 1912, only days before the outbreak of the First Balkan War, the War Ministry requested funding of more than *Kronen* 400m to pay for more modern military hardware, including larger calibre artillery, airplanes and battleships. The entire amount, to be financed by debt, was confirmed agreed at the next cabinet meeting on the 14th of the month.¹⁶ This was a cabinet preparing for war, which of course did not need to be discussed in parliament. While the immediate interest for Social Democrats in the Monarchy's Balkan policy was its effect on the cost of living, its more important and fateful outcome was the start of a world war. A good summary of this was offered by Renner's biographer:

the diplomats of the Monarchy, as if in a children's game of cops and robbers, scrapped with the Balkan governments for meagre stakes. Plainly Austria-Hungary would not have known what to do with Serbia had it fallen in their lap without a fight. For both parts of the Empire, Cisleithania and Transleithania, just as with Bosnia, strove mightily, at least with regard to the two 'Master Nations', the Germans here and the Magyars there, to address the preponderance of Slavs. For the sake therefore of a goal that they did not want and which would be a Pandora's box for them, to propel the world into constant unrest, ultimately to precipitate a war and in the end to bring about their own downfall is beyond absurd.¹⁷

The standing of the Monarchy among its peers seemed to be more important than those considerations; according to Judson: “Believing that a cataclysm like a war offered them their last opportunity to silence political conflict at home and forestall further damage to

¹³ A. Füssek, ‘Die Haltung des österreichischen Ministerpräsidenten Stürgkh zu Kriegsbeginn 1914’, *Osterreich in Geschichte und Literatur*, Year XIII (1969), book 5, p. 235.

¹⁴ Also twice Trade Minister and once Minister without Portfolio. *Österreichisches biographisches Lexikon 1815-1850 Online-Edition*, www.biographien.ac.at (August, 2016).

¹⁵ Füssek, ‘Die Haltung’, p. 238.

¹⁶ *Ministerrats Protokolle*, 5 & 14 October 1912, *Allgemeines Verwaltungsarchiv des Österreichischen Staatsarchives, Inneres, Ministerratspräsidium, Ministerratsprotokolle*, file no. 25.

¹⁷ J. Hannak, *Karl Renner und seine Zeit: Versuch einer Biographie* (Vienna, 1965), p. 185.

the Empire's great power status abroad, they embraced it."¹⁸

It is helpful to view the First World War for Austria in terms of three stages: first the period between the start of the Balkan Wars in October of 1912 and the declaration of war in August of 1914, then the two years and four months from the outbreak of war to the death of Franz Joseph and finally the last two years of the war. The first period was against the background of the Balkan Wars. It was essentially marked by the descent, already begun with the coming of the Bienerth government in 1909, to the point where the Austrian government was, as Renner described it, effectively absolutist, despite the outwardly constitutional framework. The Emperor's Minister President governed by decree on his behalf. During these two years, Social Democrats concentrated on their reform efforts and bread-and-butter issues like inflation. At the same time, through their involvement in the Second International, they were active, or at the very least vocal, in opposing war and militarism. Next were the war years until the death of the old Emperor in November 1916, characterised by a broadly unified effort across society but nevertheless by frustration for civilian politicians of all parties, including the Social Democrats. Finally, from the autumn of 1916, war fatigue was felt in all walks of life and classes. Discussion about the process of government had been simmering for some time, and following the death of the Emperor it became widespread and serious. Therefore, politics was more fluid even before war prospects turned less promising for the Central Powers.

In terms of loss of life and other human hardship, the Great War far eclipsed any previous experience of all the participants. The conflict has been exhaustively examined from almost every imaginable standpoint, in truly intimidating detail. From the perspective of this paper, specific mention should be made of several contributions. Zbynek Zeman related the disintegration of the Monarchy from the standpoint of an exile

¹⁸ P. Judson, *The Habsburg Empire: A New History* (Cambridge, MA, 2016), p. 383.

from communist eastern Europe, with heavy emphasis on the Czech experience.¹⁹ In the 1990s, Rudolf Ardelt published an appreciation of the response of Social Democrats to the war, including an effort to view their situation in psycho-social terms.²⁰ A decade later, Maureen Healy contributed a work on Vienna's wartime experience.²¹ More recently, Lothar Höbelt produced an exhaustive interpretation of the politics behind the war itself based upon detailed research.²² Finally, Manfred Rauchensteiner undertook a thorough survey of the war and the end of Empire.²³ This chapter, which is really tangential to the above-mentioned work, explains how the Social Democrats were able, during this time, to consolidate their position as members of the establishment, despite the ever more severe limitations imposed on them by an increasingly unresponsive government framework. Having attained that status, they played a central, even formative, role in the shaping of the Republic.

All members of the Socialist International, including Austria's Social Democrats, had long been inveighing against militarism and declaiming their anti-war credentials. Indeed the International was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1913.²⁴ The organisation could theoretically draw on the support of five million workers organised by their constituent parties around the world. It had taken the International half a century to reach their pre-war scale, esteem and reach. The Socialist International, then called "The International Working Men's Association", was launched by Karl Marx in London in 1864. Its members soon fell to squabbling. During their conference at the Hague in 1872, a breach between Marxists and the followers of Bakunin destroyed any coherence, and the

¹⁹ Z. Zeman, *The Break-Up of the Habsburg Empire 1914-1918: A Study in National and Social Revolution* (London, 1961).

²⁰ Ardelt, *Vom Kampf um Bürgerrechte zum Burgfrieden*.

²¹ M. Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire: Total War and Everyday Life in World War I* (Cambridge, 2004).

²² L. Höbelt, *'Stehen oder Fallen' Österreichische Politik im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Vienna, 2015).

²³ M. Rauchensteiner, *Der Erste Weltkrieg und das Ende der Habsburgermonarchie 1914-1918* (Vienna, 2013).

²⁴ G. Haupt, *Der Kongreß fand nicht statt: Die Sozialistische Internationale 1914* (Vienna, 1967), p. 9.

group was formally dissolved in Philadelphia in 1876.²⁵ Some thirteen years later, on the occasion of the centenary of Bastille Day, 14 July 1889, French Socialists resurrected the institution, which then became known as the Second International.²⁶ James Joll summarised the importance of the occasion(s) as threefold: first, the re-establishment of the International and the end of the isolation of the 70s; second, the provision of support for smaller socialist parties from an organised group of larger and well-established ones, and third, the realisation that the socialist parties shared common problems which would be debated during the following quarter of a century.²⁷ During the same period, participation in bourgeois government became and would remain a subject of debate.²⁸

As the new century dawned, war and militarism ceased to be purely theoretical problems. The Spanish-American War, the Boxer Rebellion and the Boer War, tensions between European powers in North Africa and the Balkans and finally the Russo-Japanese War afforded ample proof that the preservation of peace was a very important challenge. Still, the Second International and its Bureau in Brussels remained a connecting rather than a leading organ. This was borne out at the Copenhagen Congress in 1910, when the International proved unable to resolve a dispute between the German and the Czech Austrians.²⁹ The resolution of the second Morocco Crisis seemed to vindicate Victor Adler's cautious attitude in contrast to the enthusiastic activism of the French.³⁰ The two spells of tension regarding Morocco arose from the German-French rivalry for influence in Africa. The first, in 1905, was settled by the Treaty of Algeciras, which saw France getting what they wanted and Germany not accomplishing much if anything. The second ended in the autumn of 1911 with some territorial compensation for Germany in central Africa.³¹ In

²⁵ J. Joll, *The Second International 1889–1914* (New York, 1956), p. 22.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 30; also G. Lichtheim, *A Short History of Socialism* (New York, NY., 1970), p. 235.

²⁷ Joll, *The Second International*, pp. 55-80.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 77-105.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 120-122.

³⁰ Haupt, *Der Kongreß*, p. 45.

³¹ G. Craig, *Germany 1866-1945* (Oxford, 1978), pp. 318-319 and 328-329.

both cases there had seemed to be a real danger the major European powers would be at war, when a peaceful solution was ultimately pieced together. Unsurprisingly, Victor Adler's own assessment of the International Socialist Bureau was sceptical:

Taken as a whole, in my estimation the ISB as a diplomatic entity is in any case not very helpful. One always has the feeling of talking about things one knows nothing about and of exercising influence that one does not have. If we as a Bureau can do no more than what any mass meeting can: raise protests, then we would best leave that to the masses themselves.³²

Nevertheless, toward the end of 1912, as the Balkan Wars seemed to pose yet another threat to European peace, demonstrations were mounted in several European cities, including in Vienna on 10 November. The International met in Basle on 24 November to consider the dire situation. Although the 550 delegates adopted a measure unanimously, there were no concrete steps specified. James Joll, a noted historian of socialism, thought the Basle Congress of November 1912 was seminal:

The Basle Congress marks the high point of the International's optimistic self-confidence; and it reveals how far socialism had become almost a religious movement in feeling, and how much blind faith was placed in the actual existence of the International. The optimism generated at Basle only faded in July 1914. Up to the last minute confidence in the possibilities of international action against war was encouraged by the speeches and writings of socialist leaders, the constant exchange of visits and courtesies, and by such demonstrations as the Congress at Berne in 1913 where members of the French and German parliaments, liberals as well as socialists, met to proclaim their desire for friendship, and which they were to repeat at Basle in the spring of the following year.³³

At the same time it became apparent that the socialists really had very little idea what was actually going on in government circles.

The crisis passed, and everyone relaxed.³⁴ After a very tense year, the mood was optimistic. Adler gained stature due to his apparently shrewd assessment of the Balkan Crisis, when he counselled not to risk squandering capital on reckless action with little

³² V. Adler to Bebel, 7 August 1911, F. Adler (ed.), *Victor Adler: Briefwechsel mit August Bebel und Karl Kautsky* (Vienna, 1954), doc. A102, pp. 537 & 538.

³³ Joll, *The Second International*, p. 157.

³⁴ Haupt, *Der Kongreß*, pp. 67-82.

prospect of gain. There were nevertheless ominous developments. The year saw an increase in the duration of national service in France over socialist objections. In Germany socialists actually supported an increase in military spending, arguing that it would help the anti-militarist cause since the cost would be borne by the bourgeoisie! In spite of this, the feeling in the ISB at the start of 1914 was that England, France and Germany could soon settle their differences.³⁵ “One has only to read the socialist press of the day, which unhesitatingly drew a picture completely contrary to the unrest which they had been reporting the year before, to get an idea of the psychological metamorphosis seen in early 1914.”³⁶ Socialists had gained ground politically, especially in Germany and France, since 1908, but they were still far from a majority anywhere. Their highest shares of mandates were in Australia (47%) and Finland (45%). The apparent success of their pacifist efforts during the previous two years had encouraged the view that Europe was headed for calmer times. It seemed to them that reason had conquered imperialistic arrogance, that the threat of revolution had banished the urge to warlike adventures.³⁷ In a breath-taking demonstration of post hoc logic, socialists attributed the peaceful resolution of the crisis to their demonstrations and the power of their membership.

The summer of that year was to see the Vienna Congress of the Socialist International, originally due to be held the year before but postponed, since there appeared to be no urgency, to fall on the 50th anniversary of the founding of the (First) International.³⁸ The three items at the top of the agenda were unemployment, inflation and imperialism.³⁹ The congress in Vienna was above all to decide upon concrete measures to prevent war. One major proposal was to form an international tribunal. Leaders of the British and Belgian delegations intended to propose the general strike. The Germans

³⁵ Haupt, *Der Kongreß*, pp. 85-95.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 104-107.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 60-65.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 109-116.

opposed the latter idea on grounds that it would result in the defeat of the country with the best organised effort, that it would provide a pretext for unhelpful measures and finally that it would reduce, if not eliminate, the possibility of any constructive engagement with government.⁴⁰

Against the background of preparations for the big event, the assassinations in Sarajevo seemed unlikely to lead to war. Socialists were not alone in drawing that conclusion. Stefan Zweig remembered the arrival of the news of the assassinations in Baden, the spa town near Vienna where he spent the balmy summer of 1914, “two hours later one could see no sign of any sort of real mourning. People chatted and laughed; music was heard in the local pubs late into the evening.” The next day brought the usual expressions of grief and regret in the press, but there seemed no indication of any political action against Serbia.⁴¹ In Britain, for example, the *Manchester Guardian's* view was: “It is not to be supposed that the death of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand will have any immediate or salient effect on the politics of Europe.”⁴² Lots of attention was being lavished on ceremonial questions following the deaths on account of the morganatic nature of the marriage of the deceased. Ten days after the murders, the (German-Austrian) Social Democrats' Board of Directors met. In attendance were twelve of the Board members of the party, though Victor Adler, Pernerstorfer, Bauer, Austerlitz and Renner were not present. There was no mention of either the assassinations or the danger of war.⁴³ In fact, the socialists were not the only ones in the dark. Bridge wrote that the decision-makers were just as insouciant: ‘Although in June 1914 no one in Vienna, Belgrade or St. Petersburg had been thinking in terms of war, the terrorists at Sarajevo had contrived a situation that, given the mentality of the decision-makers of the time, hardly admitted of

⁴⁰ Haupt, *Der Kongreß*, pp. 131–132.

⁴¹ S. Zweig, *Die Welt von Gestern* (Stockholm, 1944), p. 249.

⁴² *Manchester Guardian*, 29 June 1914.

⁴³ *Protokoll des deutschen Parteivorstandes*, 9 July 1914, *VGA Partei Archiv vor 1934, Sitzungsprotokolle*, Mappe no. 1.

any other solution.’⁴⁴

Meanwhile, arrangements for the Socialist International Congress went ahead; delegates were coming from as far away as China! The first indication that the situation had become serious came on 21 July, more than three weeks after the events in Sarajevo, when the censor suppressed a big part of that day’s *Arbeiter-Zeitung*. Although there was some holiday absence, there were enough Social Democratic leaders in town that the Board was able to convene on the 23rd. There were fifteen in attendance, though Victor Adler, Seitz and Bauer were again absent. At the meeting, the danger of war and the International Congress were the subjects to be discussed. Friedrich Adler had drafted a letter to the ISB explaining that the congress could really not be held in Vienna, though there was some disagreement on that score. Apart from that, there was no discussion of what to do if and when war broke out.⁴⁵

On 25 July, Austria severed relations with Serbia, and the ultimatum presented to the Serbs was published. The same day, the ISB called a special meeting, and the leaders, including Victor and Friedrich Adler, headed for Brussels. As soon as Karl Kautsky saw the ultimatum, he realised there would be war with Serbia, but SPD leaders still expected a local conflict. The next morning, the *Wiener Zeitung* published, in the Official Part, the orders of 25 July setting forth in full the wartime powers of government, while in the Unofficial Part was the announcement of the closing of the XXIst session of parliament (which had since March merely been in session, while not sitting).⁴⁶ There should no longer have been any doubt about the shape if not the scale of events to come. Nevertheless, it was only following Berlin's rejection of Edward Grey's offer of mediation on the 27th that all saw the situation more clearly.⁴⁷ The following day there was a sitting

⁴⁴ F. Bridge, *The Habsburg Monarchy among the Great Powers, 1815-1918* (New York, NY., 1990), p. 336.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 23 July 1914.

⁴⁶ *Wiener Zeitung*, 26 July 1914.

⁴⁷ Haupt, *Der Kongreß*, pp. 147 – 156.

of the General Executive (*Gesamtexekutive*) of the Austrian Social Democratic Party, where the debate concerned whether to issue a manifesto or a communiqué, though there was no discussion of the content. The third option was to do nothing, and that was the result. There was uncertainty about the attitude of their Czech colleagues.⁴⁸

Two days later at the ISB meeting in Brussels, Victor Adler was the first to speak. He explained that the Social Democrats were unable to take any preventive measures. Mobilisation had already begun, and martial law had been declared. He proposed that steps be taken to preserve the organisation and his party. His assessment was confirmed by Nemeč for the Czechs and Burian for the Hungarians. The delegates still thought they had time to hold the congress, and Paris on 9 August was suggested. There was no discussion of what was to be done if war started, other than Adler's suggestion, and the meeting broke up without conclusion.⁴⁹ That morning the newspapers carried the announcement of the declaration of war on Serbia the day before.

Socialist sentiments and their determination to prevent war came to nothing in the summer of 1914. This has been commented upon at some length; so it is worth quoting a socialist rejoinder to those who are tempted to lay blame at the door of the International on that account:

The Socialist International has been reproached on the basis they were unable to hinder the war. That is the case, just as were other much more formidable powers. But who must bear the principal responsibility? Would it not be first and foremost the rulers themselves, who had fought socialism and the International for years with all the weapons at their disposal, preventing their spread and ridiculing the idea of internationalism? Had they not done all they could to keep national animosities simmering?⁵⁰

As a general proposition, it is difficult to argue with that assessment, but subsequent studies have taken a more detailed view of the role of the ISB. George Lichtheim, in his

⁴⁸ *Protokoll der Sitzung der Gesamtexekutive der SDAPÖ*, 28 July 1914, *VGA Partei Archiv vor 1934*, *Sitzungsprotokolle*, Mappe no. 1.

⁴⁹ Haupt, *Der Kongreß*, pp. 157–176, and Joll, *The Second International*, p. 163.

⁵⁰ L. Brügel, *Geschichte der österreichischen Sozialdemokratie*, 5 volumes (Vienna, 1925), vol. 5, p. 7.

history of socialism, attempted a Europe-wide perspective:

..the war of 1914, which wrecked the Second International, also destroyed something else – the precarious balance between “reformist” and “revolutionary” strands within the European labour movement. The tension was necessarily greatest in those areas where a democratic revolution had not yet occurred: Germany, Austria-Hungary and Russia. One can also put it differently: reformism was strongest where liberal democracy was firmly established, while radicalism possessed a mass following where the labour movement was confronted with authoritarian regimes.⁵¹

In terms of strategy and tactics before and throughout the war, this simple analysis does not stand up. Surely Austria's regime could be characterised as authoritarian, and reformism had been dominant among socialists from 1889. For his part, Georges Haupt, the historian of the aborted Vienna Congress, was less inclined to generalise, merely acknowledging that there were similar tensions in all the socialist parties, broadly speaking along the lines suggested by Joll but without the attempt at further categorisation of movements postulated by Lichtheim. The differences and tensions between the various socialist groups could be papered over but not reconciled,⁵² and furthermore, they were not directly relevant to war prevention.

The minutes of all these gatherings make clear that holiday absence was not a significant factor. There were two much more real problems. First, no Social Democrat had any idea what was going on in the relevant parts of the government. Of course, planning for war needs to be done to a large extent in secret, but the isolation of parliamentarians from the machinery of government made the entire situation even more opaque. Second, despite all the worry, discussion and resolutions about war, little thought had been given to what exactly would be advisable should the worst actually happen. Much is made of the tendency at Socialist International level to theorise and debate the interplay of various Marxist theories regarding capitalism, militarism and imperialism, to

⁵¹ Lichtheim, *A Short History of Socialism*, p. 252.

⁵² Haupt, *Der Kongreß*, pp. 117-129.

dispute how day-to-day events fit in the procrustean bed of Marxist dogma, and then to neglect the formulating of specific measures. Those may be valid criticisms, but the most damning judgement must be that there was no indication of thought devoted to the most serious risk, the outbreak of war. The idea of a general strike was always in the background, but that was mooted as an answer to every tactical need. Most judged this a blunt weapon, and its use in a war context would clearly have been futile if not counterproductive. There ensued a period of weeks when the Social Democrats had no idea even what to discuss, let alone what to do.

As to the position of the socialists at the outbreak of war, there was a moral dimension and a practical one. From a moral standpoint, any society is arguably entitled, indeed obliged, to defend its members against aggression. This was not a question of party or even of nation. Indeed, French Socialists were clear during the years leading to the Great War regarding their concern about what they perceived as a threat of aggression on the part of Germany. If the population thought they were being called upon to defend their homes and their society, they could be expected to answer that call regardless of their political persuasion or their nationality, and indeed that is what they did in Austria, where support for the war effort was general and widespread. Joll noted that Jaurès was very clear France would be justified going to war if attacked by Germany, and that Germans had comparable views vis-à-vis Russia. “This was a natural attitude for socialists to adopt when they realised that the workers in fact had a good deal more to lose than their chains.”⁵³

It is of interest to contrast the position of Social Democrats in Austria and Germany on the eve of the Great War, if only from the nationalism angle. In Germany, Social Democrats had been accused during the election campaign in 1907 of being unpatriotic,

⁵³ Joll, *The Second International*, p. 112.

even disloyal. Those barbs had stuck, leaving them extra-sensitive to any suggestion they could be second-class citizens by virtue of their internationalism. In Austria, the situation was in fact the opposite, at least programmatically. Social Democrats stood to a large extent 'above' nationalism; so they had no need to deal with that issue. In that context they would arguably have been the most reliably Austrian of the citizens of the Monarchy. On 4 August 1914, German socialists voted to finance the war effort. In his biography of Karl Kraus, Edward Timms maintained that the Austrian Social Democrats would have voted the same way had they been given the opportunity, but this seems an unfair assumption not only to the Austrian socialists, but also to their German comrades.⁵⁴ After all, the Germans were under pressure from the nationalists and believed their country was threatened. As for the Austrians, the question would have to be what their attitude would have been had the issues been discussed in a parliament with a genuine policy-making role during the spring and immediately after the murder of the heir apparent. For his part, James Joll related that the Austrian Social Democrats had voted for the war credits.⁵⁵ He further opined:

The Austrian Socialists' support for the war, in any case, was bound to be somewhat academic: for, the war credits once voted, the parliament was adjourned and did not meet again until 1917, when all was crumbling and there were more powerful forces opposing the war than the Socialists could muster.⁵⁶

Joll offered no source for any parliamentary proceedings after Friday, 13 March 1914, when the parliamentary records indicate the final sitting before 1917 took place.⁵⁷ Nor did he specify what 'more powerful forces' were involved in 1917.

Once the war had started, it was a different question for socialists of all nations.

From the practical point of view, there was a time for anti-war action. It was before war

⁵⁴ E. Timms, *Karl Kraus Apocalyptic Satirist: Culture and Catastrophe in Habsburg Vienna* (New Haven, Ct., 1986), p. 286.

⁵⁵ Joll, *The Second International*, p. 178.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 179.

⁵⁷ *Stenographische Protokolle des Abgeordnetenhauses, XXI. Session, 204. Sitzung*, 13 March 1914, p. 9746.

became a fact, and socialists were clear about that. The nature of the action to be taken once war became a reality had forced itself onto the agenda, but there was no clarity. Some were convinced that co-ordinated strikes were the best tactic, while others doubted the effectiveness of that approach. Austrian Social Democratic leadership had never been keen on strike action in support of political goals, preferring demonstrations. Regardless of the tactics discussed, at no time before the declaration of war did they advocate anything but peaceful means of resolving international tensions. Furthermore, two features of the workings of government in the Monarchy made it easier for them to hold to that line: foreign policy, including decisions on war and peace, were the preserve of the Monarchy without recourse to parliament. Secondly, parliament had, as mentioned above, been sent home in March of 1914; so there was not even a chance to debate any aspect of the question. Following that adjournment, Karl Renner had made his assessment quite clear in his previously cited article from the social democratic monthly *Der Kampf*. On the implications of the adjournment:

Now parliaments are only there to raise taxes and authorize recruits. Carrying on work on the constitution, extending the rule of law, improvement of the economy, social issues – until very recently recognised as the role of the state – are now passé. That Austria and Hungary have national problems to solve, that the Empire will become ever more problematic in the absence of such a solution, has dropped completely from view. Ministers who might have ideas, people like Koerber who advocate the primacy of economic policy, like Beck who strive for national reconciliation and work for social reforms, have become impossible. A minister who is plagued by an idea, however modest, is now seen as useless.... These fools, who have unsanctioned concerns about the state, are today greeted with arrogant smiles of those who are paid lavishly by the state to do its thinking, and who regard, based on old truisms, their office as proof in itself of their competence and their pay as proof of their skill, who say: 'Obstruction is merely a good opportunity!'⁵⁸

Renner's view, therefore, was that the nationalists' tactics were used merely as a pretext to get rid of the possibly tiresome attentions of a representative legislature. The result, however, filled Renner with hopelessness:

⁵⁸ Renner, 'Das Regime des Leichtsinns', p. 289.

Frivolity – that is in the last analysis the constitution of Austria, frivolity is our unwritten basic state law. A frivolous cabinet, a frivolous majority, a frivolous obstruction determine Austria's fate in her most decisive years. Today they are acting as if everything is in order after all and there is nothing missing except bayonets and dreadnoughts. In the meantime however all the structure of the ship that is carrying us is gradually and quietly falling apart.⁵⁹

In Stürgkh's cabinet there were members of the two major parties of the right, the Christian Socials and the German Nationalists, who according to Ardelt were placing their hopes on the heir apparent to the throne to cut the Gordian knot of nationalist obstruction and blunt the drive for reform.⁶⁰ In addition, efforts were under way to reach an accommodation with the obstructing Czechs during January and February. By early March only details remained to be cleared up with regard to reconvening of the Bohemian provincial diet. Furthermore, there was other urgent business pending.⁶¹ As mentioned briefly above, the lower house met on Friday, 13 March, and was due to sit next on the following Tuesday.⁶² According to Sunday's *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, Stürgkh let it be known that, if there were not clear undertakings on Monday to deal smoothly during the coming week with both the army bill and the loan bill, he would send parliament home. On Monday negotiating delegates of the Czechs and Germans met to discuss explanations offered by the Czechs to the latest German requests for assurances. The Germans were unable to accept; the meeting was inconclusive, whereupon Stürgkh adjourned parliament.⁶³

The Social Democrats had felt all along that Stürgkh aimed to run the government without parliament. Ernst von Plener certainly was of the same view, as he related in his memoirs. In contrast to Zweig, he felt there was very general indignation and a feeling at all levels of society that something had to be done. He therefore urged Stürgkh to use the

⁵⁹ Renner, 'Das Regime des Leichtsinns', p. 292.

⁶⁰ Ardelt, *Vom Kampf um Bürgerrechte zum Burgfrieden*, p. 55.

⁶¹ Füssek, *Stürgkh*, p. 50.

⁶² *Stenographische Protokolle des Abgeordnetenhauses, XXI. Session, 204. Sitzung*, 13 March 1914, p. 9746.

⁶³ *Reichspost*, 17 March 1914.

'unanimity of patriotic feeling' to recall parliament, but the latter stuck stubbornly by his conviction that the Czech obstruction made governing with parliament impossible, which in turn would merely be an embarrassment for Austria.⁶⁴ Stürgkh's biographer Füssek, like Plener,⁶⁵ also deemed it a missed opportunity to get parliament behind him. It is tempting to suggest, however, that the prospect of debating or even answering interpellations about the path to war in that forum, even had parliament returned without obstruction, would not have been attractive to Stürgkh. Füssek went on to enumerate other opportunities missed after the start of the war, but that was purely with benefit of hindsight. Above all, it is plain from the very conduct of government by Stürgkh that recall of parliament was the last thing on his mind.

The Social Democrats publicised clearly their disapproval of war as an appropriate response:

We are convinced that for everything which Austria-Hungary craves in the interest of the protection of the integrity of the state, the fulfilment **would have been attainable in peace**, and still would be, and that no state necessity, and no consideration of the role as a great power compels the abandonment of the path of peaceful understanding. For that reason we declare in the name of the working classes, we declare as representatives of the German workers in Austria, **that we take no responsibility for this war**, that we place the responsibility for it and for everything by way of terribly serious consequences which may follow from it on those who have contrived, supported and encouraged the fateful step which has placed us on the verge of war.

We are particularly obliged, even compelled, thus to clarify and declare our position because for many months the people of Austria have been robbed of their constitutional rights and thus lack the platform from which to make their will understood.⁶⁶

This manifesto from the Social Democratic deputies in parliament confirmed and clarified an important and unequivocal position with reference to war.

Although this view was shared by the Social Democrats' fellow workers' parties in

⁶⁴ E. Plener, *Erinnerungen von Ernst Plener*. 3 volumes (Stuttgart, 1921), vol. 3, p. 437.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* p. 439.

⁶⁶ *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 25 July 1914 a.m., emphasis original.

the Second International, the Austrians' position offered an interesting contrast in two respects. First, when the war had finally run its course, they were able to point out that they were not the authors of the war, which they had opposed from before the start. They insisted that the Emperor take responsibility and accept the cease fire terms on offer. The Social Democrats were therefore able, despite their co-operation during the conflict, to deny ownership of either the war or its outcome, especially at that moment.⁶⁷ Their situation was as much a result of fate as of judgement. With no parliament sitting, representatives were not called upon to vote on any aspect of the war. In any case, foreign relations and defence issues were not within the competence of parliament, but in the event they had not been in a position to demand a say in the matter or even discuss it. Furthermore, for much of the decade immediately before the outbreak of the war, German Social Democrats, for example, had found themselves forced to proclaim their patriotism repeatedly to answer the allegations, made with great effect in the election campaign of 1907, that they were enemies of the Fatherland.⁶⁸ During the same time, the Austrian Social Democrats strove to maintain an internationalist as distinct from nationalist approach, seeking to dismiss nationalism as a means by which bourgeois politicians diverted attention from socialists' practical, concrete goals. Their dissociation from the start of the war therefore allowed them a luxury their German counterparts were not able to enjoy. For the Austrian socialists, there were no memories of the "4th of August".⁶⁹ They were able to be non-nationalist and anti-war, without being unpatriotic or irresponsible.

The measures published in the *Wiener Zeitung* on the 26th, mentioned above, constituted the imposition of martial law; so it had to be plain to all that war was close. The Social Democrats made their position very clear: though Austria had been grievously

⁶⁷ K. Seitz, 'Vor Zehn Jahren', *Der Kampf*, vol. 21, no. 11 (November, 1928), pp. 518 & 519.

⁶⁸ C. Schorske, *German Social Democracy 1905-1917: The Development of the Great Schism*. (Cambridge, Ma., 1955), chapter 3.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 285.

wronged, there was a peaceful means of redress, and Serbia could be brought to account in that way. There was no need to bring Austria-Hungary to the brink of war. This sombre but unequivocal attitude was reaffirmed in the leader on the 28th, as it turned out the day war was declared:

The Social Democratic Workers' Party in Austria has warned for six years of this frightful danger. During those six years the party has done everything in their power to preserve for the people the great blessing of peace. Today we see that the powers which were urging war have been stronger than we....History teaches that war brings great changes in the lives of states and their people. The war will make a new Austria. It will change fundamentally the terms of our struggle. To be equipped and to remain equipped for the time after the war is now our most important task. Therefore it is our present duty to preserve our organisation.⁷⁰

The declaration of war was carried in the papers the following day; so the question of what to do was no longer academic. As mentioned above, Victor Adler explained that there was only one thing worse than being at war, and that was losing a war.⁷¹ Had the Party undertaken any concrete measures to hinder Austria-Hungary's war effort, they would have been at the very least subject to arrest and imprisonment pursuant to the Imperial ordinances of 25 July 1914 and quite possibly guilty of treason and treated accordingly, with overwhelming public support.⁷² Morally and practically, Social Democrats had no choice but to answer the call to arms; so they did. That one can maintain, with the benefit of hindsight and all the facts in view, that Austria was not threatened is of no use in the evaluation of the behaviour of Austrian citizens or their political parties in 1914.

The day the news of war was published, the leaders of the Social Democratic members of parliament met, the Germans, the Czechs and the Poles. Ignacy Daszyński summed up the sense of the meeting that the most important objective was to maintain the

⁷⁰ *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 28 July 1914.

⁷¹ L. Meysels, *Victor Adler: Die Biographie* (Vienna, 1997), p. 208.

⁷² While such conduct might arguably not be treasonous in today's parlance, the concept was not narrowly defined in Habsburg Austria. See page 9 above, where in the *Wiener Hochverratsprozess* of July 1870, the accused were convicted for staging a demonstration in peacetime.

institutions of each national party, particularly the relationships with the local representatives and the capability of the organisations.⁷³ The maintenance of their structure was a leitmotiv in much of the leadership's deliberations, and there was also mention of the opportunities to be brought by any change in circumstances resulting from the war. However, Judson's view – that “For socialists the war offered the chance to achieve social and political reform in return for the cooperation of the industrial working classes.”⁷⁴ – suggests some sort of formal agreement, of which there is no evidence.

The following day the Board of the (German Austrian) Party met to discuss a range of practical issues such as deliveries of goods for the military, a report to fellow socialists in Berlin, the effect of the war on co-operatives, the calling up of colleagues and the continuation of the evening edition of the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*.⁷⁵ A week later the same Board decided that party officials who were called up would receive half pay and have their insurance paid during service.⁷⁶ A week into the war there was still a wholly practical focus and no sign of any rift. Unsurprisingly, the harmony did not last.

Germany declared war on Russia on 1 August and on France on 3 August. On 4 August, the German Reichstag held the vote on war credits, and the Social Democrats supported. That moved Friedrich Austerlitz, editor of the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, to write the best known expression of socialist German patriotism in wartime Austria:

Whether the diplomacy was handled correctly, whether it had to happen the way it has, may be decided with the passage of time. Now German survival is at stake, whereupon there can be no wavering and no hesitation! The German People united in iron, unshakeable resolve not to be subdued, and neither death nor the devil will be able to get the better of this great people, our German people.⁷⁷

Born to a poor family in Hochlieben, Austerlitz attended *Volksschule* there and

⁷³ *Protokoll der Gemeinsame Sitzung der Vorstände des deutschen, des tschechoslavischen und des polnischen Klubs der sozialdemokratischen Abgeordneten*, 29 July 1914, *VGA Partei Archiv vor 1934*, *Sitzungsprotokolle*, Mappe no. 1.

⁷⁴ Judson, *Habsburg Empire*, p. 385.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 30 July 1914.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 7 August 1914.

⁷⁷ *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 5 August 1914.

Bürgerschule in Jung Bunzlau before his family insisted he start work at age 14. Having started as an intern in the retail business then a *Handelslehrling* (trader's apprentice) in Böhmisches-Leipa, he moved next to Innsbruck then to Vienna, rising to the status of *Prokurist* (authorised representative). An autodidact with a keen interest in Shakespeare and Schopenhauer as well as Marx, he began work in journalism in 1895. Victor Adler noticed Austerlitz and recruited him to work at the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*.⁷⁸

The distinctly Germanocentric ring of Austerlitz's appeal at the outbreak of war, not surprising in light of his growing up in the German community around Bohemia, further reflected backing of the war effort by the Monarchy's subjects of all nations. This strongly suggests that nationalism as such was not the major determinant of people's attitudes to the war in Austria. Zeman ascribed the more or less uniform approach of the Social Democrats of the various nationalities to the 'Marxist predilection for large economic units such as the Habsburg monarchy' as well as to the brotherhood of the working classes.⁷⁹ He quoted Czech leader Beneš from a conversation the latter had with fellow Czech and Social Democrat leader Šmeral about Czech separatist ambitions: "Šmeral simply told me we were mad." Czech Social Democrats saw their best chance of reforms in the context of the Habsburg state and regarded separatist dreams as an irresponsible gamble.⁸⁰

Timms highlighted that the public in 1914, unlike the population even between the wars, was entirely dependent on newspapers for both facts and evaluative comment on the events of the day. Leading articles in the press of the day were at least influential and possibly formative in terms of public perception, while the exclusivity of this medium made easy work of managing public ambitions and expectations. In Austria, as in the other belligerent states, authorities appreciated the value of information, both from the negative

⁷⁸ *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, obituary, 6 July 1931.

⁷⁹ Zeman, *Break-Up*, p. 14.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

standpoint of censorship and the potentially positive propaganda. There was also the role of patriotism, as pointed out by Mark Cornwall: “From the beginning, under the force of patriotic spontaneity, a strong degree of self-censorship was apparent. It was in this vein that *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, the Social Democrat newspaper in Vienna, toed the line which had immediately been adopted by loyalist papers such as *Neue Freie Presse*.”⁸¹ In any event, the public backdrop for the next few years of Social Democrat activity and their relations with the bureaucracy, the military and the Monarchy was by all accounts feverish. All the belligerent nations competed to have the highest sounding justifications for their participation.⁸² Intellectuals of all flavours declaimed their patriotism in support of the war effort.⁸³ The *Arbeiter-Zeitung* was hardly alone in its enthusiastic tone.

Several days later the trade union commission set out their recommendations in a call to members. Unions were not meant to suffer because of government measures announced on 26 July, and indeed they had a role to play. At the same time, they needed to be strictly observant of the new regulations to be sure no cause was given for those regulations to be used to their disadvantage:

As serious as the time may be, and however great the demands placed on the willingness of each to make sacrifices, they should not be grounds for voluntarily curtailing our activities. To the contrary: the more serious the times, the greater the sacrifices demanded of us, the greater our duty to think of the future, which will more than ever require strong and capable unions for working people.⁸⁴

Despite this encouragement, the call further suggested a suspension of campaign for higher wages before stressing once again the priority of preserving the unions for the future. This message was repeated in *Der Kampf* later in the autumn. While the party had been unprepared for the war, it was certain to bring great changes in its wake – particularly in

⁸¹ M. Cornwall, *The Undermining of Austria-Hungary: The Battle for Hearts and Minds* (London, 2000), p. 24.

⁸² Brügel, *Geschichte der österreichischen Sozialdemokratie*, vol. 5, p. 145.

⁸³ Timms, *Karl Kraus*, p. 285.

⁸⁴ Brügel, *Geschichte der österreichischen Sozialdemokratie*, vol. 5, pp. 174-175.

social relationships – and preparedness for that was a prime objective.⁸⁵ Robert Wegs concluded on the basis of his research that the unions co-operated for a combination of reasons: loyalty to the Emperor, the lack of an organised Workers' Movement and special measures by the government to combat worker unrest.⁸⁶

Not all Social Democrats shared the war enthusiasm or even the calm philosophical approach. At the Board on 13 August, the main item on the agenda was the attitude of the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* to the war. From the minutes:

Seitz complains that the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* had shown in a few articles all too great war enthusiasm. Especially the article about the *Reichstag* sitting in Germany bore directly German nationalist character. Aside from that, he wants to register an objection: the Board had decided upon a report regarding the postponement of the International Congress by the ISB in Brussels, and it was only after a great struggle with Austerlitz, who initially refused to pick it up, that it eventually appeared in the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*.

Based on this complaint, a proposal of Victor Adler, seconded by Friedrich, was adopted that this be the subject of a special sitting of the Board to which Austerlitz was to be invited at a time to be agreed with him.⁸⁷ The report of the postponement had been telegraphed by Friedrich Adler before he boarded the train from Brussels on 29 July for the trip home. When he got to Vienna, he was surprised that it had not been printed in the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*. A long and allegedly heated conversation ensued between Adler and Austerlitz, following which the two were said not to have spoken for a year.⁸⁸ The follow-up meeting was held four days later, and the sole item on the agenda was the position of the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* regarding the war. Seitz gave further focus to his complaint. He was keen that the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* “not make itself the distributor of all the official lies, second that they treat the war as a whole much more coolly and finally that they should not forget the remaining international context.” Moreover, he pointed out that bulletins from the

⁸⁵ J. Deutsch, ‘Krieg und Parteiorganisation’, *Der Kampf*, vol. 7 (1913/14), no. 11-12 (1 Dec. 1914), p. 501.

⁸⁶ R. Wegs, *Die österreichische Kriegswirtschaft 1914-1918* (Vienna, 1979), p. 93.

⁸⁷ *Protokoll der Sitzung des deutschen Parteivorstandes*, 13 Aug. 1914, *VGA Partei Archiv vor 1934*, *Sitzungsprotokolle*, Mappe no. 1.

⁸⁸ R. Florence, *Fritz: The Story of a Political Assassin* (New York, NY., 1971), p. 125.

Board should not have been subject to censorship by the editor of the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*. Both Ellenbogen and Renner supported Seitz, though Renner suggested they not make any announcements. Anton Hueber, trade union leader and Secretary of the *Gewerkschaftskommission*, pointed out the difficulties Austerlitz had to deal with and defended the Editor. Friedrich Adler proposed that the minutes reflect the Board's regret of the attitude of the paper during the first few days of the war, whereupon Austerlitz explained that he had not simply violated a Board instruction but rather had acted from concern to protect the paper, and he rejected the other reproaches. After cool reflection Austerlitz was not inclined to take back a line of his 5 August article. Victor Adler explained the difficult position of the editorial staff at the paper and especially Austerlitz in the current circumstances but conceded that the 5 August article might have been differently written. He thought it best not to have any position reflected in the minutes.⁸⁹

Two days later the Board met to consider, among other items, a complaint from the Vienna Press Control Commission. Austerlitz's caution, it seems, had not been misplaced, even if his colleagues were upset. The Commission had written to complain that, at the last sitting of the party's Board, press questions had been discussed, but no representative of the Commission had been invited. Also, the Commission regretted the attitude of the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* to the war and accused it of German nationalist tendencies! The editors met on the 24th to deal with the Commission's letter regarding the paper's attitude. Their answer was that this was a matter for the Board, and they noted that there were no *Arbeiter-Zeitung* representatives on the Commission. The Board decided they would write to the Commission along those lines, reminding them that only the Board had the statutory right and duty to specify and control (politically and in principle) the position of the

⁸⁹ *Protokoll der Sitzung des deutschen Parteivorstandes*, 17 Aug. 1914, *VGA Partei Archiv vor 1934*, *Sitzungsprotokolle*, Mappe no. 1.

paper.⁹⁰ Nearly a month later the Board received a response from the Commission: the latter had decided to postpone their complaints against the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, since there would be an opportunity to return to the subject during the consultation process regarding a statute for the Commission.

Of course there was disagreement within the party leadership about the position to be taken. After all, they were leaders of a political party, whose members could not be expected to share the same views at all times. Like their German comrades, Social Democrats in Austria had different views about how to deal with the war as about many other subjects, but the trajectory of the disagreement was quite different in Austria. While in Germany a separate Independent Social Democratic Party broke away from the main party, the Austrians were able to maintain their institutional unity. More interesting perhaps is that prominent in the respective schools of opinion were father and son: Victor and Friedrich Adler.

Friedrich Adler had studied mathematics and physics, completing his doctorate at the University of Zurich. He was actually a leading candidate for a position on the faculty in 1911, but he had decided to return to Vienna to work for the Party. He recommended to the university that they hire his friend Albert Einstein, which they duly did!⁹¹ Having returned to Vienna, he went to work for the Party as well as for the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* during the election campaign of 1911. Following the outbreak of war, Adler, at the time 35 years old, saw in the enthusiasm for the war on the part of some colleagues, particularly Austerlitz, the “collapse of his life's work”.⁹²

On 9 August, Friedrich Adler wrote a letter to the Party's Board announcing his resignation from all his roles in the party, specifically those of Party Secretary and of

⁹⁰ *Protokoll der Sitzung des deutschen Parteivorstandes, 27 Aug. 1914, VGA Partei Archiv vor 1934, Sitzungsprotokolle, Mappe no. 1.*

⁹¹ Florence, *Fritz*, pp. 44-45.

⁹² Adler, F. *Vor dem Ausnahmegericht* (Jena, 1923), p. 113.

Editor of the monthly journal, *Der Kampf*. In the letter he made clear that there was no reproach and that he understood the difficult choice that his colleagues faced between loyalty to their constituents and loyalty to their Marxist ideals. Regarding the position of the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* with respect to the war, the subject to be discussed by the Board, his letter lamented: "I must confess I would rather that, instead of the daily documenting our shame, we had packed up the paper, locked the presses and gone to jail."⁹³ He accompanied the letter with a memorandum setting out his ideas about the war, refuting all the official 'justifications'. In it he urged the Board not to join in the war-mongering of the rulers. They should rather distance themselves from that stance and wait silently for the right time to assert themselves in support of their cause, which after all was meant to be the liberation of the international proletariat:⁹⁴ "The International has been incurably compromised, but the proletariat survives; it will carry on and fulfil its mission without those who hastily let fall the banner of the International and adopted the slogans of nationalism."⁹⁵

Father and son wrestled with the resignation issue, which the Board had not discussed. Several officers had been called up; so the personnel situation was difficult. Ultimately, Victor Adler was able to convince his son to stay on, if temporarily. In October, Friedrich's wife Kathia and their children moved to Zurich to live with the in-laws, escaping the privations of the war, while Friedrich moved into a shared apartment. He took his meals at the family home; so he and his father had ample opportunity to explore their differences. Not for the first time between generations, father took the pragmatic view, while son chose the idealist high road.⁹⁶ Victor assured his friend Karl Kautsky:

⁹³ Ardelt, Rudolf. *Vom Kampf um Bürgerrechte zum Burgfrieden*, p. 102.

⁹⁴ Brügel, *Geschichte der österreichischen Sozialdemokratie*, vol. 5, p. 181.

⁹⁵ F. Adler, *Vor dem Ausnahmegesetz* (Jena, 1923), pp. 15-19.

⁹⁶ Florence, *Fritz*, pp. 35-37.

The political conflict with Fritz is from a personal standpoint not so bad; he is and remains my closest friend – but I worry myself that he is becoming fanatic and that he will therefore not be able to do as much for the Party as I expect of him. I hope as things become calmer his sense of facts will strengthen and the worship of straight lines, that they call 'principles', will wane – but it's not a family tragedy. For such things I have no talent, and it only seems that way to people for whom no situation is spicy enough and who are accustomed to taking everything personally.⁹⁷

In many respects, the subject matter of the dispute may not seem important in hindsight, but it is interesting that members changed sides. Most prominent of those was Karl Renner. Having supported Seitz's complaint along with Friedrich at the start of the war, Renner was to play the role of the principal villain when Friedrich Adler reviewed the period during the spring of 1917. Of more interest here is that the debate carried on in the editions of *Der Kampf*, and the excisions of the censors were not so great as to hide the dispute from any who cared to follow it.

Der Kampf was the serious monthly journal of Austrian Social Democracy. Karl Renner was a co-editor with Friedrich Adler, and both contributed regularly to the journal. Renner's article in the last edition of 1914, the first to appear after the start of the war, reinforced earlier appeals, reminding readers that Social Democrats had predicted the war quite clearly but had been too weak to prevent it. He insisted that the prime objectives had to be to protect workers as much as possible from the suffering during the war and to preserve their organisation and their members' class consciousness. "Socialists clearly predicted this world war. Though too weak, as subjects naturally too weak, to prevent it, socialism is strong enough to bear and survive it."⁹⁸ The leading article in the same edition, attributed to "the Editors", lamented the painful fact that "capitalist imperialism rules the world and not the Socialist International just as certainly as the war rages while the International remains silent."⁹⁹ The same article made clear the aim of the journal

⁹⁷ V. Adler to Kautsky, 26 November 1914, F. Adler, (ed.), *Victor Adler: Briefwechsel mit August Bebel und Karl Kautsky* (Vienna, 1954), doc. no A113, pp. 602–604.

⁹⁸ K. Renner, 'Kriegsfürsorge und Sozialdemokratie', *Der Kampf*, vol. 7 (1913/14), no. 11-12 (1 December 1914), pp. 486-7.

⁹⁹ 'Statt des Weltkongresses – Weltkrieg' by the editors, *Der Kampf*, vol. 7 (1913/14), no. 11-12 (1 Dec.

during the war:

The violent developments we are witnessing today in the capitalist world need to be gone through scientifically and made useful in a practical sense to the proletariat. *Der Kampf* will participate eagerly in the pursuit of that objective as a platform for free discussion and scientific research. The special problems, with which the coming events will confront Social Democracy in Austria-Hungary, have been starkly illuminated by this war. That calls for the most thoroughgoing theoretical criticism.¹⁰⁰

The outlines of some disagreement were beginning to clarify themselves. On the one hand there were party leaders urging constituents to work with their fellow citizens to achieve the best possible outcome. On the other there were members who were convinced that any support beyond the minimum would give the war the status of legitimate community undertaking, thus betraying party principles.

The differences were more distinctly visible during 1915. Karl Renner led the February edition with an article entitled “War and the International” in which he argued that the International would survive the war.

What is the International? We have come to understand this as the periodic congresses and the office in Brussels, but these can only be the visible expression of the living society. The latter is the real International, and the organisation is at best its representation. Just as a nation does not disappear when its parliament is not in session or has been abolished; so the International does not disappear, even if the formal organisation is not there.¹⁰¹

The following month saw Renner take more careful aim at Friedrich Adler's position. He pointed out that the latter saw the party's problematic position not as the result of the war but rather as the consequence of their *Burgfrieden* accommodation with the bourgeoisie. Renner protested that the war was a matter of defending their society rather than an abandonment of their principles. In April appeared Friedrich Adler's heavily censored article “The International of the Deed”, wherein he increased his breadth of fire, arguing that the real problem of the International was not the chauvinism of a few individuals but

1914), p. 482.

¹⁰⁰ Deutsch, ‘Krieg und Parteiorganisation’, p. 501.

¹⁰¹ K. Renner, ‘Der Krieg und die Internationale’, *Der Kampf*, vol. 8 (1915), no. 2 (1 Feb. 1915), p. 50.

rather the decision of the socialist parties to fall in behind the ruling classes. He accepted Renner's concept of the International but as a concept which would come to fruition as a victory in the future. While all agreed they needed to get there, the starting point was the problem. Social Democratic parties were unable to pursue the politics of peace, because they had embraced the war, not just a defensive war but this war, with all its aims, hidden and unhidden, as postulated by the ruling classes. The only institution which could articulate unreservedly and with full force the thoughts and desires of the people had not yet recovered its ability to act. The constituents needed action – the International of the Deed.¹⁰²

In the last edition of 1915, Rudolf Hilferding's article, “*Europäer nicht Mitteleuropäer*” focused on the *Mitteleuropa* book by Friedrich Naumann, the progressive-liberal German pastor and politician.¹⁰³ The book suggested the idea of a central European federation, a concept with which Karl Renner was also associated. Hilferding judged this a product of fear regarding how post war economic relations would develop. In his view, Naumann was proposing nothing short of a German-dominated group of nations, with the others in political and economic subordination to the Germans, who in turn would be subject to the German ruling classes.¹⁰⁴

At the start of 1916, an article by Renner took Hilferding to task. The latter had got his facts right but drawn the wrong conclusions. Even worse, he had made common cause with protectionists. At the same time, Renner conceded that Naumann's book had many errors and shortcomings, that it was a book written by a bourgeois for the bourgeoisie, but he maintained that ‘*Mitteleuropa*’ had survived dynastic struggles and would also outlast the tariff era and further that such a political entity would be the best hope of peace in the

¹⁰² F. Adler, ‘Die Internationale der Tat’, *Der Kampf*, vol. 8 (1915), no. 4 (1 April 1915), p. 148.

¹⁰³ *Neue Deutsche Biographie* (Berlin, 1997), vol. 18 (Moller-Nausea), pp. 767-769.

¹⁰⁴ R. Hilferding, ‘Europäer nicht Mitteleuropäer’, *Der Kampf*, vol. 8, no. 11-12 (November/December, 1915), pp. 357–365.

region.¹⁰⁵ To this Hilferding responded the next month that he remained convinced the idea was a plot to extend German hegemony.

We are therefore opposed to the idea of *Mitteleuropa*, which is as always so well conceived but in reality would turn out to be simply a central European defence and customs union as proposed by Naumann. Not for the first time in German history, the government would have fashioned out of the ideas and objectives of democracy a creation which would postpone for decades the realisation of democratic ideals.

In March, Renner turned his fire on Hilferding again, accusing him of taking an unduly one-sided approach in his reporting on party disputes within the German party, claiming the Marxist high ground. Renner argued that the 'left' had no exclusive claim to Marxist validity. What was more, he held that it was simply wrong to judge the conduct of the Party's members. In time of peril, they would not let their country down.

Robert Danneberg took issue with Renner's assessment of the situation confronting socialists at the start of the war. He reminded readers that governments had been concerned to ascertain the attitudes of their socialist compatriots before going to war. His implication presumably was that those attitudes would have been influential to some degree rather than to help compile lists of those to be rounded up and shot. But in the interim, the war had proven to be a dead end; so the duty of Social Democracy was to lead people out of that situation.¹⁰⁶ In the same issue Friedrich Adler summarised the opposing views quite aptly:

The longer the war drags on, the clearer it becomes that the political position with regard to war aims could be of decisive significance. The tendencies within Social Democracy distinguish themselves in that one rests on the belief that the war must necessarily be concluded by force of arms with the complete victory of one side, that only thus can peace be achieved, while the other sees the principal task of Social Democracy in the preparation of the psychological ground for a political settlement, in case no decisive military outcome is achievable. The former regards political influence as superfluous, would postpone those efforts to the end of the war and produces largely anodyne explanations, while the latter regards the realisation of political influence as the most important mission of Social Democracy during the war, for which all available powers must be brought to bear.

¹⁰⁵ K. Renner, 'Wirklichkeit oder Wahnidee?', *Der Kampf*, vol. 9, no. 1 (January, 1916), pp. 15 – 25.

¹⁰⁶ R. Danneberg, 'Nur Notstandshandlungen', *Der Kampf*, vol. 9, no. 4 (April, 1916), pp. 139–148.

And he concluded his article with the following juxtaposition of the 'right' and the 'left':

Two problems have been wrestling with one another since the beginning of the war among members of the working class: It is for them not only a question of what they can do for the war, for its carrying through and for survival, but also, and equally important, what they are duty bound to do for the peace, to make it possible and then to achieve it. Social Democrats seem generally to have one of these concerns in the main. It does not help gain an insight into the dilemma when we hold that one view is valid and deny the existence of the other.¹⁰⁷

Regardless of this war of words, the attitude of the Party remained supportive of the war effort at least so far as not to oppose it openly. Karl Renner furnished the clearest view of the position of those broadly sharing his views in this debate:

For in the case of a party it is always first a question of the behaviour, of the deed, of the unity of action. A party is neither a church, nor a social circle, nor an academic institution, but rather a fighting army, which leads the class interest of the proletariat to victory, that is interests, not opinions. However highly a party values thoughts, convictions or theories, these are only of use as means to an end. ...An old proverb has proved itself during the struggles of Austrian Social Democrats: it is better to err with your comrades than to be right opposing them.¹⁰⁸

That others understood this attitude was borne out in assessments by the Habsburg authorities. The annual report of the Viennese police for the year 1914 states: "The posture of the Austrian Social Democratic Party through the end of 1914 has been thoroughly loyal. Regarding the theoretical justification of Social Democrats' role in the war, the German and Polish parties alike proclaimed the war as a struggle against Tsarism, in whose defeat their comrades in the West have an interest, and the Czechs followed without enthusiasm." The report also noted the work of both the Party and the unions toward ameliorating unemployment and other hardship.¹⁰⁹

During the spring of 1915, the Board of the German Party was informed that *Der Kampf* had lost *Kronen* 3,600 for the year 1914, its first ever loss. The Board considered reducing the size of each edition but deferred that decision until a subsequent meeting

¹⁰⁷ F. Adler, 'Mutwilliger Streit oder politischer Gegensatz?', *Der Kampf*, vol. 9, no. 4 (April, 1916), pp. 148-149.

¹⁰⁸ K. Renner, 'Der taktische Streit', *Der Kampf*, vol. 9, no. 1 (January, 1916), page 18.

¹⁰⁹ Brügel, *Geschichte der österreichischen Sozialdemokratie*, vol. 5, p. 181.

when Friedrich Adler would be present. At their meeting a fortnight later, the decision was to reduce the annual aggregate size rather than to cut each edition.¹¹⁰ It is worth noting that Friedrich Adler retained a central role in the day-to-day decision making process despite his flirtation with resigning. Furthermore, he was co-publishing a periodical with Karl Renner. The two editors may not always have been seeing eye to eye, but they were working together.

The challenge of how to give expression to their disapproval of the war while remaining within the law troubled the party leadership from early in the conflict. At their July meeting, the Party Directorate discussed a peace demonstration by the Party, and during the session, Renner made clear that the aim needed to be peace rather than an armistice. The latter would only find their sons in another war after 15 years (of course it took a bit longer!). There needed to be no annexations in the west and the establishment of a real Poland in the east at the expense of Russia, Germany and Austria, that is including Galicia and Prussian Poland. As Austerlitz pointed out, the real question was how to give the resolution expression. Social Democrats had agreed to support the war effort the previous summer, and it was time to call in the markers. Friedrich Adler noted the majority supported Austerlitz's view; so they should be drafting an appropriate manifesto.¹¹¹ The idea of a demonstration had given way. A fortnight later, Friedrich Adler reported to the Board that Austerlitz had patiently worked for days with the state attorney, then finally with Count Oskar von Montlong, head of the press section in the Foreign Office. The final result was that there was a blank spot in the introduction, although in the provinces the appearance of any part was not widespread. They had decided not to push further, as they were in an area of questionable legality and risked being unduly provocative.¹¹² The

¹¹⁰ *Protokoll der Sitzung des deutschen Parteivorstandes*, 17 June and 1 July 1915, *VGA Partei Archiv vor 1934, Sitzungsprotokolle*, Mappe no. 1.

¹¹¹ *Protokoll der Sitzung der Parteivertretung und des Klubs der Abgeordneten*, 13 July 1915, *VGA Partei Archiv vor 1934, Sitzungsprotokolle*, Mappe no. 1.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 29 July 1915.

conclusion from this episode is that, while they did not disagree on the need to push for an end to the war, the means presented an insoluble conundrum, whatever the views of the various leaders.

On 25 and 26 March 1916 the Conference of the German Social Democratic Party of Austria was attended by 243 delegates with Karl Seitz in the Chair. According to police reports, the first day was taken up by practical issues: party membership and circulation of periodicals, both of which were sharply down, and proposals for improvements in social insurance and care for invalids, as well as proposals on the merging of Austrian and Hungarian economies. On the second day, the conference re-affirmed the unity of the Party, and there was lots of discussion of the coming May Day demonstration. Friedrich Adler then brought a motion instructing the Board to urge the government to agree with allies to publicise an announcement that the Central Powers were ready at any time to enter negotiations with the sole proviso that all were clear from the start that there would be no annexations and no reparations. Victor Adler opposed, and the motion was not carried. The same day a demand for women's suffrage was easily passed.¹¹³ If this was a public display of the divergent views of the Adler father and son, it was also an illustration of which views carried weight within the Party. While Friedrich's proposal seems harmless enough with a century of perspective, it would not have been regarded as helpful by the government, and it was furthermore unrealistic, since it suggested France should forego claims on Alsace.

These tactics were calculated to preserve the party's and the unions' roles in society, but their immediate political impact was non-existent. While doubtless frustrating for the party over the short term, it gave them common ground with the other parties, also suffering from imposed inaction, and that sharing was important. It provided for the

¹¹³ R. Neck, *Arbeiterschaft und Staat im ersten Weltkrieg 1914-1918* (Vienna, 1964), vol. 1, pp. 54-59.

politicians reasons at least to confer and possibly to work together, and Stürgkh's approach to governing encouraged this by excluding from any role in politics the largest possible number of potential collaborators. At a meeting of the Directorate of the German Party in February 1915, Pernerstorfer reported about a conference of the collective parliamentary presidency and a subsequent meeting with Stürgkh to discuss the summoning of parliament. Stürgkh advised that nine members were then in jail and another three, under police surveillance. He also made very clear that he had no interest in the recall of parliament.¹¹⁴

While Stürgkh was making plans and priorities for his wartime benevolent dictatorship, he was also having to reckon with the military authorities, mainly the *Armeeoberkommando* (AOK), which was running the war itself, but also the *Kriegsüberwachungsamt* (KÜA), the 'war oversight office', set up by the AOK at the start of the war. The KÜA conferred with the Ministries of Finance, Interior, Trade, Justice, Transport and Foreign Affairs, thereby exercising control over publishing, the dispensing of justice, transport, telephone and telegraph and any other areas its own officials thought appropriate.¹¹⁵ Christoph Führ's book on the AOK portrays the organisation very keen to find Czech irredentism at every turn, ready to blame the Czechs and other Slavs for any failures and fighting constantly for ever greater involvement in civilian life. Their enthusiasm in this regard waned whenever the war was going well for them, then returned when it got more difficult.¹¹⁶ Of course, it is always tempting for soldiers to attribute any lack of success to inadequacies on the part of civilians or allies, and the Austrians seem not to have been an exception.

Fussek described the ever more demanding and intrusive encroachment of the AOK

¹¹⁴ *Protokoll der Sitzung der deutschen Parteivertretung*, 24 February 1915, *VGA Partei Archiv vor 1934*, *Sitzungsprotokolle*, Mappe no. 1.

¹¹⁵ Wegs, *Die österreichische Kriegswirtschaft*, pp. 24-25.

¹¹⁶ C. Führ, *Das K. u. k. Armeeoberkommando und die Innenpolitik in Österreich 1914-1917* (Graz, 1968).

in the everyday lives of civilians, of which a notable example was the Kramář fiasco. Karel Kramář was a prominent Czech leader in parliament and editor of *Národní listy*, the main organ of the Young Czech party. By all accounts very well connected and influential, he was friendly with both the Emperor and Stürgkh, but on 21 May 1915, the AOK had him arrested, not bothering to tell anyone for some time¹¹⁷. It turned out there had been little evidence worthy of the name found by the authorities, despite which he was found guilty of high treason and condemned to death, commuted to a prison sentence by the Emperor.¹¹⁸ The fate of Kramář is indicative of Stürgkh's real position in terms of his relation to the military leadership. The efforts of AOK to get greater control of Bohemia, resisted by Stürgkh and always declined by Franz Joseph, soured the relations of the former with the military, and they tried in the autumn of 1915 to get him fired.¹¹⁹

For his part, Stürgkh had to rely on his Ministry of Trade and the War Ministry to get the economy on a war footing and keep it running that way. Whatever his relations with the AOK, he was forced to take their views into account; so his government became to a significant extent a military dictatorship while he soaked up the blame.¹²⁰

As if that were not enough, Stürgkh also had to deal with his Hungarian opposite number, Hungarian Prime Minister Count István Tisza de Borosjenő et Szeged (Tisza). By holding out on their Cisleithanian compatriots to build their own reserves, the Hungarians aggravated and accelerated supply problems in Austria. Moreover, they imposed tolls on cattle and meat exports, and there was little Stürgkh could do about it apart from protest. Stürgkh had little or no leverage vis á vis Hungary; so he could only make the best of the situation.¹²¹

¹¹⁷ Along with fellow Czech Scheiner. The latter was soon released for lack of evidence, which in view of the activities of the two seems ironic. Scheiner had been receiving funds from Russia! See Zeman, *Break-Up*, pp. 72 & 85; see also Rauchensteiner, *Der Erste Weltkrieg*, pp. 444 & 445.

¹¹⁸ Fussek, 'Stürgkh', p. 121; see also Führ, *AOK und Innenpolitik*, p. 50.

¹¹⁹ Führ, *AOK und Innenpolitik*, pp. 160-169.

¹²⁰ Wegs, *Die österreichische Kriegswirtschaft*, pp. 23-24.

¹²¹ Fussek, 'Stürgkh', p. 147.

Therefore, while it may have been fair for Renner to term Stürgkh's regime 'absolutist', it only seemed that way to the civilians on the home front, since he was in fact sharing power in Austria with the military and in the context of the Dual Monarchy with Tisza. Füssek saw the Minister President as feeling himself called upon to do a job for the Emperor and being thus obliged to carry out his responsibilities to Franz Joseph's satisfaction. In the autumn of 1915, Stürgkh received a deputation from the *Herrenhaus* which had come to express dissatisfaction. The AOK had already given vent of their unhappiness to Franz Joseph. Stürgkh assured his guests that the slightest hint from the Emperor would be enough for him to resign his office immediately.¹²² The unintended consequence of his approach was to focus all grievances on himself.

Early in 1916, tempers became frayed within the Board of the Social Democratic Party. Renner was away in Tetschen in northern Bohemia, and articles were to appear in *Der Kampf* by party colleagues Walecki and Hilferding without his having been able to include a rebuttal. This upset him.¹²³ Walecki's article was critical of the Polish Social Democrats for co-operating with the nationalists and supporting the war, while, by way of contrast, their comrades in Russia were unwilling to make common cause with the class enemy.¹²⁴ Hilferding's contrasted the attitude of Austrian Social Democrats unfavourably with the anti-war minority among their German comrades.¹²⁵

Friedrich Adler explained that it had boiled down to a timing issue. He had never declined an article and was not guilty of promoting minority views. He was willing to resign his post as editor, but if he stayed he would maintain his course. Victor Adler pointed out that the journal should be a discussion forum with the purpose of reducing, not

¹²² Füssek, 'Stürgkh', p. 158.

¹²³ Renner's complaint was by letter from Tetschen, where he (as co-editor) had received the January edition. Although the letter was undated, it had to have been early 1916, since the January issue was the only one during the war with an article by Walecki.

¹²⁴ H. Walecki, 'Der Weg zum Polenklub', *Der Kampf*, vol. 9, no. 1 (January, 1916), pp. 25-27.

¹²⁵ R. Hilferding, 'Der Konflikt in der deutschen Sozialdemokratie', *Der Kampf*, vol. 9, no. 1 (January, 1916), pp. 11-15.

sharpening disagreements. The conclusion was that, when two editors could not agree about the inclusion of an article, the question would be referred to the Board. There was general agreement that there should be an editor from both tendencies in the Party. This would avoid the trap into which the German Social Democrats had fallen. Their organ, *Die Neue Zeit*, was, according to Victor Adler, viewed as one-sided.¹²⁶

Renner's rebuttal was published 60 days later. He took strong issue with Hilferding's view of the proper posture with regard to the war, pointing out that the questions everyone needed to ask were: "Is there a war?" and "What do we do?" He noted that the English and French working classes were not having difficulty with the answers. Among the concluding points, there was one of particular relevance to the success of the Austrian Social Democrats: "The plain fact that the more developed the proletariat, the nearer its representatives have come to the state's government is truly food for thought. Therefore the degree of their closeness to the state is an indicator of their class maturity, and not their degree of removal from the state."¹²⁷

This discussion, after nearly a year and a half of war, not only confirms the wholly unsurprising lack of complete harmony among the socialist leaders. More importantly, it illustrates conclusively the purposeful efforts to allow expression of those differences and to accommodate them within the party. Furthermore, the argument was being carried on in a political vacuum, since large political gatherings were impossible under wartime restrictions. Thus deprived of any forum outside the leadership, it was easy to magnify disagreement. In retrospect there were comical lapses, for example: Karl Renner complained in a footnote of Friedrich Adler's name calling, then proceeded to engage in a bit of his own.¹²⁸ For his part, Friedrich Adler would not let up. In his last article of the

¹²⁶ *Protokoll der Sitzung des deutschen Parteivorstandes*, 12 Jan. 1916, *VGA Partei Archiv vor 1934*, *Sitzungsprotokolle*, Mappe no. 1.

¹²⁷ K. Renner, 'Zur Krise des Sozialismus', *Der Kampf*, vol. 9, no. 3 (March, 1916), pp. 87-97.

¹²⁸ K. Renner, 'Probleme des Marxismus II', *Der Kampf*, vol. 9, no. 5-6 (May-June, 1916), p. 185.

war¹²⁹, he reported on that year's congress of the German sister party, tracing the evolution of their version of the same quarrel. He concluded that "Germany is not Austria, not wanting to stray so much from their way and not falling so easily to the level of Christian Social intellectual slovenliness. Therefore, it was taken as natural that a political party must have a standpoint."¹³⁰

While the Social Democrats were debating their attitude and what needed to be done about it, they were not alone in being frustrated. In July of 1916, Ernst Count von Silva Tarouca, a conservative large landowner, invited members of parliament to discuss a reconvening.¹³¹ Having worked in the bureaucracy in Prague after completing law school in Vienna, Silva Tarouca entered politics and served as a member of the lower house from 1891 until 1907 and after that of the upper house. He would briefly be Agriculture Minister in 1917 and 1918. His invitation to a 'confidential conference' took the form of a letter to the Party leadership:

The silencing of parliament threatens to bring ever greater and irreparable damage to the state. Recognition of this has grown in all parts of the population with the duration of the war. Among our enemies the absence of our parliament is seen as a sign of our weakness and inner disintegration. Furthermore, the recent inclusion in Hungary of the opposition in discussions about important decisions raises the concern that, with the Austrian parliament closed, our interests will be severely disadvantaged during the war as well as in the discussion and formulation of war goals.¹³²

Seitz summarised the meeting, which lasted more than three hours, in a letter to Victor Adler. He explained that Karl Wolf, a leading German Nationalist, had held out against a recall, though without explicit support from Christian Social Albert Geßmann. Because the hope was to present a demand supported by all parties, there was no concrete result.¹³³

¹²⁹ Another appeared in the Sept 1917 issue, but it had been written two years before and censored in its entirety at the time.

¹³⁰ F. Adler, 'Die Reichskonferenz der Sozialdemokratie Deutschlands', *Der Kampf*, vol. 9, no. 10 (October, 1916), p. 345.

¹³¹ Höbelt, "Stehen oder Fallen?", p. 119.

¹³² Silva-Tarouca to the *Parteivertretung*, Letter of 15 July 1916, *VGA Partei Archiv vor 1934, Partei Interna*, Mappe no. 40, doc. 16.

¹³³ Seitz to V. Adler, 5 August 1916, *Adler Archiv*, Mappe no. 155, Tasche 1. Adler was at the time taking a

Seitz's report to the Party Directorate further explained that the Christian Socials requested assurances regarding a new Order of Business as well as an undertaking from the Social Democrats that they would not oppose the handling of 'state necessities'. In addition, the head of the German Nationalist *Verband* (or coalition), Gustav Groß, had suggested to the Minister President the convocation of a political advisory council. Groß hoped the Christian Socials and the Social Democrats would agree to that or make a similar request.¹³⁴ Josef Redlich's account supports that assessment in greater detail, including a rundown of those present, among whom were Karl Seitz and Wilhelm Ellenbogen, both of whom offered views on the issues under discussion.¹³⁵ Aside from the German Nationalists, who were not keen to give citizens of non-German groups a forum for pursuing their aims, there was broad consensus that Stürgkh had to go. Neither Seitz nor Redlich mentioned any Social Democrat response on the recommendations of the other parties. Certainly there was no reason to give either of the opposing parties a blank cheque at that stage. German concerns may not have been unfounded, since Czech parties seemed to be coming together, though the eventful autumn of 1916 slowed that process, and the bourgeois parties still found it difficult to attract working class support.¹³⁶

This all transpired against the background of sharply deteriorating conditions for civilians. Mark Cornwall observed that the consensus in support of the war can be seen to have broken down as summer gave way to autumn 1916.¹³⁷ Rationing was introduced at different times for a number of foodstuffs. In the early stages of rationing, the allowance was for 1,300 calories per day. That meagre provision was steadily reduced and by the end of the war had reached 831!¹³⁸ Standing in line to get food were representatives of all

cure at Bad Nauheim.

¹³⁴ *Protokoll der deutschen Parteiveertretung*, 27 July 1916, *VGA Partei Archiv vor 1934, Sitzungsprotokolle*, Mappe no. 2.

¹³⁵ Redlich diary, 27 July 1916, *Schicksalsjahre Österreichs*, vol. 2, pp. 190-192.

¹³⁶ Zemak, *Break-Up*, p. 115.

¹³⁷ Cornwall, *Undermining*, p. 29.

¹³⁸ Healy, *Vienna and the fall of the Habsburg Empire*, p. 45.

classes and ages, with children forced to stay up all night in line with mothers.¹³⁹

Censorship was taking its toll on the patience of the public and press. The *Arbeiter-Zeitung* protested:

No one is authorised to say what must be said. Everyone has to express his real feelings in coded form with veiled allusions which are naturally easily misunderstood. The result is that “public opinion” has become a travesty of people’s real feelings, that it stands in direct contradiction to the underlying general opinion. When will we at last realise that we are keeping ourselves in an utterly unsustainable condition? Can we continue to deny that it is foolish to keep the entire population mute!¹⁴⁰

Not only was social cohesion put under intolerable strain, those associated with the war and its authors were progressively discredited.

For his part, Redlich described Stürgkh's approach to government in the following terms:

Since he took office Count Stürgkh has always, in his half-arrogant, half generously self-conscious style, ostentatiously taken all responsibility on himself: he has surrounded himself with insignificant or incapable ministers, in order to steer everything his way or to be able smoothly to follow the will of Tisza and the Court. In that way he has piled on himself all the hatred and displeasure of the long suffering Viennese populace – especially through the mismanagement of the Food Administration.¹⁴¹

Stürgkh’s long time friend Plener thought he had become more stubborn and less sure of himself during his time in government and was too protective of the Kaiser. Plener deemed Stürgkh's worry about the impression of parliamentary disunity on Austria's enemies unjustified.¹⁴²

In the autumn, Dr Edmund Bernatzik, a prominent member of the Law faculty at the University of Vienna, Heinrich Lammasch, another distinguished jurist, future Minister President and member of the *Herrenhaus* and advocate of a sort of League of Nations, and historian and Social Democrat Ludo Moritz Hartmann, with the support of two other

¹³⁹ Healy, *Vienna and the fall of the Habsburg Empire*, p. 73.

¹⁴⁰ *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 11 June 1916.

¹⁴¹ Redlich diary, 21 October 1916, *Schicksalsjahre Österreichs*, vol. 2, p. 217.

¹⁴² Plener, *Erinnerungen*, vol. 3, pp. 444-5.

academicians, planned a meeting at the *Konzerthaus* for 22 October. The subject was to be the recall of parliament, and there were three speakers on the programme. Apart from Bernatzik, there were Dr Julius Sylvester and Engelbert Pernerstorfer, President and Vice President of the lower house respectively. According to Friedrich Adler, he and Hartmann discussed the meeting with the police, presumably with its chief Schober, and were told to have only invited guests. Adler was keen to avoid any incidents which might upset the police.¹⁴³ Unfortunately, his caution proved inadequate. Schober was overruled by Police Commissioner Baron Gorup, who prohibited the meeting.¹⁴⁴ That the Social Democrats distributed 20,000 invitations could easily have been a factor in Gorup's decision.¹⁴⁵

On the afternoon of 21 October, Friedrich Adler shot Minister President Stürgkh dead as the latter lunched at the Hotel Meissl und Schadn. Adler was arrested immediately without resistance and jailed pending trial. Redlich guessed that the immediate impetus for Adler's deed was the calling off of the meeting about parliament. Since Friedrich Adler was known to have disagreements with fellow Social Democrats, it is opportune to review that aspect of the socialist scene. As seen, there was quite evidently a spectrum of opinion within the leadership. Relationships were strained at times, and leaders in other parties were aware of all that. However, when news of Stürgkh's assassination broke, there was no suggestion of a plot, by a faction or by the party. It seemed taken for granted from the start that Adler had acted on his own.¹⁴⁶ That sort of deed was not expected of the Social Democrats. Also, though the view of historians to date is that the Social Democrats were irrevocably divided, the Board and the Directorate of the Party met on 80 occasions between 1 October 1914 and the killing of Stürgkh. Of those, Renner attended 60

¹⁴³ *Protokoll der Sitzung des deutschen Parteivorstandes*, 19 Oct 1916, *VGA Partei Archiv vor 1934*, *Sitzungsprotokolle*, Mappe no. 2.

¹⁴⁴ Fussek, 'Stürgkh', p. 165.

¹⁴⁵ Neck, *Arbeiterschaft und Staat im ersten Weltkrieg*, vol. 2, p. 130, Report by the Vienna police to the *Statthaltereie Wien* on the occasion of F Adler's transfer to the Vienna *Landesgericht*, 26 October 1916.

¹⁴⁶ See for example the *Reichspost*, 22 Oct 1916.

meetings, Austerlitz, 35, and Friedrich Adler, 68. Of the ones he attended, Adler kept the minutes for 60.¹⁴⁷ Not only were these men in regular and close contact, they trusted one another. The inescapable conclusion is that they worked well together despite predictable differences of opinion, even if those had become heated at times. Complete harmony was not a feature of the Austrian Social Democratic world, but neither were schismatics.

In the immediate aftermath of the murder, fellow Social Democrats were aghast. Adler's young party colleague and friend Julius Deutsch, an artillery officer serving at the time near Kötschach in Carinthia, wrote in his memoirs several years later, remembering hearing the news:¹⁴⁸

What we were discussing I can no longer remember. Suddenly the Captain burst into the room, brandishing a newspaper in his hand. "Do you know what's happened? The Minister President has been murdered!" I looked at him, astounded, but before I could say anything, he continued excitedly: "And do you know who the assassin is? Dr Adler!" My head swam. "Dr Adler? Which Dr Adler?" I could not grasp the news. My tongue hung limp. I felt I should say something, but I was unable to do so. I reached for the newspaper; it was from Graz. On the front page, at the top, in fat letters, stood "Count Stürgkh murdered – Dr Friedrich Adler is the assassin." "But what do you say?" continued the Captain "He is after all a friend of yours. What came over him?" I thought to myself "How did that become possible? Friedrich Adler, the tender, gentle man. Has he gone mad? It's horrible, incomprehensible."

It crossed no one's mind that this might have been a Social Democratic Party matter or plot, even if the police did investigate that possibility. The response from others in the Party was the same as that of Deutsch. Outside the Party, the public's assessment, taking Redlich and Plener, or even Stürgkh's kindly disposed biographer, as illustrative, seemed to be that Stürgkh had brought his fate largely on himself. Having made himself the sole arbiter of all matters civilian, he had become the focus of any and all dissatisfaction, a lightning rod of sorts. Apart from the fact that few would miss Stürgkh, had the Social

¹⁴⁷ Attendance at Directors' meetings taken from the minutes of those meetings in *VGA Partei Archiv vor 1934, Sitzungsprotokolle*, Mappe nos. 1 and 2.

¹⁴⁸ M. Maier and G. Spitaler (eds), J Deutsch, *Kriegserlebnisse eines Friedliebenden: Aufzeichnungen aus dem Ersten Weltkrieg* (Vienna, 2016), p. 139.

Democrats not been viewed as conscientious citizens, Adler's deed would surely have had much more serious consequences for the Party leaders and their organisation.

Fascinating as the assassination story is, its real significance was to provide badly needed punctuation. Stürgkh had stood in the way of any change and had been able to use the extensive emergency powers to reinforce his unbending posture. That he appeared to enjoy the confidence of the Monarch had frozen everything while dissatisfaction mounted. Any frustrations at the hands of the military and the Hungarians were inevitably put to his account because of the opaque structure of government. Moreover, it was not just the politicians who were unhappy with the Minister President. The AOK as well as the German High Command and the heir apparent were anxious to be rid of him.¹⁴⁹

A month after Friedrich Adler killed Stürgkh, the old Emperor died, and the two events unfroze politics. The new Emperor, Karl I, pledged himself from the start to follow a constitutional path, which indicated that there would be a return of parliament at some point.¹⁵⁰ A further indication came a month later when the new cabinet of Minister President Count Heinrich Carolus Boromeus Maria Clam-Martinić announced as one of its objectives the creation of fully constitutional conditions.¹⁵¹ From a long line of Czech aristocrats (one of whom was defenestrated in Prague in 1618!), Clam-Martinić should have been in an excellent position to bring disparate groups together.¹⁵² He had federalist, if not democratic, instincts and upbringing. His family had for two generations been involved in the discussions of reforms to bring about a compromise in Bohemia.¹⁵³ Clam-Martinić and his cabinet worked during the winter on far-reaching amendments to the constitution, to be enacted by decree.

¹⁴⁹ M. Rauchensteiner, *Der erste Weltkrieg und das Ende der Habsburgermonarchie 1914-1918* (Vienna, 2013), p. 25.

¹⁵⁰ *Wiener Zeitung*, 22 November 1916: "I will respect their (my people's) constitutional freedoms..."

¹⁵¹ Ardelt, *Vom Kampf um Bürgerrechte zum Burgfrieden*, p. 161.

¹⁵² F. Höglinger, *Minister-Präsident Heinrich Graf Clam-Martinić* (Graz, 1964), p. 23.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

In cabinet on 16 April, cabinet concluded that government by decree would no longer suffice, in view not only of the posture and instincts of the new Emperor but especially of the revolution in Russia.¹⁵⁴ Redlich furnished more revealing detail and offered two possible explanations. The previous day Czernin had an audience with the Emperor. The former reported his discussions with Adler and Renner and explained that the Social Democrats would help intermediate a separate peace by making contact with Russian socialists to that end, but only if there were to be no decrees. This had convinced the Karl, who was worried about tranquillity in the monarchy. On the other hand, Interior Minister Handel had explained the decision in light of Czernin's need to prove to the Russians that the Czechs were not being oppressed.¹⁵⁵

As for the Social Democrats, an evolution in their thinking is demonstrated by Friedrich Austerlitz's views in early 1917. He reminisced that, though many agreed the Social Democrats could not have prevented the war even if they had tried, they "knew in their hearts that war is no less than the negation of socialism, that a circumstance in which men are possessed by the urge to kill one another is the absolute opposite of socialist ideals, which advocate the brotherhood of men and peoples."¹⁵⁶ This is a far cry indeed from his proclamation of 'The Day of the German Nation' 30 months earlier.

During the spring, Social Democrats were invited on several occasions to meet both Clam-Martinić and the Emperor, though these conversations were general in nature.¹⁵⁷ Toward the end of April, the opening of parliament was announced for 30 May. The parliamentary party formulated their approach for the initial stages of the new session. They would oppose any attempt to subject speeches in the house to censorship, even if that

¹⁵⁴ Höglinger, *Clam-Martinić*, pp. 148 & 175; see also Zeman, *Break-Up*, p. 120.

¹⁵⁵ Redlich diary, 24 April 1917, *Schicksalsjahre Österreichs*, vol. 2, p. 291.

¹⁵⁶ F. Austerlitz, 'Sozialdemokratie und Revolution', *Der Kampf*, vol. 10, no. 4 (April, 1917), page 93.

¹⁵⁷ *Protokoll der Sitzung des deutschen Parteivorstandes*, 31 March, 26 April and 28 June 1917, *VGA Partei Archiv vor 1934, Sitzungsprotokolle*, Mappe no. 2. It is interesting that the minutes of these meetings do not reflect any dealings with Czernin.

meant opposing a new order of business. They decided to vote for Gustav Groß to be the President and to propose Pernerstorfer for Vice President, and they lined up their committee assignments.¹⁵⁸

Not long before the opening of parliament came the trial of Friedrich Adler. Because the proceedings managed for a time to escape the attention of the censors, much of Adler's defence was made public. It was more an indictment of the unconstitutional government and its policies than a defence of his own actions. When asked if he acknowledged his guilt, he responded: "I am guilty to the same extent as every officer, who, in a war, kills or gives the order to kill, no less, but also no more."¹⁵⁹ According to Redlich, Adler's speech "made a deep impression in Vienna".¹⁶⁰ From the standpoint of the Party's image the most surprising aspect of Adler's defense was the terms in which he denounced Karl Renner's role in the Party. In one passage he portrayed him as "a Lueger in Social Democracy".¹⁶¹ It would be hard to imagine a more damning epithet for one Social Democrat to apply to another. According to his biographer,

Renner did not respond publicly to the severe accusations of the condemned Friedrich Adler, although they were naturally painful for him. "if one works in a party," he was said to have explained later "it is not advisable to react sensitively to harsh words aimed at oneself, which in any case one might also use. There is really no choice but to work on and to wait for the party members to get an idea of one's achievements. Trust is earned rather than quarrelled for."¹⁶²

Austerlitz, who had once argued with Friedrich Adler, reflected that there was no need to choose between Friedrich Adler and the Party, because his action had arisen from his devotion to Social Democracy and the Party.¹⁶³

At the end of May parliament sat for the first time since the spring of 1914. The

¹⁵⁸ *Protokoll der Klubsitzung der SPÖ*, 29 May 1917, *VGA Partei Archiv vor 1934, Sitzungsprotokolle*, Mappe no. 2.

¹⁵⁹ Adler, *Vor dem Ausnahmegericht*, p. 64.

¹⁶⁰ Redlich diary, 21 May 1917, *Schicksalsjahre Österreichs*, vol. 2, p. 298.

¹⁶¹ Adler, *Vor dem Ausnahmegericht*, p. 6

¹⁶² W. Rauscher, *Karl Renner – ein österreichischer Mythos* (Vienna, 1995), p. 90.

¹⁶³ F. Austerlitz, 'Friedrich Adler und die Partei', *Der Kampf*, vol. 10, no. 5-6 (May-June, 1917), p. 141.

Social Democrats proceeded to set out their programme as in prior sessions, with a constant drumbeat of proposals for the reinstatement of trial by jury, several draft bills for social insurance, women's suffrage, tenant protection, reforms of the factory act, an end of martial law, abolition of the death penalty, an end of employment books, 55-hours' maximum work week and the eight-hour day. There was no question what their agenda for reform entailed, and their commitment to constitutional government was clear. The contrast with nationalist groups could hardly have been more stark. In the opening session, Abg Staněk and Abg Korošec read declarations from the Czech and south Slav parties respectively demanding the re-organisation of the state as a federation of nation states within the Habsburg Empire. The Christian Socials opposed this in German nationalist terms.¹⁶⁴ For his part, Clam-Martinic seemed to have lost much of his enthusiasm for federalism.¹⁶⁵ However, the Minister President was addressing the practical problems he had inherited, most notably food and social care, where his efforts earned praise from Social Democrat leader Ferdinand Hanusch.¹⁶⁶

Hanusch was born in Oberdorf bei Wigstadt in 1866, the fourth child of a Silesian home weaver. At age 13 he started work labouring on building sites but found work at a ribbon factory at 14, joining the trade association the following year to continue his education. His journeyman years took him not only to Berlin, Vienna and Trieste, but also to Romania and Turkey. During this time he received repeated police attention and deprivation, much of which he described in his autobiographically-based *Auf der Walze*.¹⁶⁷ Having returned to Silesia to work in a silk factory, he became involved in the workers' movement at age 25. In 1900 his new position as head of the Union of Textile Workers brought him to Vienna, where he was elected to the *Gewerkschaftskommission* in 1903 and

¹⁶⁴ Zeman, *Break-Up*, pp. 127-129; see also *Stenographische Protokolle des Abgeordnetenhauses*, XXIIInd Session, 1st (opening) Sitting, 30 May 1917, pp. 34-35.

¹⁶⁵ Höglinger, *Clam-Martinic*, pp. 63 & 109.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

¹⁶⁷ F. Hanusch, *Auf der Walze*, (Vienna, 1907).

to the people's parliament in 1907. Hanusch was later to become State Secretary for Social Welfare in the first government of the First Republic.¹⁶⁸

In the spring of 1917, just as parliament was opening, there was a wave of wildcat strikes, and on 1 June the leaders of labour and the party met to address the problems. Hanusch reported that the previous week between 40,000 and 60,000 workers had gone on strike without the knowledge and against the policy of the Trade Union Commission. The Commission had met the day before Hanusch's report (i.e. 30 May 1917) and concluded that they were not keeping members well enough informed. They put in place a regime of monthly meetings to be sure all would as far as possible be aware of the situation. The Party Directorate, the Commission and the local members of parliament would all be invited. In the unions there was concern about the rise of radical tendencies, particularly among the young. It was important that all have the chance to put their views and to understand the development of the official positions.¹⁶⁹

Later in June, Clam-Martinic decided the best course would be to form a national government, including the Social Democrats, who he proposed should send Karl Renner. The Board debated the matter and resolved to decline the invitation.¹⁷⁰ The Party's response was:

Pernerstorfer and Seitz explained on behalf of the Party that Deputy Renner on his own behalf and the Club Board of Directors for the Party declined participation in the building of a cabinet. Considerations of principle indicate that participation by Social Democrats in a government at war is out of the question. The first priority of Social Democracy for the time being is international work for peace. Furthermore, the current constitutional circumstances make it impossible to assume any responsibility.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁸ *Österreichisches biographisches Lexikon 1815-1950 Online-Edition*, www.biographien.ac.at (August, 2016)

¹⁶⁹ *Protokoll über die gemeinsame Sitzung der Parteivertretung, der Gewerkschaftskommission und des Wiener Vorstandes*, 1 June 1917 (9:30 to 20:45!) *VGA Partei Archiv vor 1934, Sitzungsprotokolle*, Mappe no. 2.

¹⁷⁰ *Protokoll der Sitzung des deutschen Parteivorstandes*, 21 June 1917, *VGA Partei Archiv vor 1934, Sitzungsprotokolle*, Mappe no. 2.

¹⁷¹ *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 22 June 1917.

In the event, as the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* reported the following day, 22 June, in its leading article, several other parties had declined participation; so the socialist response was not a deciding factor on its own. It is interesting that the Party did not decline the invitation as such, but only under the prevailing circumstances. Serving in a government with the other parties was not the issue. The role would probably have been a poison chalice in any case, but in Austria's constitutional framework, members of government served at the pleasure of the Emperor rather than of parliament. To join such a government would have been a substantive endorsement of the Monarchy. Nevertheless, their response indicated a readiness to take part in a coalition under the right conditions.¹⁷² This was a significant advance on their having agreed earlier in the year to play limited roles in the Office of Nutrition, on the Nutrition Council and in the General Commissariat for War and Transition Economy, all of which were operational, as opposed to political, positions.¹⁷³ In the event, Clam-Martinic had left the assembly of a majority in parliament far too late, and he seemed not to have a programme, despite his efforts on social welfare. His resignation came the following week, when he was replaced by Ernst Ritter Seidler von Feuchtenegg (Seidler).

The year 1917 was marked by several major developments affecting the war itself. In the spring the Central Powers resumed unrestricted submarine warfare. Shortly thereafter, the U. S. entered the war on the side of the Entente. In November, the second phase of that year's revolutions in Russia brought the Bolsheviks to power. The new rulers of Russia requested a cease-fire on 20 November. Twelve days of talks led to a 30 day cease fire agreement starting on 15 December,¹⁷⁴ whereupon discussions commenced to agree on a permanent cessation of hostilities. These dragged on. Not only had the Central

¹⁷² Hannak, *Karl Renner und seine Zeit*, p. 280; Höbelt, 'Stehen oder Fallen?', p. 188.

¹⁷³ Ardelt, *Vom Kampf um Bürgerrechte zum Burgfrieden*, p. 163.

¹⁷⁴ W. Bihl, *Österreich-Ungarn und die Friedensschlüsse von Brest Litovsk* (Vienna, 1970), p. 31.

Powers not agreed between themselves on their objectives, Trotsky, who led the Russian delegation, was trying to stretch the process hoping to be the beneficiary of widespread revolution following the Bolshevik lead.¹⁷⁵ During December, the news of the peace talks in the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* was encouraging without being specific, but as the year drew to a close, they reported the possibility that the status of Poland and the Baltic region would present sticking points. Beginning with the 12 January issue, there appeared increasingly shrill warnings: “Dark powers are at work to disturb the peace talks at Brest-Litovsk! The warmongers are once again raising their heads to hinder the peace process, which will spoil their plans. It is time therefore that the people stand up to make clear their determination to make peace.”¹⁷⁶ A double-column lead article on the 16th screamed: “Talks in Brest-Litovsk in danger!”, then “Russia demands nothing from us.”¹⁷⁷

On the home front deteriorating living conditions, particularly in terms of food distribution, caused increasing discontent. In January of 1918, following announcement of another tightening of the bread ration, matters once again came to a head.¹⁷⁸ During the week of the 14th, workers in Wiener Neustadt struck spontaneously, and the strikes quickly spread across all Cisleithania.¹⁷⁹ Affected were not only war industries, but also transport and newspapers.¹⁸⁰ According to Wolfdieter Bihl, “To what extent direct agitation on the part of the Bolsheviks was involved cannot be established with certainty, but it cannot be doubted that Bolshevik ideas were current among the workers.”¹⁸¹ The Party Directorate met on the 15th. The resolutions from that meeting were the publication of a manifesto and the assembly of a delegation to discuss the situation with the Minister President.¹⁸² The

¹⁷⁵ Bihl, *Brest Litovsk*, pp. 39-40 & 53-54.

¹⁷⁶ *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 12 & 13 January 1918.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 16 January 1918.

¹⁷⁸ Höbelt, ‘*Stehen oder Fallen?*’, p. 212.

¹⁷⁹ R. Plaschka, H. Haselsteiner and A. Suppan, *Innere Front: Militärassistentz, Widerstand und Umsturz in der Donaumonarchie 1918* (Vienna, 1974), vol. 1, pp. 51-70.

¹⁸⁰ Redlich diary, 19 January 1918, *Schicksalsjahre Österreichs*, vol. 2, pp. 374-375.

¹⁸¹ Bihl, *Brest-Litovsk*, p. 88.

¹⁸² *Protokoll der Sitzung der Parteivertretung*, 15 January 1918, *VGA Partei Archiv vor 1934*,

former appeared in the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* with a clarification on the 17th that the strikes had not been organised by either Party or unions but rather were entirely spontaneous. Party leaders set out the demands which they thought attainable, and which, in their view, should calm the situation: first, an assurance that the peace discussions under way in Brest Litovsk would not be allowed to fail or be delayed on grounds of the territorial ambitions of the Central Powers; second, that the distribution of food be adjusted to achieve more equitable sharing of supplies; third, that local representative bodies be elected on the basis of direct and equal suffrage; and, finally, that the military control of certain factories be ended. While these were being discussed with the government, the leadership urged workers, especially in the transport, food and fuel sectors, to return to work to avoid making a bad situation even worse.¹⁸³

The following day, Friday the 18th, party leaders were able to announce that their proposals as set forth the day before had been put to the government and that negotiations had begun on that basis. Representing the Social Democrats in these talks were Adler, Seitz, Renner and Eldersch.¹⁸⁴ Workers in the various affected districts had chosen representatives who would meet that evening in the Margaretener Eisenbahnerheim, a meeting hall in a Vienna working class suburb. The leaders repeated the appeal to workers to continue working.¹⁸⁵ The Social Democrat leaders engaged in talks with Minister President Seidler and Foreign Minister Graf Ottokar Czernin as well as foreign ministry officials. The government was given to understand that the striking workers would not be satisfied with bland palliatives. Furthermore, the Social Democrat leaders would attempt to bring the strikes to an end only with a definitive government statement regarding annexations. Following telephone conversations with the Emperor and Czernin, Seidler

Sitzungsprotokolle, Mappe no. 2.

¹⁸³ *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 17 January 1918.

¹⁸⁴ Plaschka, Haselsteiner and Suppan. *Innere Front*, p. 71.

¹⁸⁵ *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 18 January 1918.

and the Social Democrat leaders, meeting at the cabinet office, agreed on a statement on the 19th.¹⁸⁶ There were no editions of the paper during the weekend; so the results of the negotiations with the government were announced on Monday morning. All the proposed changes to the food distribution arrangements had been accepted. The government would support efforts to achieve direct and equal suffrage, and legislation would be introduced to address the military control of factories. On the basis of this success, the leadership urged all workers to return to work.¹⁸⁷ In fact the resolution of the strikes was anything but rapid and smooth, taking an entire week and in some cases requiring troops to encourage the return to work.¹⁸⁸

Social Democrats had done their best to control the strikes, but their having forced the local suffrage issue on to the agenda discomfited their bourgeois opponents.¹⁸⁹ Redlich's assessment was that the workers had allowed themselves to be bought off with vague and heavily circumscribed promises, but at the same time he reckoned that Seidler would pay for this apparent surrender with his position.¹⁹⁰ As it turned out the Premier remained at his post until midsummer. Edward Timms noted the 'patriotic' leadership of Victor Adler and saw the role of the Party subduing the strikes in 1918 as a failure of political leadership, suggesting that the strikes could have been used to force the government to 'sue for peace'. However, this would probably have led to some overt German interference, and it would certainly have left the Social Democrats open to accusations of treachery.

Events in Russia were part of the question of revolution. There are two aspects to consider: concerns of the state leadership, both monarchy and military, on the one hand and the views and actions of the Social Democrats' constituents on the other. The former were

¹⁸⁶ Bihl, *Brest-Litovsk*, p. 89.

¹⁸⁷ *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 21 January 1918.

¹⁸⁸ Plaschka, Haselsteiner and Suppan. *Innere Front*, pp. 72-73.

¹⁸⁹ Höbelt, 'Stehen oder Fallen?', p. 214.

¹⁹⁰ Redlich diary, 21 January 1918, *Schicksalsjahre Österreichs*, vol. 2, p. 375.

very worried about possible contagion across the front, but those concerns proved unfounded. Rauchensteiner suggested a number of reasons for this: more humane leadership than the Russian, comparably better provisioning, stronger belief in the prospects of victory and most of all incomparably better political relationships at home.¹⁹¹ At the same time, according to Redlich, Czernin was arguing strongly for closer government rapprochement with the Social Democrats.¹⁹² For ordinary working people the food crisis overshadowed events abroad.¹⁹³ In any case, the real situation in Russia following the Tsar's abdication in March 1917 was unclear to most for the rest of the war. The Social Democrat best informed on the train of events in Russia was Otto Bauer, who was a prisoner of war in Siberia at the time of the abdication of the Tsar. His two biographers disagree about what enabled him to get to Petrograd for the summer and where he lived while there, but they agree that he was close to the Mensheviks, and especially to the Dans and Julius Martov. That certainly gave him a close view of the Bolsheviks' ascent, although Bauer was back in Vienna by the time they seized power, or rather proclaimed they had done so.¹⁹⁴ That Bolshevism played no role in the Social Democrats' actions during the remainder of the war should be viewed in light of not only the long standing reformist, that is non-revolutionary, stance of the party but also Bauer's direct exposure to events in Russia.

Living conditions had continued to deteriorate, and when the bread ration was reduced by another half in June, strikes broke out yet again. Party and union leaders met on the 17th to discuss how to deal with the situation. They resolved to send a deputation of six of their number, including Renner, to Minister President Seidler with a list of measures which would bring the strikers back to work. This included political demands – no

¹⁹¹ Rauchensteiner, *Der erste Weltkrieg*, pp. 724 – 725.

¹⁹² Hanisch, *Der grosse Illusionist*, pp. 87-88.

¹⁹³ Rauchensteiner, *Der erste Weltkrieg*, p. 727.

¹⁹⁴ Leichter, *Otto Bauer*, pp. 163 – 164; and Hanisch, *Der grosse Illusionist*, pp. 87 – 88.

reprisals, no military provocation, the lifting of censorship and the recall of parliament, which had not sat since the middle of March. There were also economic measures: pay rises and shorter hours.¹⁹⁵ Negotiations with the employers and the government lasted the entire week, and the result was that pay was increased and there were no reprisals.¹⁹⁶

From the spring, discussions had been under way in Vienna regarding reform of the local suffrage. Christian Socials proposed a two-tier system. The Social Democrats decided to go along with that provided the general curia received more seats than the privileged and that half of the additional seats on the general curia make up a women's curia. Furthermore, the requirements for the general curia should reflect those for parliamentary suffrage.¹⁹⁷ Early in the autumn the negotiations continued. The Social Democrats were still not happy with the proposals of the Christian Socials. The issues remaining included women's votes, the number of seats on the general curia, residence requirements and the effect of state benefit receipt on voting rights. The Social Democrats duly drafted a counterproposal to be taken to the Christian Socials.¹⁹⁸ Although these discussions came to nothing before the end of the monarchy, their existence demonstrates sustained work being done between the parties outside the formal government framework.

Late in the summer the German offensive in France ground to a halt. Then an ill-advised Austrian version in Italy ended in costly disaster. It had become clear that the Central Powers could not prevail or for that matter even carry on. Against the background of general collapse and futile efforts of the Monarchy to salvage its role in some form, Austria's German parties met during October to discuss a basis for a future government. The Social Democrats had declined participation in another proposed national

¹⁹⁵ *Protokoll der Sitzung des deutschen Parteivorstandes und des Wiener Ausschusses*, 17 June 1918, *VGA Partei Archiv vor 1934, Sitzungsprotokolle*, Mappe no. 2.

¹⁹⁶ *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 23 June 1918.

¹⁹⁷ *Protokoll der Sitzung des deutschen Parteivorstandes*, 11 June 1918, *VGA Partei Archiv vor 1934, Sitzungsprotokolle*, Mappe no. 2.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 9 and 16 September 1918.

government.¹⁹⁹ At the next meeting of the Board Seitz reported that Seidler²⁰⁰ had asked him if it was correct that the Social Democrats would join in a Ministry, which Seitz was able to deny. More interestingly, in a conversation with the Chairman of the German Nationalist group they agreed “that on 21 October the constituting of the provisional German National Assembly would take place. Beforehand there would be several sittings to attend to technical issues.” Bauer was assigned to draft a proposal for the next day.²⁰¹ His draft took the form of a proposed resolution by the assembly. First the assembly would have to declare itself the Provisional National Assembly, then they would set up Committees: Executive, Constitutional, Administrative, Local Government, Nutrition, Political Economy and War and Transition. The assembly would give the Executive Committee governing authority, including the making of laws. Following some debate and minor amendments, the Board adopted Bauer's draft with some provision for negotiating room. Should the bourgeois legislators not feel up to styling themselves a government with lawmaking authority, the fall back would be to have an Executive Committee able to prepare laws. Although Renner thought they should meet once more to be sure, the resolution was adopted there and then.²⁰²

On the afternoon of 21 October those members of the lower house representing the Alpine Crown Lands met in the chambers of the provincial diet of Lower Austria. In Redlich's words, with Seitz in the chair, they “constituted the state of German Austria”. Redlich noted that the speeches sounded “dull and without passion” including Adler's.²⁰³ Victor Adler was a very sick man with only three weeks to live, but his speech was

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 11 October 1918.

²⁰⁰ Following his resignation as Minister President, Seidler was appointed Director of the Emperor's cabinet. See *Österreichisches biographisches Lexikon 1815-1950 Online-Edition*, www.biographien.ac.at (August, 2016).

²⁰¹ *Protokoll der Sitzung des deutschen Parteivorstandes*, 17 October 1918, *VGA Partei Archiv vor 1934*, *Sitzungsprotokolle*, Mappe no. 2.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 18 October 1918.

²⁰³ Redlich diary, 21 October 1918, *Schicksalsjahre Österreichs*, vol. 2, pp. 451-452.

certainly not short of interest and passion, at least on paper. He made a point of stressing that Social Democrats would remain true to their programme, and the one aspect of that intention to which he made very specific reference was suffrage. He was quite clear that all elections at all levels of government must be on the basis of general and equal suffrage for both men and women. He closed with the following challenge to opposing parties: “We have told you that we want to work with you; it is up to you to see that we can work with you.”²⁰⁴ The meeting appointed an Executive Committee of 20 from its number, including Victor Adler and Karl Renner.²⁰⁵ Even if they had yet to decide what form the state would take: monarchy, republic or constituent part of Germany, they had taken the first step toward statehood outside the old structure.

From the meeting on 21 October until 12 November, just over three weeks, there were in effect two governments. The Monarchy soldiered on under the direction of a new Minister President, Heinrich Lammasch, while the Austrian successor state worked on clarifying itself, so to speak. Most accounts of this time in Austria focus on the dying monarchy, while the real interest is the nascent republic. According to Railway Minister Karl Baron von Banhans, there were nightly meetings between the *Ministerrat* (cabinet) of the Monarchy and the Executive Committee of its successor. These mostly went on into the early hours and were attended at first by Christian Socials, German Nationalists and Social Democrats. Later however Banhans was surprised that the former stopped coming to the meetings and left entire process in the hands of the Social Democrats, more specifically to Victor Adler, Seitz and Renner. In Banhans’s opinion, it was becoming increasingly clear that the Social Democrats would be leading the new state.²⁰⁶

The following week the assembly was to hold its second sitting. The Social

²⁰⁴ *Stenographische Protokoll der (konstituierende) 1. Sitzung der Nationalversammlung der deutschen Abgeordneten*, 21 October 1918, p. 8.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

²⁰⁶ P. Mechtler, ‘Erinnerungen des Dr Karl Freiherrn von Banhans (1861-1942)’, *Mitteilungen des österreichischen Staatsarchivs*, vol. 12 (1959), pp. 395 & 396.

Democrat members gathered beforehand to prepare themselves and decided they would aim to have roles in the Foreign, Interior, War and Social Services Ministries. Victor Adler was to be their candidate for Foreign Minister, but they deferred selecting individuals for the other roles, the idea being that the unions would have views on a social services candidate.²⁰⁷ At the Assembly, Karl Renner introduced a draft constitution, explaining that it was really only a “piece of a constitution”, and an “emergency shelter” (*Notdach*) to establish some form of public authority. The Executive Committee would have to become the *Staatsrat* (State Council). That body was elected afresh, with few changes in membership from the Executive Committee.²⁰⁸ Three Presidents were elected for the assembly: Franz Dinghofer, a German Nationalist and former Mayor of Linz²⁰⁹, Johann Hauser, a Christian Social and Catholic priest²¹⁰, and Karl Seitz.²¹¹ Later the same day, the new State Council chose Karl Renner as its leader.²¹² Josef Redlich recorded the following day that Christian Social (and future party leader) Ignaz Seipel considered it a great success that a republic had not been proclaimed that day!²¹³

On Saturday, 2 November, Seitz and Adler met the Emperor, who explained the Italian cease fire offer to them. The terms were very harsh, but the Emperor was inclined to accept. It was at this meeting that Adler made clear to Karl that the Social Democrats could not take responsibility for ending the war out of the hands of those who had started it.²¹⁴

²⁰⁷ *Protokoll der Klubsitzung der SPÖ*, 30 October 1918, *VGA Partei Archiv vor 1934, Sitzungsprotokolle*, Mappe no. 2.

²⁰⁸ *Stenographische Protokoll der (konstituierende) Nationalversammlung der deutschen Abgeordneten*, 2. Sitzung, 30 October 1918, p. 34.

²⁰⁹ Dvorak, *Biographisches Lexikon der Deutschen Burschenschaft*, vol. 1: *Politiker*, part-vol. 1: A-E, pp. 205-206.

²¹⁰ *Österreichisches biographisches Lexikon 1815-1950 Online-Edition*, www.biographien.ac.at (August, 2016).

²¹¹ *Stenographische Protokoll der (konstituierende) Nationalversammlung der deutschen Abgeordneten*, 2. Sitzung, 30 October 1918, p. 53.

²¹² Rauscher, *Renner*, p. 115.

²¹³ Redlich diary, 31 October 1918, *Schicksalsjahre Österreichs*, vol. 2, p. 459.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 2 November 1918, p. 462.

The next day, Friedrich Adler was freed. In fact, Justice Minister Vitorelli signed the amnesty on the 31st,²¹⁵ and Gustav Harpner, Adler's defense counsel, was able to deliver the news to the Party Congress in Vienna the next day. Victor went in person to the prison, at Stein, to collect his son.²¹⁶

The last Austrian imperial cabinet meeting was at 9:00 on 11 November. This was to be followed by a meeting with representatives of the new provisional government. In the event, the latter arrived an hour early, so anxious were they to get the appropriate proclamation printed quickly. Their concern was to preserve the peace by avoiding any risk of a power vacuum.²¹⁷ When Banhans asked Seitz why they were in such a rush to get rid of the Emperor, Seitz replied by citing the examples of Germany, Hungary and Bohemia. Should the Social Democrats stand by while their party colleagues “cut off the branch we are sitting on”?²¹⁸ An hour later came the news that Victor Adler had died, of course knowing that the Republic would be proclaimed on the following day.

On 12 November 1918, the lower house held the 95th sitting of its XXIInd Session. Having heard a tribute to Victor Adler, and having wished the successor national governments well, it dissolved itself. There was, once again, only one government. That same day, the first law enacted unanimously by the new government established the Republic of German Austria.²¹⁹ It was printed from a handwritten draft that Chancellor Karl Renner brought with him for the occasion, composed either the day before or that very morning, without the help of the legal experts in the bureaucracy²²⁰. The pay-off for the careful work of nearly three decades was that the republic proclaimed on 12 November 1918 was indeed largely if not entirely, the creation of the Social Democrats. At the

²¹⁵ *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 2 Nov 1918.

²¹⁶ Florence, *Fritz*, pages 302 / 303. Friedrich's cousin and Victor Adler's great nephew, Peter Halban, told the writer that it was Victor who was allowed actually to unlock the door of the cell to let his son go free!

²¹⁷ Mechtler, ‘Erinnerungen des Dr Karl Freiherrn von Banhans’, p. 397.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 399.

²¹⁹ *Staatsgesetzblatt*, no. 5/1918.

²²⁰ Hannak, *Renner*, p. 352.

ceremony the communists caused some disturbance, but they were unable to derail the process. In fact, they had invited Friedrich Adler to assume the leadership of their party, which he declined to do, making clear his commitment to the Social Democrats.²²¹ They had earned and retained the confidence of the population and their opponents, and that put them in a position to influence events in their chosen direction. Friedrich von Wieser, the prominent and well-connected economist, writing about the end of the monarchy, judged:

the more peaceful process in German Austria was linked to the unity preserved by the socialists during the war. Their leadership succeeded despite the often sensitive tension between moderates and radicals. They avoided the course taken by the majority socialists in Germany and remained as a party in opposition to the war, even when the mood among the workers from the start was almost entirely in favour of the war, which they saw as a defensive one forced upon them and in which they fulfilled their patriotic duty.²²²

Wieser saw the mood change following the collapse of Russia and with the deterioration of conditions at home. In his view the unity of the party enabled them to keep the leadership in 'moderate' hands.

The second day of the party congress that November opened with congratulations for Seitz and Hanusch as President of the State Council and member of the government respectively. Otto Bauer addressed the gathering and explained to them that there had just been a revolution without bloodshed.²²³ The tone and content of the proceedings at the congress were significant, since they showed there was no longer any reluctance to share power with members of other parties. There was no more worry about lending tacit support to the war itself, nor did the poison chalice concern stop the Social Democrats shouldering a major share in the responsibility for dealing with the not insubstantial challenges now facing the country. Literally millions of soldiers, still armed, were finding their way home, joined by all the displaced civilians in an environment where food and

²²¹ C. Gulick, *Austria from Habsburg to Hitler* (Berkeley, Ca., 1948), vol. 1, p. 72

²²² F. von Wieser, *Österreichs Ende* (Berlin, 1919), pp. 239-240.

²²³ *Unterlagen zur zweiten Kriegstagung der Sozialdemokratie, VGA Partei Archiv vor 1934*, Mappe 58.

other necessities were in short supply and money of uncertain value.²²⁴ This is a picture very hard to imagine today, and that it did not dissolve into anarchy is a testimony both to the social fabric inherited from the Habsburg state and to the standing of those building the new one.

Naturally the intra-party quarrels about questions raised by the war had disappeared as the war was coming to an end. The united effort was now on meeting the challenges presented by the winding down of the war.²²⁵ Tempers were frayed, but the sides of the argument had inevitably converged: a military outcome and peace terms would be part of any post war settlement. Subsequent developments provided ample opportunity to reflect on Renner's view that an armistice would not be a solution.

Not only had the Social Democrats brought their most vehement opponents to a resolution of their making, they had raised their profile and credibility with the public at large. The circulation figures for the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, taken from the notes of the Chief Operating Officer, Ernst Herlitzka, bear unequivocal witness to their success in terms of public perception.²²⁶

<u>year</u>	<u>Comment</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>comment</u>	<u>Number</u>
1902	Weekdays	18,000	Sundays	23,000
1905		35,000		44,000
1908		37,000		46,000
<i>After the start of war</i>				
1914		83,000		
1915		38,300		
1916		35,000		
1917		55,000		
1918	October	96,000		
	November	110,000		
1919	January	115,000		
	February (elections)	120,000		

²²⁴ Rauchensteiner, *Der erste Weltkrieg*, pp. 1053-1054.

²²⁵ *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 2 Nov 1918.

²²⁶ Herlitzka, Ernst. *Die Arbeiter-Zeitung – eine Auswahl von Daten*, VGA Sach-Archiv, Lade 8, Mappe 43.

The approach of the Social Democrats to the war stressed two priorities: first to preserve as much as possible the party and union structures to enable them to function once the war, whatever the outcome, came to an end and second to avoid any action which would put their members at risk with the authorities. Socialists were of course subject to being called to serve. Otto Bauer spent the bulk of the war as a prisoner of the Russians, while Julius Deutsch was posted to the Italian then the Romanian fronts before returning safely home to Vienna in the autumn of 1917.²²⁷ That they were prepared to bear their share of the obligations and the hardships did socialists' standing no harm. When the collapse came, they were in a position to take full advantage of the opportunity. They had long before taken the view that their constituents would be the biggest losers in any violence or chaos, and at the birth of the First Republic, that assessment was fully vindicated.

²²⁷ J. Deutsch, *Ein weiter Weg: Lebenserinnerungen* (Zurich, 1960), p. 110.

Conclusion

That 12 November 1918 found the Austrian Social Democrats leading the new Republic of German-Austria was due to their wise choices with regard to strategy and tactics as well as to the skill and judgement of their leadership group. The foregoing has set out their activities relating to a number of specific themes and examined the observations of selected historians. In concluding it will be helpful to review what has been presented, highlighting several important threads which run through Austrian Social Democrats' rise.

There is a consensus among historians that the Social Democrats neglected, even dodged, the nationality issue until after they had won the suffrage campaign. The reader will agree that was not the case. Social Democrats were conscious of the nationalities problem at least from Hainfeld, where their declarations were clear on the equality of nationalities. The starting point for the Social Democrats, however, was that working people of all nationalities faced the same challenges, and that nationality was at best a distraction from more substantive and pressing needs and moreover a trap to turn their constituents against one another. The Social Democrats wrongly guessed that public understanding would soon come around to their view. The Badeni language controversy and its aftermath made clear that they could not simply wait for the 'masses' to come to their senses. The storm which followed the ill-starred language reform came as a surprise for many, not least Badeni himself.

The Social Democrats, with large Czech and German constituencies as well as members from other nations, needed a credible approach to the relationship of the state to those nations and the nations to one another. As for the Badeni language reforms, the socialists had a straightforward position: the language question could and should be settled in parliament. Starting with preparations for the Brünn conference, they focused on the quest for a larger, more comprehensive nationalities proposal. The framework they

produced was at the same time well-considered and innovative. Seliger, Renner and Kristan created it, supported by Bauer and ultimately as we have seen by Seipel. The work of Karl Renner, perhaps with inspiration from Etbin Kristan, articulated a solution which retains its relevance more than a century later. Renner's work provided an original yet feasible basis on which to place nationality in a more manageable relationship with the state, and Bauer's contribution was clearly aimed at supporting this proposal in a Marxist context for the party faithful. As pointed out by the historian Jeremy King, Social Democrats "offered not incremental modifications to an already dominant political model but a fresh and even revolutionary approach".¹

The ensuing century is a refutation of the Wilsonian 'solution' and arguably suggests reconsideration of the Renner-Kristan-Seipel proposal; so it is too soon to deem the idea outside the 'stream of history'. Of course, as Seipel pointed out at the time of his endorsement, it had not yet been tried, but if today's European Union survives and prospers, it will be eloquent vindication of the Social Democrats' proposal. Certainly the nation state 'solution', the explicit goal of self-determination, has produced ill-will, bloodshed and outbursts of xenophobia as well as the repeated exploitation of irredentism. In any case, given the uselessness of the nationality issue in terms of Social Democratic aims, the time and effort they, and particularly Renner and Bauer, lavished on the subject demonstrated timely and accurate awareness of public discourse and a willingness to address the issues deemed important by the man in the street.

As Judson, among others, explained, the monarchy and the bureaucracy which served it hoped that by including an ever broader share of the (male) population in the political process, there would be a more congenial parliament to support the ambitions of the government. The Hainfeld declarations were quite specific, as we have related, on the objective of universal, direct and equal suffrage. Taaffe's suffrage extension was a first

¹ J. King, *Budweisers to Czechs and Germans* (Princeton, 2002), p. 87.

step, but it took Badeni's reform to enable Social Democrats to have a parliamentary presence. Until that time, that is for the first eight years after Hainfeld, they struggled to get their message in front of the public. Once they had a platform in parliament and access to the political process, they were better able to judge the mood in governing circles. Of course the secret of timing is to be prepared for and to recognize opportunities; so their readiness, when events in Hungary and Russia coincided with a favourable constellation in parliament, to launch a serious suffrage campaign simply left the Christian Socials on the sidelines. Thereafter, Social Democrats did not neglect the rest of the campaign, keeping women's suffrage, as well as local representative bodies and residence requirements, constantly on the agenda. They understood the suffrage reform of 1907 was only the beginning. Finally, in the autumn of 1918, success came with hardly a hint of objection.

Thus, Social Democrats were busy with both suffrage and nationalities for the entire three decades between Hainfeld and the birth of the Republic. On suffrage they secured a victory along the way in November of 1905, while their nationalities programme was being developed and promulgated. The record shows unequivocally that the leadership was keenly aware there was a long way yet to go to any position resembling a solution to either problem. The nationalities issue did not spring suddenly from the Badeni language fiasco, nor did it disappear with the Versailles settlement. By the same token suffrage reform didn't suddenly appear in 1905 to be accomplished definitively in 1907. Both those challenges predated Hainfeld, figured prominently in the resolutions at that convention and are still confronting us. The nationalities problem was not neglected, any more than the suffrage campaign was won.

The content of the Social Democrats' legislative programme was ambitious, and we have seen a small selection of the reforms they proposed. The situation was complicated by the diffuse nature of legislative authority, with much of the social subject matter, like education and housing, being in the remit of local councils. With regard to accident and

health insurance, Social Democrats were able to drive noteworthy advances in provisions for these risks in terms of who was granted coverage and the security of the risk-bearing entities, be they *Bruderalden* or *Krankenkassen*, building on foundations laid by prior generations of reformers. Despite that progress, much remained to be done at the start of the First Republic in a difficult environment. In education, local control meant their efforts – to bring about co-education, to secure adequate pay for teachers and to diminish the role of the Catholic Church in personnel selection and curriculum – were limited to setting the agenda for the future. Indeed there were specific reforms instituted shortly after the birth of the republic. Housing was the area where the Social Democrats had their most obvious, complete and lasting success. Before 1918 this was strictly a local government matter; so central government could do little beyond guarantees for loans, tax concessions and the creation of a housing fund. There were few benefits to show from those efforts, but that picture was transformed quickly just after the birth of the republic with the adjustment of compulsory purchase provisions. This forged the legal framework for the rapid expansion of community housing. Their results prove the Social Democrats had the wit and the ability to deliver meaningful progress toward their social objectives.

On the negative side, inflation and food shortages presented difficulties which they were unable to overcome. Although their advocacy was effective enough, as we saw in the question of meat imports, they were outgunned by the emerging alliance of Christian Socials and provincial farming voters, whose interests coincided with those of agrarian Hungary. Even the trusted tactic of mass demonstration was no help in this campaign.

While the twin problems of inflation and meat shortages persisted at home, and despite the frustrations with the parliamentary process, Social Democrats' progress was without doubt accelerated by the Great War, which discredited and demoralised their opponents to the point where 'they no longer believed in their cause'. The Social Democrats were more fortunate than their comrades in Wilhelmina Germany in two

important respects. First, they were, though it had been difficult and uncomfortable at times, an international party or federation of sister parties within the state. Therefore they could not be accused of disloyalty for lacking a national posture (and in fact we saw Friedrich Austerlitz criticized for taking such a position). Second, being deprived by both the constitution and the adjournment of parliament of any voice in the decision to go to war or even the chance to debate it, they were absolved of any ownership of the war. They could simply choose between grudging support and outright resistance.

Because of the specific course the Social Democrats chose, after deliberation and discussion, the war ‘chased the game into the trap’, to borrow Renner’s analogy. Much comment is wasted on second guessing the socialists, reproaching them for not having done more to prevent the war (or even voting credits!) or having failed to recognise the opportunity presented by the strikes in 1918. Most historians notice but do not fully appreciate the continuation of the Lassallean strategy, even though the leaders repeatedly proclaimed that approach, in meetings beginning with the International at the end of July 1914, then with their instructions to members and unions throughout. Social Democrats were quite specific that the war would bring change, and with it, opportunity.

The First World War, horrific as it unquestionably was, presented the Austrian Social Democrats with a choice they were, perhaps uniquely among their peers, able to turn to their advantage. They had argued in favour of a peaceful resolution for all issues and had been very clear about their anti-war stance. Just as usefully, to the extent the terrible experience of the Great War could be described that way, Austrian socialists were not asked to judge any specific measures once the die had been cast. Stürgkh took all the blame on himself. To avail themselves of post war opportunities, socialists would need their organisation and the good will of their fellow citizens. The decision to participate in the ‘defence of the realm’, all the while urging peace, was both conscious and fortunate. When the shooting stopped, the Social Democratic organisation was intact, and they

enjoyed the respect of their fellow citizens. But it was only thanks to the conscious decisions of the leadership that the Social Democrats' struggle for reform benefitted from the war.

Those same leaders had contrived to keep the Party together during a time when there was little to do but argue amongst themselves. In those debates, as Victor Adler appreciated, *Der Kampf* served as both a vehicle where all the party could set out their thoughts and a safety valve. Opposing views could be aired outside meetings, where tempers would be tested. Victor Adler made clear his appreciation of the importance of keeping the party together, for example in his admonitions following the flair-up in early 1916.

Having reviewed the first three decades of Austria's Social Democratic Party with specific regard to these selected themes, we can conclude that their strategy – to work within the constraints of the existing state – was fully vindicated. It is only fair however to remind ourselves that they were fortunate in that Austria enjoyed the rule of law; so as long as Social Democrats kept their activities within legal bounds, the law protected them.

Furthermore, Adler's view that his constituents had the most to lose by any direct, extra-legal challenge to the existing order and that it would jeopardize any progress already secured was undoubtedly justified. Those commentators who find fault with that strategy, for example in the context of the war, fail to consider the balance of resources. After all, in any violent confrontation, the Social Democrats' constituents would be the principal if not the only victims, and any destruction would be largely at their cost. Furthermore, it must be clear that, had socialists spent the preceding three decades preaching revolution, embracing a Bolshevik approach, or even had they adopted a much less accommodating posture during the war, the leaders would have set themselves up for reproaches of treachery and possibly shared the fate of Liebknecht, Luxemburg and Eisner. There would never have been 'Red Vienna'.

All the while they were preparing the ground for the realisation of the rest of their programme when the next opportunity presented itself. At the same time they were building, re-building and administering a modern mass political party with no examples to go by. In this context, the tactics consisted first and foremost of constructing the most reasonable possible of arguments in favour of each reform to appeal to the broadest constituency, regardless of their party affiliation. We have thus seen disparate factions supporting the Social Democrats' agenda. For example, Christian Socials gave grudging support for the suffrage campaign, then nationalists supported on education matters, and there was even Christian Social backing in the campaign for meat imports, namely Jerzabek, both in committee and in the house. Others were prepared to back the phosphorus ban. In addressing social concerns, including insurance, education and housing, the Social Democrats developed substantive, feasible reforms, ideas which were in the vanguard among their contemporaries, all set out in the form of clear and thoroughly explained proposals. Many were implemented at the outset in the First Republic, most obviously the end of the housing shortage in Vienna. Some were not, and others did not work out well, like arming the population, which was anyway one of many unfortunate effects of the war, leading to the *Heimwehr* and the *Schutzbund*. The failures, ideas which were not implemented and those which went wrong, do not diminish the importance of content thoughtfully, plainly and persistently presented. This key component has received scant credit.

All the Social Democrat campaigns required presentation, and presentation required a medium. Parliament was not merely the right choice, it was the only one. Any other means of publicising their programme was subject to censorship. When parliament was in session, it afforded socialists the means of getting their message across to their opponents, to the government and to the newspapers. The latter could be counted upon to do the publicity, armed, as we still are today, with the parliamentary proceedings. Moreover, their

position in parliament put them in contact with the 'governing class'. That they fully intended that result was forcefully explained by Franz Schuhmeier in his 1907 review of the decision to attend the *Thronrede*. By the birth of the Republic socialists had been in the 'governing class' for some time, in most cases for at least a decade.

While their use of the mass demonstration seemed to bear fruit in 1905, and even if the May Day tradition is re-enacted to this day, it should have been clear at the latest in 1911 that mobs presented very real problems. Again and again, as in the first May Day demonstration in 1890 and in the giant turnout in 1905 in support of suffrage reform, the Social Democrats proved they had taken the lessons of 1869 to heart. Though Mommsen was very positive in his evaluation of the Social Democrats' use of the demonstration, the conclusion must be that its use was a qualified success. While the demonstration was used successfully in support of the suffrage campaign, it was much less useful in the inflation protests. The ground had to be very well prepared, both in terms of the goal being thoroughly publicized, specific and attainable and the event itself being painstakingly choreographed from start to finish. Neither of those essential requirements had been fulfilled for the inflation demonstration of September 1911. Also, there had been several instances of riotous behaviour during the twelve months before the inflation riots. These provided occasions for potentially disruptive participants to get a sense of the opportunity for mischief these large gatherings offered. They should also have served as a warning to the Social Democrats, but it was not heeded. In contrast, at their meeting with police before *Wahlrechtstag* the socialist leaders took personal responsibility for the peaceful running of the event. That seems curiously not to have warranted much comment, and it is doubtful that those leaders were adequate surety in any strict sense. Nevertheless, their party would have paid a steep price had things turned sour. By the same token, the riotous denouement to the inflation demonstration in September of 1911 highlighted a failure on the part of the party leaders, also seldom stressed. As already intimated, the dangers

inherent in mob action came all too clearly into focus in 1927.

With regard to the leadership, the last President of the *Abgeordnetenhaus*, Julius Sylvester, a member of the (nationalist) German People's Party, gave the following opponent's assessment of Victor Adler:

Although suffering with a minor speech defect, he belonged to parliament's great speakers, could play all the opposition 'registers' against the government, poured contempt and ridicule on the nationalist and bourgeois parties and always received enthusiastic support from his party comrades. His death was a great catastrophe for his party. The loss of his statesmanlike vision left a hole in his party which could not be filled.²

Mommsen described Adler's general approach as having theoretic discussions and debates confined to journals, while concentrating day-to-day efforts in practical work. Party unity was after all better maintained in deeds than in than in programmatic discussions.

He liked to stress that he was no theoretician, which was his tactic for passing up debates about principles, which he deemed unproductive. That reflected his evolution from intellectual polemicist to practical party politician. He had an instinctive distaste for theoretical debates which did not lead to practical deeds. He saw himself as an eclectic, which seemed useful for him given his practical objectives. Behind these views sat deep scepticism regarding theories about the future.

Furthermore, in answer to criticism regarding his treatment of the left tendencies in the party:

It is not enough to explain Adler's aversion to the far left by reference to his decidedly reformist posture. To a much greater extent it was his ethic of responsibility which underpinned Adler's view that it was impermissible to trade in revolutionary rhetoric for which the people would have to bear the consequences.³

Finally, Mommsen's verdict was that, while the reproach remained that Adler had overstated the usefulness of the place in parliament, his critics have been noticeably silent on what the alternatives were.⁴ Certainly in comparison to outcomes in other places, for example Hungary and Germany, the reliance on and maintenance of the parliamentary

² J. Sylvester, *Vom toten Parlament und seinen letzten Trägern* (Vienna, 1928), pp. 36-37.

³ H. Mommsen, 'Victor Adler und die Politik der österreichischen Sozialdemokratie im ersten Weltkrieg' in Ackerl, Isabella (Ed.) *Politik und Gesellschaft im alten und neuen Österreich: Festschrift für Rudolf Neck zum 60. Geburtstag* (Vienna, 1981), pp. 384 & 385.

⁴ *Ibid.*, page 408.

framework as well as the absorption of the communist councils worked out well, whatever the eventual difficulties of the First Republic.

As a general proposition, other historians evaluating the Social Democrats' results have been mainly focused on the period after the formation of the First Republic. That line of study leads inexorably to the clerical-fascist takeover in February of 1934. Analysing the Austrian Social Democrat project through the lens of the apparent failure in 1934 distorts the view of developments up to the formation of the republic in 1918 and those after 1945. Historians have therefore understandably failed to identify the Social Democrats' very real success composing and implementing reforms. Moreover, to regard the 12 February 1934 'outcome' as a failure on the part of Austrian Social Democrats ignores similar developments in Hungary, Italy and Germany before Austria, then Spain and finally France afterwards.

During the formative quarter of a century from Hainfeld to the Great War, Social Democratic leaders and their followers built an effective modern political party. They had no instruction book, even if they had the benefit of sharing views and ideas with their fellow movement members elsewhere in Europe. Though this thesis is not directly concerned with events after 1918, it is entirely consistent with the main theme to mention in passing and lament the unfortunate tendency to judge the success or failure of leaders and their movements not in terms of what they cause to happen but rather in terms of how they seize and how long they manage to retain power or how they score on some hypothetical doctrinal yardstick. This has not been a thesis about seizing or holding power – or for that matter even having any. Rather, it has been entirely about the business of opposition, which involves preparing for government but also, in the case of the Austrian Social Democrats, of joining the establishment – of being seen as a valid party of government rather than a radical and destructive fringe.

In Memory of the
Establishment of the Republic
on the 12th of November 1918*



* Photograph by the author, 30 October 2015.

The Making of Red Vienna

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